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EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS OF MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS: A FOCUS ON TURKISH - AMERICAN YOUTH

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in The School of Education

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Almighty God (Allah) who created heaven and earth, made it possible to complete this study. The success comes from him and we just only show our efforts.

This dissertation is dedicated to my mom, Muneyver Atmaca, even though she could not continue her education after elementary school; her passion for education never ended, and inspired me to this stage.
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to investigate the educational aspirations of Turkish-American middle and high school students. For comparison purposes, students from other ethnic groups were also included in the study. Factors related to family, school, and the individual student were examined through survey data and interviews. In addition, possible barriers to educational goals, preferred area of study, and perceived parent support were explored. Interview with Turkish-American parents revealed types of parental supports and insights about their understanding of children’s experiences and performance.

The results of the ordinal regression analyses revealed that parents’ expectations and school achievement were the most influential factors on educational aspirations of Turkish American middle and high school students. Parents’ expectations and generation level (immigrant status) were found most influential for the group of other ethnic students included in the study.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Since early in its history, the United States (US) has been a popular destination for immigrants from all over the world. People have moved to the US for economic, educational, and even political reasons. Since the 1840s the US immigration rate has consistently been high, often counted in the hundreds of thousands. Between 1991-1998, the average yearly total for US immigrants was 950,634.

Until the 1960’s, most US immigrants came from Europe. Today, Asia, South and Central America are the source of most immigrants to the US (Cohn, 2001). The change in the demographics of the immigrant population was due to a revision of immigration law in 1965. Prior to that revision, US immigration law was based on the National Origin Quota System, which was established in the Immigration Act of 1924 and reinforced by the Immigration Act of 1952. This system was based on providing visas to 2% of the number of the people of each nationality present in the United States in 1890. The quota system favored Western Europeans. As a result of the Immigrant Act of 1952, 85% of annual immigrant visas were allotted to people from Northern and Western European countries (Office of the Historian, n.d.; History of US Immigration Laws, n.d.).

In 1965, the National Origin Quota System was abolished. Instead, annual immigrations were based on the rule of 170,000 for Eastern Hemisphere countries with a maximum of 20,000 people from each nation, and 120,000 for Western Hemisphere countries with no national limitations. This act significantly changed the immigration demographics of the nation by giving people from countries outside of Western Europe the opportunity to enter the United States.

According to the American Community Survey (ACS), 40 million foreign-born people lived in United States in 2010 (US Census Bureau, 2010). Based on census figures, it is possible
to extrapolate that the estimated number of people living in immigrant households in the US exceeds 40 million. In fact, one in five students’ mother tongue is not English (Howard, 2006). Moreover, it has been predicted that by 2040, one in every three children in the US will grow up in an immigrant family (Suarez-Orozco, Suarez-Orozco & Todorova, 2008). This trend should mean that education should be more culturally diverse than ever before. However, the population of teachers is not as diverse as that of the students. Most of the educators are white, middle class, monolingual English speakers. In this situation inequality in education may come into play as students who come from the same background as their teachers have a greater advantage in the learning process than students from other backgrounds.

Teachers need to engage students effectively to the content so that successful learning occurs. If teachers are familiar with students’ backgrounds and cultures, they can find better ways to engage students with the curriculum. In fact, the connection between academic knowledge and skills with lived experiences and references of students improves engagement as lessons become personally meaningful and interesting. Consequently, students learn more easily and thoroughly (Gay, 2000). Therefore, existing research emphasized the need of culturally responsive teachers in schools and the preparation of such teachers (Fuller, 1992; Smith, 1969; Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Gay, 2002; Garmon, 2004; Whipp, 2013). Villegas and Lucas (2002) suggested six characteristics of culturally responsive teachers: they should be socio-culturally conscious, have affirming views of students from diverse backgrounds, see themselves as agents of change for making schools more equitable, understand how learners construct knowledge, know about the lives of their students, design instruction that builds on students’ current knowledge, and improve their knowledge.
Culture strongly influences the attitudes, values, and behaviors that students and teachers carry to the instructional process (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). In their study of Cuban, Vietnamese, Haitian, and Mexican immigrant students’ educational progress Portes and MacLeod (1996) reported the effects of the ethnic community on students’ academic performance. Although US education has not been very culturally responsive to ethnically diverse students (Villegas & Lucas, 2002), diverse classrooms give all students an opportunity to learn to embrace cultural differences and break down stereotypes, sexism, and prejudice. This situation requires educators be more aware of their students’ racial, ethnic, cultural, and economic backgrounds in order to facilitate their education. Such awareness is crucial because, through education, students can overcome barriers and reach more opportunities for their future goals and plans. Since education plays such a vital role for the successful future of both individuals and nation, it is important to provide quality education for these diverse students so that they will be productive, contributing members of society.

Existing research on various ethnic student groups reveals the efforts of the researchers to understand the educational experiences of each group and to provide educators with essential information regarding relevant groups so as to improve the education of individuals, and thus society. For instance, several researchers focused on educational experiences of Chinese immigrant students (Rosenthal & Feldman, 1991; McKay & Wong, 1996; Stevenson & Lee, 1996; Liang, 2006; Kaufman, 2004). Yeh and Inose (2002) focused on coping strategies of Chinese, Japanese and Korean immigrant students; Matute-Bianchi (1986) studied school performance of Mexican-American and Japanese-American students in California; and Gibson (1998) studied West Indian, South Asian and Mexican students. Park (1997) studied learning style preferences of Chinese, Filipino, Korean and Vietnamese students, while Rumbaut and Ima

In order to advise and counsel students and to respond adequately to needs of diverse student populations, much more research is needed, especially for overlooked and under-served immigrant student groups. This study aims to understand the educational aspirations of one of these overlooked groups: Turkish immigrant students.

**Statement of the Problem**

Turkish-Americans are one of the many rapidly growing immigrant communities in the US. According to the 2010 census, there are 195,283 people of Turkish ancestry in the United States (US Census, 2010), of which 47,565 are 18 years old or younger. Around 52% of Turkish immigrants who are 25 years old or older have bachelors or graduate degrees. The median family income is around $63,000 (US Census, 2010).

Although the Immigration Act of 1965 allowed immigrants to be welcomed based on their skills and professions rather than their counties of origin (Reimers, 1985), Turkish immigration to the US began much earlier than 1965. In fact, immigration from Turkey (known as the Ottoman Empire prior to 1923) has been categorized into three stages: 1820-1921, 1950-1970, and post-1970 (Balgamis & Karpat, 2010). In the first wave from 1820-1921, two major factors affected immigration. First, American teachers and preachers in missionary schools in the Ottoman Empire encouraged students to pursue further education in the United States. When
those people left, their former neighbors followed them to America. People who came in this
century-long wave either returned to Turkey or assimilated into the US culture. Those who
assimilated typically have no links to Turkish immigrants in the second and third waves
(Balgamis & Karpat, 2010). For instance, the author of this study met an elderly woman whose
father had migrated to the United States from the Ottoman Empire around 1911 to study
medicine. He married a US citizen and stayed in the US. Despite having a Turkish name, the
woman could not speak the Turkish language.

In the second wave of Turkish immigration (1950-1970), the immigration rate was low
and most Turkish immigrants were professionals (Karpat, 2010). It is important to note that
following World War II, Turkey’s relationship with the United States improved markedly.
Turkey contributed personnel to the Korean War (1950-1953), joined the North Atlantic Treaty
Organization (NATO) in 1952, and allowed the US to establish the Incirlik Air Force Base in
1954, which played a crucial role during the Cold War. This improved relationship opened up
opportunities for professional development and further studies for professionals such as military
experts, engineers, and doctors. After completing their degrees, many of these students stayed in
the United States for their children’s education. Most of these professionals became physicians
or university professors of engineering, economics, political science, sociology, or Turkish
language and literature. Their children continued their parents’ path and became equally
successful professionals in the United States (Bilge, 1997). A prime example of these children is
a well-known medical doctor and TV personality Mehmet Oz, known as Dr. Oz. Dr. Oz is a
professor at the department of surgery at Columbia, and his father, Dr. Mustafa Oz, immigrated
to the United States in 1955 as a medical resident.
After 1970, around 200,000 Turks immigrated to the United States. In this third wave, immigrants not only reflected the complex social mosaic of Turkish society but also were able to establish their own community organizations, such as American-Turkish associations and Turkish cultural centers (Karpat, 2010). The Assembly of Turkish-American Association was set up in Washington, DC, in 1980 as an umbrella organization of Turkish-American associations throughout the United States, Canada and Turkey. However, despite their growing numbers and presence in the US dating back to the beginning of the twentieth century, there has been limited research on the Turkish-American experience (Kaya, 2003; Isik- Ercan, 2010). In fact, there has been almost no research on educational aspirations of Turkish immigrant students.

**Purpose of the Study**

There is a body of literature focusing on immigrant students’ adaptation, performance and experiences in the United States (Suarez- Orozco et al., 2008; Olsen, 1997; Zhou, 1997; Kao& Tienda, 1995), and there is a vast amount of research focused on students’ educational aspirations for college (Hossler, Braxton & Coopersmith, 1989; Hossler, Schmit & Vesper, 1999; Cabrera & LaNasa, 2000). There are also studies focusing on educational aspirations of students from different ethnic backgrounds (Teranishi, Ceja, Antonio, Allen & McDonough, 2004; Ojeda & Flores, 2008; Ma & Yeh, 2010). However, in light of the increasingly multicultural profile of American public schools and the need for understanding different ethnic group’s experiences in education, overlooked ethnic groups need more attention from researchers.

In the literature, educational aspirations –which imply students’ educational plans for college and beyond- have been studied based on various theoretical frameworks. One of the most widely accepted models; the College Choice Model (Hossler& Gallagher, 1987) comprises three phases of educational aspirations to college enrollment (predisposition, search, and choice).
The theoretical framework for the predisposition stage is suggested by Hossler & Stage (1992). Family, school and individual factors were found to be influential in the educational aspirations of American youth (Hossler & Stage, 1992; Wahl & Blackhurst, 2000), and researchers suggested studying the same factors to determine whether they are as important among different ethnic groups and if they interact in similar patterns (Hossler & Stage, 1992). Hossler & Stage (1992) stated that “more research on the college choice for other ethnic groups is needed” (p.446). In addition, researchers emphasized the need for research on overlooked ethnic groups such as Middle Eastern immigrants (Rong & Preissle, 2009).

Therefore, this study was designed to examine and explore if key factors identified in the literature (College Choice Model, Hossler & Stage, 1992) predict the educational aspirations of Turkish immigrant students. Factors related to family, school and the individual student were focused on in this study in order to understand Turkish immigrant students’ educational plans and experiences. In addition, possible barriers that Turkish immigrant youth might experience and any difference in educational plans between genders were also explored. Moreover, this study explored how Turkish-American parents perceived their children’s educational experiences and how they support their children.

**Significance of the Study**

Most studies about immigrant children’s educational aspirations have focused on either Hispanic or Asian students, reflecting their proportions in the immigrant population. According to the US Census Bureau report in 2010, 57.5% of the immigrant population had Hispanic or Asian origins (5.4% Chinese, 4.5% Indian, and 29.3% Mexican) while 42.5% of the immigrants were from all other countries in the world. Existing research on immigrant students mostly focuses on Latinos or Asian students to understand why Latinos have lower and Asians have
higher educational performance. Suarez-Orozco (2007) noted that immigrants from Mexico, Cuba and Central America received disproportionate attention from researchers. Other immigrant groups that neither over- nor under-achieve are often under-studied. Therefore, immigrant groups such as South Americans and Caribbeans, and other ethnic groups from Asian, Eastern European and African origins should be studied (Suarez-Orozco, 2007). Studying overlooked communities will benefit future researchers and enable them to compare experiences over periods of time.

Rong and Preissle (2009) noted the lack of research literature on Middle Eastern immigrant students and emphasized the necessity of future studies in order to understand performance of this diverse group, which includes different racial, ethnic, religious, and socioeconomic backgrounds, as well as various languages. Moreover, studying immigrant students from this region of the world will help educators understand their culture, and eliminate common myths and stereotypes about those students. Since Turkish students are often categorized as Middle Easterners, studying their performance and experiences will fill the empty space in the literature that Rong and Preissle (2009) addressed.

Starting from the early 19th century, the presence of Turkish people in the US has continued to grow. In fact, according to the Institute of International Students, Turkey has been one of the top 10 countries to send students to the US (Open Doors Report, 2012). Moreover, according to National Science Foundation Report (December, 2012) the rate of foreign doctorate recipient staying in the United States is high. The report noted that among U.S. doctorate recipient -foreign students between 2001- 2011, Turkish graduates were sixth of ten other nationals stayed in the US after graduation. After China, India, South Korea, Taiwan, and Canada, Turkey was the sixth country followed by Thailand, Japan, Mexico, and Germany.
Consequently, studies of Turkish students’ experiences in the United States have mainly focused on undergraduate or graduate level students. These studies investigated stress due to psychological and cultural change (known as acculturative stress), adjustment issues, psychological adaptation, participation in class, life satisfaction and help-seeking attitudes (Duru & Poyrazli, 2007; Poyrazli, Arbona & Bullington, 2001; Bektas, Demir & Bowden, 2009; Tatar, 2005; Kilinc & Garanello, 2003).

According to Finn (2012), 52% of Turkish students who completed doctorates in science or engineering in 2004 stayed in the US for a year after graduation, with 40% of them staying five years after graduation. This rate was higher than students from Taiwan (37%), Mexico (34%), and Thailand (12%), and was similar to rates of students from South Korea, Greece, and Japan (42, 41, and 40%, respectively). In contrast to their growing presence in the US, scholarly knowledge of Turkish students’ experiences remains limited in the literature, with especially scanty attention paid to the lower age group of Turkish immigrant students in US. Although Isik-Ercan’s recent dissertation study (2009) provided important information about negotiations of Turkish culture, identity and schooling experiences for Turkish K-12 students and their families, the eventual goal of schooling is to prepare students for future life. Thus, the area of educational aspirations is an important topic for further research. College and advanced education is an important indicator of future life quality of an individual. However, little is known about the educational aspirations and plans of Turkish-American youth. This study will contribute to understanding of the college choice process among Turkish-American youth, thus providing insights into the predisposition stage of the College Choice model (Hossler & Stage, 1992) for the Turkish ethnic community.
Therefore, this study will fill the gap in the literature and contribute to an area that needs more research. Moreover, this study will give a voice to an immigrant community which is being lost under the “other” category and invisible in the literature on educational aspirations of immigrants.

**Outline of the Study**

Chapter one has been an introduction to the study, including the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study and outline of the study. Chapter two is the review of related literature on educational aspirations. The factors affecting educational aspirations are reviewed. Studies of Turkish immigrants in other countries are also included. Most common theories of educational aspirations are defined along with the theoretical frameworks of the study. Chapter three presents the research methods for this study. Research questions, research design, participants, instruments, variables, data collection procedures, and data analysis plans are explained in this chapter. Chapter four presents the results of the study and chapter five presents the discussions and conclusions.

**Definitions of Key Terms**

Educational aspirations: A students’ perception of his/her intention to follow further education after high school. In other words, aspirations refer to students’ hope and desire for their education after high school.

Educational expectations: A student’s belief or thinking about what will happen in the future regarding his/her education.

Educational attainment: The highest degree of education a student completes.

Turkish-American youth: A student born to at least one Turkish parent and is currently living in United States.
College Choice model: Refers to the comprehensive, complex, multi-stage process in which students realize their aspirations for college education through the several stages (predisposition, search, and choice) until reaching college enrollment.

Predisposition stage of the college choice model: A student’s decision or aspiration to continue his/her formal education after high school (Hossler & Stage, 1992, p. 427).
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

Research in education which focuses on different groups of US students has expanded beyond comparisons between African-American and white students to the issues which impact students from numerous backgrounds, reflecting the increasing diversity of the US (e.g., Seller & Weis, 1997; Beck, 1997; Suarez-Orozco, 1997; Pessar, 1997; Bankston III, 1997; Laguerre, 1997; Gonzales, Dumka, Mauricio & German, 2007; Deaux, Bikmen, Gilkes, Ventuneac, Joseph, Payne, & Steele, 2007; Nguyen & Stritikus, 2009). A key focus of this literature has been the educational aspirations students hold. Since educational aspirations are regarded as indicators of students’ plans for future attainment (Sewell, 1969), these aspirations have received a great deal of attention from researchers dating back to 1960’s. In the 1970s, for example, there were 700 published articles on the educational aspirations of different populations living in the United States (Williams, 1972).

In addition, it has been emphasized that the economic status of the US relies heavily on a high level of educational attainment of its citizenry. The educational performance of new generations will shape their own and their nation’s future. The diverse demographic pattern of the US indicates an increasing need to address diversity in K-12 schools and beyond. This need makes it necessary to prepare students from diverse backgrounds for post-secondary educational options that meet both personal and national expectations and goals (Mau, 1995; Wahl & Blackhurst, 2000). Regarding the needs of the global market and the nation’s demographic status, educational aspirations of students of various backgrounds is an important topic and has received closer investigation.

It is noteworthy that while expectations and aspirations reflect different concept, in much of the literature expectations and aspirations are used interchangeably. Therefore, the summary
of earlier research will inevitably reflect this trend. However, expectations refer to what students think will happen in the future, while aspirations refer to what students would like, hope, or want to happen in the future for their education. Research on educational aspirations focuses on exploring the relationship between educational aspirations and factors such as gender, race, ethnicity, immigration status, parental education, socioeconomic status, social class and different cultural settings, and academic achievement (Ojeda & Flores, 2008; Osler, 1999; Sewell & Shah, 1968; Reisman & Banuelos, 1984; Solorzano, 1992; Kao & Tienda, 1998; Seginer & Vermulst, 2002; Mau, 1995).

Immigration Status of the Students

Studies have shown that students’ immigrant status affects their aspirations and achievement. Some studies noted difference in academic motivation between voluntary and involuntary migrants. Voluntary migrant Asians and Hispanics were found to have greater motivation for higher studies than involuntary immigrants. Involuntary immigrants, such as native-born Blacks, American Indians, Mexican-Americans in the Southwest, native Hawaiians and Puerto Ricans were found to be less motivated to pursue post-secondary education (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Gibson & Ogbu, 1991).

Studies found that immigrants have consistently higher aspirations for college education than native-born students (Kao & Tienda, 1995; Fuligni, 1997). Similarly, in comparison with native and foreign-born Asian students, Qian and Blair (1999) found that foreign-born Asian students have higher educational aspirations. Conway (2010), who studied the differences between educational aspirations of immigrant and native student groups in an urban community college setting in the US, found that both foreign high schooled and US high schooled immigrant students have higher educational aspirations than nonimmigrant students.
In their longitudinal study of a nationally representative sample of students Liu, Thai and Fan (2009) focused on immigrant status in different racial / ethnic groups. They found that immigrant students are more likely to obtain a baccalaureate degree or above than non-immigrant students.

Consistent with Qian and Blair (1999)’s study Liu, Thai and Fan (2009) also pointed out the difference in likelihood of earning a college degree between immigrant and non-immigrant Asian students. In comparison with white or black nonimmigrant students, Asian nonimmigrants students are found to have lower probability of obtaining a college degree. Even though Asians are labeled often as a “model minority” this perception is described to be an outcome solely of immigrant status rather than cultural attributes (Liu, Thai & Fan, 2009). On the other hand, other researchers noted the importance of cultural attributes on students ‘educational outcomes. In fact, high educational aspirations of Asian students with greater likelihoods of graduating from high school and pursuing their education beyond are found to be due to their cultural characteristics (Escueta & O’Brien, 1991; Teranishi et al, 2004). Researchers suggested that effects of generational status on educational outcomes may differ for different ethnic groups.

Furthermore, some researchers focus on generational status of immigrant students in terms of college choices and academic achievement. They argued that generational status affects the educational performance of the students. Glick & White (2003) studied the effects of generation and duration of residence on immigrant students’ academic performance and found that even though generational status predicts performance on standardized tests at the sophomore year it has a reduced effect for students’ academic performance. They suggested that rather than generational status or nativity; ethnicity and socioeconomic status which reflect the social environment are the best predictors for the achievement of immigrant students. Similarly, some
studies focused on cultural influence on aspirations and educational outcomes (Rumbaut & Ima, 1988; Ramos & Sanchez, 1995; Flores & O’Brien, 2002). However, mixed findings have been reported on effects of acculturation. Less acculturated Mexican American high school students indicated lower aspirations for college than more acculturated Mexican American students (Ramos & Sanchez, 1995). Whereas, more acculturated Mexican girls were more likely to follow less prestigious careers than less acculturated Mexican girls (Flores & O’Brien, 2002).

Rumbaut and Ima (1988) reported that Southeast Asian (from Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia) parents, who are less acculturated, strongly maintain their ethnic pride and cultural identity have children who perform better than those more acculturated parents.

In their quantitative research, Kao and Tienda (1995) studied the effect of generational status (immigration status) on grades, achievement test scores and college aspirations which are interpreted as indicators of educational achievement of a student. The study focused on generational status of eighth grade students who were classified into first generation, second generation and native students. Students were defined as first generation if students and their mothers were born outside of the US and as second generation if students were born in the US but their mothers were foreign-born, and all other students were defined as natives.

The study found that first and second generation Asians had higher aspirations than third generation Asians. Similarly, first and second generation Hispanic students tended to have greater aspirations for college than native Hispanic students. In consequence, the educational performance of immigrant and second generation immigrant students was better than that of native-born students. Kao and Tienda reported that second generation immigrant students were more likely to achieve scholastically due to proficiency in the English language and optimistic immigrant parents who promote academic achievement (Kao & Tienda, 1995).
Immigrant parents’ aspirations and optimism are believed to influence educational outcomes of their children. A study of immigrant students from diverse backgrounds revealed that students of foreign born parents consistently reported higher parental educational aspirations than students of parents who were native born (Fuligni, 1997). Similarly, Kao and Tienda (1995) found that parents’ immigrant status was an important influential factor in development of educational aspirations of immigrant youth. Moreover, Fuligni & Fuligni (2007) found that this generational difference within each ethnic group cannot be linked to differences in socioeconomic status, because for each level of education immigrant parents had significantly higher educational aspirations than American-born parents.

Furthermore, in their study of postsecondary decisions of students Hagy and Staniec (2002) found that first generation immigrant high school graduates are more likely than native-born students to enroll in all institution types except four year private colleges. They noted that even though this “immigrant effect” becomes less visible for second generation immigrants, for Asian second generation students, it is still present as their enrolment in two-year colleges are higher than native students. However, successive generations of Asians did not show any difference in college enrollment than native white students.

Similarly, St- Hilaire, (2002) reported first generation Mexican American students have higher educational aspirations than second generation Mexican American students. On the other hand Zhou (2001) reported completion of higher levels of education by second generation Mexican American students than first generation Mexican students which was consistent with Kao and Tienda(1995) findings about optimism of immigrant parents on students’ educational performance and advantages of higher level of English skills enjoyed by second generation immigrant youth’.
In conclusion, the literature on the effect of immigration status (generation level) on educational outcomes reported mixed findings. Researchers suggested that effects of generational status on educational outcomes may differ for different ethnic groups, although most research found that immigrant students have higher educational aspirations and outcomes than native students. Nationally representative studies have reported that first and second generation students have advantages in terms of aspirations and educational outcomes over the third generation, known as native students. However, even though there are mixed findings about whether the differences in educational outcomes are due to socioeconomic status, cultural differences and practices, or immigration status, it is crucial to understand how each ethnic group conveys its culture on students’ aspirations and educational outcomes.

**Academic Achievement**

Academic achievement can be defined in a variety of ways. Some studies include grade point average; others measure math, reading and science proficiency; and still others use standardized test scores such as the SAT. Research on educational aspirations showed that educational aspirations and academic achievement are highly positively correlated. Sewell and Hauser (1980) studied high school students in Wisconsin regarding their educational aspirations after high school. They found that educational aspirations are linked to educational attainment and achievement. Similarly, academic achievement measured by standardized tests scores or school performance is found to be correlated with higher educational aspirations (Qian & Blair, 1999; Hauser & Anderson, 1991).

In a study with a nationally representative sample, academic proficiency was found to be one of the more significant predictors for both educational and occupational aspirations (Mau & Bikos, 2000). A few studies noted aspirations influence academic achievement (Fuligni, 1997;
Fuligni, Tseng & Lam, 1999, Buriel & Cardoza, 1988), while others found that academic achievement influenced educational and occupational aspirations (Mau, 1995; Kao & Tienda, 1998, Mau & Bikos, 2000).

In an analysis of a nationally representative sample of students, it was found that academic performance and coursework have influences on college application and enrollment. In fact, differences between Asian-American and Latino students in terms of postsecondary school plans were related to their academic performance in high school (Berkner, Chavez, & Carrol, 1998). Students from different racial/ethnic groups also vary in SAT scores and National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) math tests (Kao & Thompson, 2003). Miller (1995) reported that Asian students have higher achievement levels than whites and Mexican-Americans, who have higher achievement than African-Americans. These differences in academic achievement tend to affect the students of different racial background who have lower educational expectations.

Studies showed that immigrant students attain GPAs equal to or better than their American-born peers during their secondary school years (Fuligni, 1997; Kao & Tienda, 1995). Immigrant students performed better on standardized tests of mathematics but not on reading and English, even though their grades in these subjects were equal to American-born students (Escueta & O’Brien, 1991; Fuligni, 1998). Moreover, immigrant students generally follow a more rigorous academic path and take more challenging courses in math and science (Kao & Tienda, 1998). These results may not be surprising, as some immigrant students revealed that they would feel guilty if they did not try hard in school, keeping in mind their parents’ hard work and sacrifice to enable them to study in the US (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 1995). Bankston and Zhou (1995) found that immigrant students who are proficient in their ethnic
language also have an advantage academically. Ethnic language ability enables students to connect with their culture and traditions, which contributes to academic achievement.

On the other hand, other researchers have noted on lower academic performance by immigrant students and focused on the importance of ethnicity. White & Glick (2009) argued that immigrant students may have lower academic performance than non-Hispanic white native students due to ethnicity which leads to less positive trajectories. They also suggested that importance of generation status is less influential in explaining immigrant students’ educational performance.

Other factors also affect the academic achievement of immigrant students. Even though they may value education and have high aspirations, economic disadvantages lead Mexican immigrants to drop out from school to help their families financially. Their dropout rate was more than twice that of their American-born peers (Gonzales, Dumka, Mauricio, & German, 2007). It is also noteworthy to mention studies which show a decline in motivation, grades and academic engagement of the students. Even though immigrant students have greater engagement in school, the longer they attended American schools the worse they did academically (Orozco, Orozco & Todorova, 2008; Fredricks, Blumenfeld & Paris, 2004).

**Parental Influence**

Many studies have shown that factors related to family and parents are important for students’ educational outcomes. The bulk of these studies focused on differences in parental and familial factors for immigrant students’ educational aspirations and performance. The literature shows that parental education, parental expectations, optimism, family obligations, and the perceived value of education have a substantial influence on immigrant students’ achievement and aspirations.
Parental education has been found to be an important factor in students’ educational aspirations. According to a National Center for Education Statistics report (2001) as early as the eighth grade, the expectation of finishing college was directly related to family income and parental levels of education. Students whose parents did not go to college tend to report lower educational expectations than their peers (NCES, 2001). Consistently, Sewell and Shah (1968) found that high levels of both parents’ educational achievement influence high levels of educational aspiration and achievement of the children. As Fuligni and Fuligni (2007) pointed out, immigrant parents’ parental education differs depending on their country of origin. Parents from Asian countries tend to have higher levels of education than both American-born parents and parents from Latin American countries. Similarly, immigrant parents from Asian countries such as China and India tend to have higher educational aspirations than those from countries such as Mexico and El Salvador. These differences influence the educational beliefs, aspirations and outcomes of the immigrant students (Fuligni & Fuligni, 2007). On the other hand, regardless of their ethnic or socioeconomic backgrounds, immigrant parents tend to emphasize academic success and achievement (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001).

Research also reported that parental educational expectations affect their children’s educational aspirations. Hossler and Stage (1992) found a strong positive relationship between parents’ expectations and students’ aspirations. According to the NCES report (2008), parents’ expectations for their children’s academic attainment have a moderate to strong influence on students’ plans and goals for post-secondary education. Many studies also showed that students’ educational aspirations were positively correlated by parental expectations (Mau, 1995; Mau & Bikos, 2000; Shepard, 1992; Smith, 1991; Wilson & Wilson, 1992). Parental education, income
and occupation were also found to have positive influence on parents’ and children’s expectations and indirect effects on students’ achievement (Hao & Bonstead-Bruns, 1998).

Parents’ educational expectations also hold an important place in immigrant students’ experiences in the US. It is believed that in comparison with native parents, the higher educational expectations and optimism of immigrant parents lead to greater educational achievement for their children such as attending college and graduate school (Fuligni, 1997; Kao & Tienda, 1995). Therefore, it is concluded that parents’ immigrant status is influential for immigrant students’ educational performance and aspirations. Seventy percent of the immigrant parents from Central America, China, Dominican Republic, Haiti and Mexico said that they came to the United States for better opportunities for their family, and 18% emphasized that their main motivation was to provide better education for their children. Consistently, a majority of the immigrant students considered education to be crucial for their success, and 81% of them were planning to go to college after high school (Suarez-Orozco, Suarez-Orozco & Todorova, 2008).

Immigrant parents valued the importance of education and they are willing to sacrifice for their children’s educational goals (Portes & Hao, 2004). Immigrant parents believe education is the best way to reach success in US society (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001a) so receiving good grades; completing high school and attending college were emphasized by foreign born parents (Fuligni & Fuligni, 2007; Caplan, Choy, & Whitmore, 1991; Gibson & Bhachu, 1991; Waters, 1999). Therefore, it is not surprising to conclude that because of social mobility, education has great necessity among immigrant students thus immigrant parents have higher educational expectations for them (Taylor & Krahn, 2005). Moreover, it is found that immigrant parents who felt less secure about their status in the US give more attention to their
children’s academic success and value education so that their children will have more secure and higher status than they did (Fuligni, 1998; Fuligni& Yoshikawa, 2004). In addition, research showed that some immigrant parents compared US educational opportunities with those in their home countries to motivate children to overcome the challenges that they might experience in United States (Gibson & Bhachu, 1991). Finally, Kao and Tienda (1998) found that having immigrant parents resulted in almost ten times the effect on income and three times the effect on the odds of obtaining a college education. Even though having foreign-born parents was found to be an advantage for the educational outcomes, however, it should be noted that economic resources, linguistic ability and lack of information about secondary and post-secondary educational systems may restrict parents’ ability to help their children to reach their educational aspirations (Fuligni & Fuligni, 2007).

Research also focused on how immigrant parents convert their educational expectations into their children’s academic achievements and aspirations. It was noted that unless parental educational expectations were communicated to their children, they would have little effect on students’ educational performance (Chen & Lan, 2006). The ways parents communicate their educational expectations to their children and how children perceive these expectations are influenced by their respective cultures. It is suggested that educators should be aware of diverse cultural factors in this process. Ceja (2004) focused on what Mexican parents said and did to influence their children’s educational aspirations and how children perceived and understood their parents’ effort. It was found that first generation college-going Mexican students developed educational resiliency through their parents’ lived experiences. Parents’ lived experiences and circumstances lead students to have a crucial perspective on the meaning of their lives and the opportunities they have. It was suggested that students believe they can be invulnerable to the
same factors that shaped their parents’ experiences. Actually, these experiences became a source of motivation for students to aspire for a college education, since a college education would enable them to reach a better economic and social status in society (Ceja, 2004).

American, Chinese-American, and Chinese high school students were compared in terms of willingness to conform to perceived parents’ expectations of academic achievement and it was found that Chinese students were more willing to accept their parents’ advice and academic expectations than American students (Chen & Lan, 2006).

Research also focused on whether the father’s or the mother’s educational expectations influence children more. It was found that the mother’s aspirations were higher than the father’s, and the mother’s aspirations had significantly more influence on the children than the father’s did (Meng, 2009). On the other hand, since mothers’ high aspirations were least sensitive to children’s ability scores, their aspirations can be explained as the optimism of mothers who subscribe to the “caregiving” role for their children.

Studies have shown that family obligations are another source of academic motivation for immigrant students (Gibson & Bhachu, 1991; Fuligni, 1998, Suarez-Orozco, 1991). Immigrant students, especially those from Asian and Latin American countries, are more likely than native students to feel responsible for supporting and assisting their families financially (Fuligni & Pendersen, 2002). Immigrant parents who lack English proficiency and knowledge about United States institutions rely on their children for daily assistance and support. Children who have a strong sense of obligation to support their family want to achieve academically in order to obtain a good job so that supporting their family will be much easier in the future (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 1991; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 1995; Fuligni & Tseng, 1999).
According to Fuligni and Fuligni (2007) students from immigrant families are well aware of their parents’ sacrifice and hardship to come to the United States for better opportunities and they strive to repay their parents. In combination with traditional expectations from children to assist their family, this awareness and desire boosts students’ academic motivations and efforts. However, family obligations may potentially interfere with students’ educational goals and their ability to continue on to post-secondary education (Fuligni & Fuligni, 2007).

**Socioeconomic Status**

Research showed that socioeconomic status (SES) has an important role on educational aspirations and academic achievement of students across racial, ethnic and immigrant groups (Reisman & Banuelos, 1984; Solorzano, 1992, Valadez, 1998, Kao & Thompson, 2003). Research suggested that family resources are important factors to overcome structural barriers for educational attainment (White & Glick, 2009). It was also found that students from higher income families have higher educational aspirations (Kao & Tienda, 1998, Wilson & Wilson, 1992, Buchmann & Dalton, 2002). Kao and Tienda (1998) noted that SES not only influenced aspirations in eighth grade, but continued to do so throughout the high school years. Even though high school academic achievement was controlled, students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds were found less likely to obtain post-secondary education (White & Glick, 2009). Moreover, McDonough (1997) suggested that low SES students whose parents did not attend college began to think about going to college much later than students whose parents had gone to college.

In a recent study, Strayhorn (2009) investigated the educational aspirations of African-American males in high school. Consistent with the above-mentioned studies on SES, Strayhorn (2009) found that SES has significant effects on educational aspirations. African-American
males from high SES families tend to have higher educational aspirations than their lower and low-SES counterparts. White and Glick (2009) noted that regardless of immigration status—whether immigrant or native—students with higher socioeconomic status tend to pursue higher education.

Highly educated immigrant parents have higher income levels and better socioeconomic status than parents with less education. In general, immigrant parents from Asian countries have higher levels of income than parents from Latin American countries (Hernandez, 2004). It should be noted, however, that immigrant parents with high levels of education do not always work in jobs at the level of their education. Due to problems with transferring their credentials to the United States, immigrant parents may work at jobs that require lower levels of education (Waldinger, 2001). Therefore, educational values, resources and environments of immigrant students should not be estimated only by socioeconomic status (Fuligni & Fuligni, 2007). When studying how social class influenced parents’ expectations, strategies and investments in children’s education, Louie (2001) found that Chinese immigrant parents from different social classes (working and middle classes) followed different strategies for their children’s post-secondary education even if they had common high aspirations for their students.

**Peer Influence**

Peer influence has been found important for students’ post-secondary education plans (Davies & Kandel, 1981; Falsey & Heyns, 1984; Jackson, 1986; Hossler & Stage, 1987). Although Russell (1980) found that peers’ aspirations were the most influential factor for students’ educational plans, Davies and Kandel (1981) found parental influence to be stronger than peer influence.
It has been suggested that immigrant students maintain their strong motivation to continue their education through their peers. Immigrant students are more likely to be friends with students who have similar backgrounds, and they encourage and support their peers’ academic achievements and aspirations (Fuligni, 1997). However, Hossler and Stage (1992) concluded that peer support and encouragement were not strongly associated with educational aspirations.

**Ethnicity**

Most of the studies focused on students of various racial and cultural backgrounds to understand differences in educational aspirations and academic achievements. It is found that educational aspirations differ based on ethnicity. Kao and Tienda (1998) found that educational aspirations differed across ethnicities, with Native American and Hispanic students having the lowest educational aspirations among eighth, 10th, and 12th graders. Research on ethnicity showed mixed results in terms of educational aspirations. Although studies showed that white students have higher educational aspirations than their African-American peers, when parental education and income were controlled no differences were found between white and African-American students’ educational aspirations (Cosby, 1971). In his longitudinal study of eighth, 10th and 12th graders’ educational aspirations, Farmer (2001) also found that when gender, socioeconomic status, locus of control, parental college aspirations, and academic achievement were controlled, African-American youths’ level of educational aspirations met or exceeded those of their white counterparts. However, in their longitudinal study, Kao and Tienda (1998) noted that while all students’ educational aspirations declined from eighth grade to tenth grade, African-American males’ aspirations declined more substantially than that of the other students.
Moreover, another study found that academic achievement in math and science has larger
effect on African American male students’ aspirations (Strayhorn, 2009). It is suggested that
African American students’ experiences of acculturation is influential on their educational
performance (Kao & Tienda, 1995). Consistently, Freeman (1997) complains of a lack of
adequate considerations of African American heritage and culture while attempting to increase
academic motivation and aspirations of African American students. However, Cooper (2009)
found that college aspirations of Hispanic male students decreased more than those of African-
American male students between 10th and 12th grade (43% vs. 34%, respectively) and Hispanic
female students’ college aspirations decreased more than those of female students from other
ethnic groups.

Research also suggested that when SES was controlled Asian students have higher
educational aspirations than white students (Caplan, Choy & Whitmore, 1992). Other studies
have shown that Asian Americans have higher educational aspirations and Hispanic students
have lower educational aspirations (George, 1990; Kao & Tienda, 1998; Mau, 1995; Mau &
Hispanics are primarily affected by parental immigration status thus Asian high achievers have
immigrant parents. On the other hand, as noted earlier, second and higher generation Asians do
not out-perform white non-Hispanic students. As mentioned earlier, some researchers found
ethnicity rather than immigrant status influence the educational performance of the immigrant
students (White & Glick, 2009).

Hao and Bornstead-Bruns (1998) studied the gap between Asian and Mexican students’
educational attainments by focusing on parent—child relationship, ethnic differences and
educational expectations. They found that lower levels of parent child relationship among
Mexicans leads to lower educational expectations of parents and children than among their Asian counterparts. In comparison with the Asian immigrant community, the Mexican immigrant community assigns a lower value to education, has weaker ethnic solidarity and economy, and limited acceptance by the local economy, all of which negatively influence immigrant Mexican students’ educational performance. Similarly, financial pressures, lack of language proficiency, institutional racism, lack of role models and poverty have been noted as factors lowering educational and vocational aspirations of Mexican students (Mau & Bikos, 2000). However, for Asian families view the educational success of their children with pride and as a path for social mobility when other areas are not available (Sue & Sue, 1990).

**Gender**

Studies reported mixed findings about the influence of gender on educational aspirations. Some researchers found that male students had significantly higher aspirations than female students (Herzog, 1982; Marjoribanks, 1984; Wilson & Wilson, 1992), while others noted that female secondary school students had higher educational and occupational aspirations than male students (Hao & Bonstead-Bruns, 1998; Mau & Bikos, 2000; Cooper, 2009). More recent studies have reported higher aspirations of female students, consistent with trends in college enrollment that indicate more motivation for female than male students. From 1990-2000, the percentage of male full-time students increased by 17% compared to a 57% increase for full-time women students (Glazer-Raymo, 2003). Moreover, according to the National Center for Education Statistics’ Mini Digest of Education Statistics, since 1984 women’s enrollment in graduate schools has exceeded that of men. One possible explanation for higher female aspirations may be related to better communication and observation of female role models (Mau & Bikos, 2000).
**Language Proficiency**

One of the important factors in immigrant students’ educational aspirations is language ability. Hao and Bornstead-Bruns (1998) found that the higher English proficiency of immigrant students yielded higher educational expectations from themselves. On the other hand, students’ language ability did not influence parental expectations.

Another important finding is that having a mother tongue other than English has a positive effect on the educational aspirations of immigrant students. Therefore, bilingualism does not negatively affect students’ achievement (Liu, Thai & Fan, 2009).

**International Studies**

Studies from international context reveal interesting findings on educational aspirations. Buchmann and Dalton (2002) compared the systematic differences among 12 countries for influences of parents and peers on educational aspirations in relation to their institutional context. The countries studied were the United States, Spain, Norway, Hong Kong, Korea, Thailand, Greece, Hungary, France, Switzerland, Germany, and Austria. It was concluded that strong influence of parents and peers on educational aspirations in United States is applicable to other countries with similar educational system. Thus, influence of peers’ and parents’ on educational aspirations was not observed in countries such as Germany, Switzerland and Austria which have very different educational systems. In addition, higher socioeconomic status is found influential in high educational aspirations for all countries except Norway. It was also found that while female students in Unites States reported significantly higher educational aspirations than males this was not the case for countries such as Germany, Austria and Norway, where aspirations did not differ significantly. Moreover, in Switzerland female students indicated lower educational aspirations than male students.
In their study of Australian students, Dandy & Nettelbeck (2002) found that Chinese and Vietnamese Australian children’s math achievements were higher than those of Anglo-Celtic Australian students, and in terms of educational aspirations more Vietnamese and Chinese students indicated they would attend university than Anglo-Celtic students did. Dyson (2005) compared Chinese immigrant students with non-immigrant Caucasian students in Canada regarding their values, aspirations and social experiences. That study found that immigrant students tended to choose more professional careers than did non-immigrant students, and that immigrant students experienced discrimination as a result of race and language differences.

Meng (2009) studied educational aspirations by focusing on whose aspirations are more influential within the household and how in rural Gansu in China. It is found that children’s aspirations were shaped by their ability rather than their parents’ aspirations. Parents had lower aspirations for their girls, but aspirations of girls did not differ significantly than boys’. Another important finding was that children, especially boys, developed higher aspirations as they grew older. This finding is in contrast with studies in OECD countries, which show systematic declines in aspirations as children age and recognize barriers.

**Turkish Immigrants**

There are a limited number of studies in the literature about Turkish immigrant students’ educational performance and aspirations. Existing studies from different countries that Turkish people have immigrated to show discouraging findings regarding children’s educational aspirations. Most of the immigrants from Turkey to Europe in the twentieth century were from rural areas and villages that did not obtain schooling above the elementary level. In addition to a lack of host country language proficiency, low levels of parental education and insufficient knowledge about the host country’s educational system were barriers for Turkish children’s
educational performance. These disadvantages were particularly pronounced in Germany, where Turkish people immigrated as laborers starting in the 1960s.

It is possible to trace Turkish immigrant students’ performance through studies which focused on the educational performance of second generation immigrants in Germany. Kristen & Granato (2007) reported that second generation Turkish and Italian immigrants faced disadvantages in comparison to German peers in the abitur process, which is the way to a college education in Germany. They suggested that this difference is a matter of social background rather than ethnic inequalities and discrimination. Moreover, unlike German students, higher parental education did not yield higher educational attainments for the immigrant children. In fact, the authors found negatively significant relationship between parental education and educational attainments of Turkish immigrant students. Even though the difference between German and Turkish school system, the ethnically segregated environment of Turkish immigrants, and the discrimination against Turkish immigrants were listed as a possible explanation of lower educational attainment among Turkish youth, these factors need further investigation to better understand and depict Turkish youth’s educational experiences in Germany. It was suggested that the lower educational qualifications of Turkish parents compared to their German counterparts influenced their children’s lower educational attainments. Due to the parents’ educational backgrounds and other factors, Kristen & Granato (2007) assumed that the educational attainment of Turkish immigrants in Germany could not improve easily, and would only happen over several generations.

Turkish immigrant youths’ educational performance was also sub-par in the United Kingdom, where it was reported that Turkish immigrant children were among the lowest achievers (Swann Report, 1985). Lack of English proficiency was noted as a primary
educational barrier among Turkish and Turkish-descended (Turkish Kurdish and Turkish Cypriot) immigrant children in London (Issa, Allen & Ross, 2008). Language barriers for parents and children, parents’ low educational levels and lack of understanding of the UK education system, and teachers’ low expectations for Turkish immigrant students all impacted the educational attainment and performance of Turkish youth in United Kingdom (Issa, Allen & Ross, 2008).

One study of Turkish immigrant youths focused on the culture and identity of second generation Turkish-Australian youths (Dinc, 2010). It is reasonable to assume that, due to moderate support of multiculturalism in Australia (Ho, 1990), Turkish Australian youths’ negative experiences such as discrimination and isolation, would be lower than those in any other European country (Dinc, 2010). Similarly, it can be assumed that Turkish youths’ experience would be more positive in the United States than those in Europe since the United States has “refined and redefined as having more inclusive culture” (Rong & Preissle, 2009). Since there is only limited research about Turkish immigrants’ educational experiences in the world, it would be helpful to understand the educational aspirations and experiences in the United States.

**Theoretical Perspectives on Aspirations**

Existing research indicated a variety of theoretical frameworks for studying aspirations. Studies from various disciplines focused on aspirations have been based on different theoretical approaches. The literature shows that educational aspirations are studied along with occupational/career aspirations by the researchers from the counseling area (Wahl & Blackhurst, 2000; Ma & Yeh, 2010; Kenny, Blustein, Chaves, Grossman, & Gallagher, 2003; Mau & Bikos, 2000). The Status Attainment model (Blau & Duncan, 1967; Sewell, Haller, &Portes, 1969),
College Choice Model (Hossler& Gallagher, 1987), predisposition of College choice model (Hossler& Stage, 1992) Developmental-contextual model of career development (Vondracek, Lerner & Schulenberg, 1986), and Social Cognitive Career Theory, SCCT (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994, 2000) are some of the widely used theories in the literature of educational and occupational aspirations.

Moreover, along with individual application of theoretical frameworks for their studies, researchers also combined or extended the theories to better address the process of educational and occupational aspirations (Mau& Bikos, 2000; Ojeda& Flores, 2008). Mau and Bikos (2000) selected variables in combination of both SCCT and Status Attainment Model for investigating educational and vocational aspirations of minority and female students. Ojeda& Flores (2008) used Social Cognitive Career Theory for studying the educational aspirations of Mexican American high school students.

Social cognitive career theory (SCCT) emerged from Bandura’s social cognitive theory of learning (1986, 1997). It focuses on how an individual’s self-efficacy beliefs about occupations determine his/her career interests. According to SCCT, personal variables such as gender, ethnicity, self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and goals, along with background contextual variables such as social cultural supports, and barriers affect learning experiences and shape the trajectory of career development. Through SCCT, it is possible to study how a person’s interests, decision-making and achievements along with personal and environmental variables influence different levels of aspirations (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994). It is argued that most of the existing research used SCCT focused on only cognitive–person variables in career development by omitting the contextual factors such as social and cultural which may also affect personal variables (Lent et al., 2000). SCCT is applied by researchers beyond career and
vocational development. Ojeda and Flores (2008) extended SCCT to the educational goals and studied the educational aspirations through personal and contextual variables.

The Developmental Contextual Model of Career Development (Vondracek, Lerner & Schulenberg, 1986) is another noteworthy theory in aspirations. This model assumes that individuals and context change interdependently over time, and that this dynamic interaction should be studied for a comprehensive understanding of career development. According to this model, individuals live in multiple social contexts, and each context may have risks and protective factors affecting students’ career aspirations. Physical environment, culture, racial and ethnic group, family, neighborhood, and school are all contexts that affect construction of individuals’ career choices (Brown, 2002).

The Developmental Contextual Model of Career Development (Vondracek, Lerner & Schulenberg, 1986) is suggested by (Kenny, Blustein, Chaves, Grossman, & Gallagher, 2003) as a framework for studying educational and career plans of students. It was found that higher levels of school engagement and aspirations were related to experiencing of fewer barriers (risk factors) and more support from family (protective factors) (Kenny et al., 2003). Ma and Yeh (2010) also used The Developmental Contextual Model of Career Development for studying educational aspirations.

The Status Attainment model (Blau & Duncan, 1967; Sewell et al., 1969) is used by many researchers especially for career development research (Mau & Bikos, 2000; Trusty & Niles, 2004). As a concept in sociology, this theory focuses on individual’s position in society, and educational and occupational attainments are regarded as the outcomes of this model. According to this model family and cognitive variables influence social psychological processes and consequently influence educational and occupational attainment. Factors influencing
aspirations for college are the focus of this model. It has been suggested that family variables such as parents’ occupation, education and income, along with children’s academic ability and achievement, influence educational outcomes through their effects on parental and peer influences and on shaping educational aspirations (Marshall, 1998).

Another theoretical framework that is widely used by researchers is the College Choice Model (Hossler & Gallagher, 1987). This theoretical model comprises three stages: predisposition, search and choice. These stages involve developing college aspirations (predisposition), gathering information and compiling a “preferred list” of colleges (search), and finally determining the actual college of attendance (choice).

Hossler and Stage (1992) developed a model of the predisposition stage of the college choice process based on Status Attainment Theory (Blau & Duncan, 1967; Sewell et al., 1969). This model was developed based on related college choice literature to form an integrated theoretical model for the predisposition stage (Hossler & Stage, 1992). Many researchers used Hossler & Stages (1992)’s predisposition stage for College Choice Model to understand the aspirations for college.

The predisposition stage encompasses the period of time when students decide whether to continue their education after high school. According to the Hossler-Stage model, socioeconomic variables, demographic characteristics, parental and peer expectations and encouragement, high school experiences, and student ability influence the students’ predisposition stage, which corresponds with students’ college aspirations (Hossler & Stage, 1992).
Hossler and Stage (1992) studied the effect of the father’s and mother’s education, family income, ethnicity, gender, parents’ expectation, student activities, and grade point average (GPA) on student’s aspirations. They found that parents’ expectations had the strongest relationship to students’ educational aspirations. Parents’ combined educational levels significantly influenced parents’ expectations as well as the student’s GPA, activities, and aspirations. They also found a positive significant relationship between school activities, grades, and students’ aspirations. Females were found to have higher GPAs, be more active in school activities, and have higher educational aspirations than males. However, family income did not significant affect aspirations for either gender.

The theoretical framework of this study is based mainly on the predisposition stage of the College Choice Model (Hossler & Stage, 1992). In fact, it was suggested that the College Choice Model needs to be tested for ethnic group students (Hossler & Stage, 1992). Based on the literature’s point about the necessity of studying educational aspirations of underrepresented
immigrant students, the predisposition stage of the College Choice Model is an appropriate framework for the current study. The College Choice Model (Hossler & Stage, 1992) is a well-accepted and cited theoretical model framework for the college aspirations. Demographic characteristics, parents’ expectations, parents’ education, family income, gender, and achievement are the key variables for this model, and it is important to look at all of those variables to understand their influence on Turkish immigrant youths’ educational aspirations.

Additionally, the Developmental Contextual Model (Vondracek, Lerner & Schulenberg, 1986), which proposes studying interactions between individuals and their social contexts for educational and career development, is useful for studying Turkish-American students’ aspirations. The model includes variables such as family, background characteristics, achievement, school engagement, parents’ expectations, and perceived barriers, and is also used by researchers for studying educational aspirations (Kenny et al., 2003; Ma & Yeh, 2010). It was found that fewer perceived barriers were associated with higher levels of school engagement and aspirations.

According to Isik- Ercan, (2010) Turkish immigrant students live in a third space in home which gives them opportunity to transcend the boundaries of Turkish and American cultural and educational contexts. Therefore, it is beneficial to explore if Turkish immigrant students who experience multiple social contexts, face and feel any barriers for their future plans. Consequently, in addition to factors in the predisposition stage of the College Choice Model, school engagement of developmental contextual model was included in the theoretical framework of the current study and perceived barriers by Turkish American students were explored.
Ma and Yeh (2005) stated that existing theories were developed for the white middle class and may not be applicable to Chinese immigrants. In a similar vein, Leong and Hardin (2002) suggested that researchers examine the cross-cultural validity of models and theories and include variables to address each culture. Accordingly, English language fluency, first language (Turkish) fluency, and the preferred area of future study were included in the study to capture the unique experiences of Turkish-American youth. Therefore, to investigate educational aspirations of Turkish immigrant youth, the College Choice Model (Hossler & Stage, 1992) and the Developmental Contextual Model of Career Development (Vondracek, Lerner & Schulenberg, 1986) are appropriate frameworks for the current study.

![Diagram of Educational Aspirations of Turkish American Youth]

Figure 2.2 Framework for the Current Study Educational Aspirations of Turkish American Youth
CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to explore and understand the influence of family, school and individual factors on the educational aspirations of Turkish-American youths. Participants in this study are Turkish immigrant middle and high school students who live in United States.

Even though Turkish immigrants were the main focus of this study, other student groups were included in the study to better understand the position of Turkish immigrant students among other students. Therefore, students from other ethnic groups such as white, black, Hispanic and Asian students were included in the study.

This study used a mixed methods approach. Quantitative data was obtained through a survey, and qualitative data was collected through focus group interviews. Details of the research methodology are described in the following parts: 1) Research Questions, 2) Research Design, 3) Participants, 4) Instruments, 5) Data Collection Procedures, and 6) Data Analysis Plan.

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between educational aspirations and family, school experience and individual characteristics for Turkish and students of other ethnic groups?

2. Can educational aspirations of Turkish immigrant and other ethnic group students be predicted from family, school and individual factors?

3. Do Turkish American students differ in terms of educational aspirations in comparison to students from other ethnic groups?

4. Do female and male Turkish immigrant students differ in terms of educational aspirations?
5. Which areas of future study do Turkish American and other ethnic/racial group students prefer?

6. What kinds of barriers do Turkish immigrant students experience for their educational plans?

7. How do Turkish-American parents perceive their children’s educational experiences and how do they support their children?

8. How do factors related to family, school and culture shape educational plans of Turkish-American youth?

**Research Design**

A mixed-methods research approach (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998) was used in this study. Mixed-methods research uses both qualitative and quantitative methods in a single study to answer the research questions.

Quantitative research methods are useful for explaining the relationship between variables (Creswell, 2005). Prediction, maximizing objectivity, replicability, and generalizability of findings are listed as the typical interests of quantitative research methods (Harwell, 2011). The researcher is expected to disregard her experiences, perceptions and biases while conducting research to reach objectivity of the findings (Harwell, 2011). It is also emphasized that differences between groups, change over time, descriptions of populations and phenomena, and relationship between two or more variables are the issues that quantitative research methods are intended to examine (Hutchinson, 2012).

Qualitative research methods, on the other hand, are defined as studying things in their natural settings, and attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people attach to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3, as cited in Creswell, 2007). In
qualitative research, the researcher is defined as the key instrument for the data collection procedure. Data can be in multiple forms such as interviews, observations and documents, and data analysis indicates an inductive process where the researcher builds themes and patterns from the data. Since the focus of the research is on the meanings that participants have for the phenomena under investigation, data analysis depends on interpretation of the data by the researcher. The researcher follows a holistic perspective as she tries to develop a complex picture of the issue under study by reporting multiple perspectives, identifying many factors involved in a situation, and drawing a big picture to make sense of a complex system that cannot be explained by a few variables and linear relationships (Creswell, 2007; Johnson & Christensen, 2004).

In conclusion, quantitative research is not very useful for exploring new phenomena or participants’ internal perspectives and personal meanings while qualitative research is useful; and quantitative research is very useful for making generalizations about populations, while qualitative research has limitation for generalizations (Johnson & Christensen, 2004). Therefore, to overcome the weaknesses of both quantitative and qualitative research approaches, a mixed-methods approach was used. Triangulation, complementarity, development, initiation and expansion were listed as purposes for conducting mixed-method research (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989). In this study, the focus was on convergence, corroboration, correspondence of the results (triangulation) as well as elaboration, enhancement, clarification of the results (complementarity) from different methods.

The mixed-methods approach is defined as expansive, creative, inclusive, pluralistic and complementary form of research (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Thus, it is helpful for exploring the relationship between educational aspirations and other factors related to family,
school and individual and understanding perspectives of students and parents on educational experiences and development of Turkish immigrant youth.

The quantitative portion of this study is non-experimental survey research. In non-experimental research studies, it is not possible to manipulate the independent variables nor randomly assign research participants to the experimental and control groups; only what naturally occurs can be studied (Johnson & Christensen, 2004). Additionally, since this study examined Turkish immigrant high school and middle school students at one time, it is a cross-sectional study. Ideally, the study would have been longitudinal, but was ruled out due to time and resource restraints. The quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS statistical software. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were reported and qualitative data (open ended question in survey and interviews) was analyzed through coding. Interpretations then were grouped into emergent themes.

Participants

The population of interest of this study was Turkish immigrant high school and middle school students who live in the United States. However, for comparison purposes students from other ethnic backgrounds were also included in the study. Students were contacted both through schools that have a substantial Turkish immigrant student body and through Turkish cultural centers and associations. Administrators of schools, cultural centers, and associations were asked for assistance in contacting students from grades 6-12 in their school or community. Students were invited to participate in the survey via letter.

After the survey, Turkish-American students were selected based on their gender, generation level, and grade level and invited to participate in the interviews and focus group.
Parents of Turkish-American students were also invited to participate in interviews in order to better understand the parents’ perspective.

**Instruments**

Survey instruments were selected based on the research questions, relevant literature, the predisposition stage of the College Choice Model (Hossler & Stage, 1992) and the Development Contextual Model (Vondracek, Lerner & Schulenberg, 1986; Kenny et al., 2003). The dependent variable of the study is educational aspirations.

**Survey**

Educational aspirations: Participants responded to indicate how far in school he/ she would like to go ranging from less than high school (1) to doctoral/ professional degree (6).

Perceived parents’ expectations: Participants indicated their perceived parents’ educational expectations by answering the following questions: How far in school do your parents think you will go? Educational expectation of parents ranged from less than high school (1) to doctoral/professional degree (6).

Demographic questions: The survey included items that gathered information about the participants’ age, ethnicity, grade level, gender, generation level (place of birth of the students, parents’ and grandparents’), and time in the United States.

Parents’ education level: Participants were asked about their father’s and mother’s education level. Measurement values were identical to those of the educational aspiration question and ranged from less than high school to doctoral/ professional degree.

Family economic status: Economic status was assessed through both family income and eligibility for free or reduced lunch. Family income: Annual income of the family ranged from 20,000 or less to 75,000 or higher. Participants were also able to choose “I don’t know” if they...
were not aware of their family’s income. Eligibility for free/ reduced lunch: Participants responded to this question using yes or no. It was observed that eligibility for free/reduced lunch provided more information than the annual income question about students’ economic status as 140 students were not qualified for free/reduced lunch while 45 students were eligible. On the other hand, 79 students out of 185 (% 42.7) indicated “I don’t know” for their family income.

Academic achievement: Participants provided their current GPA on a scale from 1(below 2.0) to 6 (3.8- 4.0 or higher).

School activities: Adapted from Hossler & Stage (1992)’s high school activities, students indicated their activity level ranging from 1 (not active) to 4 (very active) in art, athletics, cultural events, debate or speech, drama, journalism, social/special clubs, music, student government. School activities were measured by total number of student’s choices.

School engagement: School engagement was measured by a School Engagement Questionnaire (Dornbusch & Steinberg, 1990). It assessed a student’s time spent on homework, attending class, concentrating in class, and paying attention to class work. The original scale included four items for each of three subjects (Math, English, and Social Studies) and 12 items in total. Responses were measure on a 7- point Likert scale to reflect student engagement. Higher ratings indicated higher engagement with school. Previous studies that used this scale reported higher internal consistency (reliability score) with .86 (Dornbusch & Steinberg, 1990; Taylor, Casten, Flickinger, Roberts, &Fulmore, 1994). The current study used four questions for Math and English only (8 item version of the scale). The previous studies with 8 item version of the scale (for Math and English) reported internal consistency (reliability score) with .74-.80(Perry, 2008; Kenny et al. 2003).
English language fluency: To understand students’ English ability, a Self-Reported English Language Fluency (Yeh & Inose, 2003) measurement was used. English language fluency was assessed through participant responses to the questions regarding current English level, comfort level communicating English, and frequency of communicating in English. This was measured using a five point Likert scale that ranged from 1 (very poor/ not at all comfortable/ never) to 5 (very good/ very comfortable/ always). Prior studies that used this scale reported reliability of .78 to .88 (Yeh & Inose, 2003; Ma & Yeh, 2010).

First language fluency: To assess immigrant students’ first language fluency, a first language fluency measure was developed. A composite score from three questions indicated first language fluency. The measurement of First language fluency is very similar to that of English Language Fluency. Questions regarding first language level, comfort level in communicating in first language and frequency of communicating in the first language were used. Items were measured on a five point Likert scale that ranged from 1 (very poor / not at all comfortable / never) to 5 (very good / very comfortable / always).

Perceived educational barriers: An open-ended question was asked understand the potential barriers to postsecondary education perceived by middle and high school students. The responses to this question provided a deeper understanding about students’ educational experiences.

Area of study: To understand Turkish American students’ preferred areas of study for future education, a survey item was included in the study. Students were able to choose from a variety of areas of study in Arts and Humanities; Biological Sciences; Business; Sciences and Technology; and Social Sciences. A list of disciplines in each area was provided to help students find their desired future area of study.
Interview Protocols

Student and parent interview protocols (Appendix B and Appendix C) were prepared based on the theoretical framework of the current study. Interview protocols reflected the Predisposition stage of the College Choice Model (Hossler & Stage, 1992) as well as factors related to Turkish culture. Questions were categorized into background characteristics, student predisposition and parents’ expectations, students’ academic experience factors, and factors related to Turkish Americans.

Data Collection Procedures

Prior to data collection, approval for the study was obtained through the Institutional Review Board of Louisiana State University. The researcher completed the “Protecting Human Research Participants” training course and received certification from The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research. Quantitative data was collected through a survey and qualitative data was collected through one open–ended question on the survey and through interviews with parents and students.

Survey

Upon approval of the research from the Institutional Review Board of Louisiana State University, school administrators from Texas schools with substantial numbers of Turkish students were contacted for their permission to conduct the study. Possible dates and times for the study were discussed, and the administrators and the researcher agreed upon conducting it during homeroom class periods for maximum efficiency. The researcher trained the homeroom teachers and other school personnel recommended by the school administration to facilitate the administration of the survey. All students from 6- 12th grades were invited to participate in the study by means of a letter to their parents. The letter explained the purpose and importance of the 
study, assured confidentiality, and gave the investigator’s contact information along with a
consent form to be signed by the parents or legal guardian to allow a child to participate in the
study. Students whose parents allowed them to participate with a signed consent form were
included in the study. Before conducting the survey, the survey administrator explained the
study and distributed an assent form to the students to be signed. The students were told that
their participation was voluntary, and if they wanted to stop at any time and not continue with the
study, they were free to do so with no penalty or repercussions of any kind. The survey
administrator homeroom teacher read the survey out loud while students filled out the survey.

To be able to reach other Turkish students in the United States, Turkish cultural centers in
Texas and other cities in the United States also were contacted by the researcher. The
administrators of the cultural centers and associations were asked for assistance in reaching 6th-
12th grade Turkish students. The researcher contacted administrators by phone to explain the
details of conducting the survey. She then emailed a letter to the cultural centers’ administrators
that explained the purpose and importance of the study, assured confidentiality, and gave the
investigator’s contact information along with a consent form to be signed by the parents or legal
guardian to allow a child to participate in the study. A child assent form also was e-mailed to the
administrators. Turkish cultural centers are very active in their programs, and students and
parents were easily accessed and invited to participate in the study by the administrators of the
centers. However, the number of responses returned was lower than expected, which may have
been due to the time of the school year in which the survey was distributed. To obtain additional
responses, the researcher consulted with the cultural center administrators to determine the most
efficient way to conduct the survey. A date and time was established for students to participate
in the study at the cultural center.
Students who returned signed consent forms were reminded of the purpose of the study and survey, and were told their participation was strictly voluntary. Students were asked to sign an assent form if they agreed to participate. They were assured that their confidentiality would be protected and that no names would be used in the survey. The investigator’s contact information was provided in case any concerns and questions about the study arose.

**Open-Ended Question**

Qualitative data was collected through interviews and an open-ended question in the survey about students’ perceived potential difficulties and barriers. Students were given a space in the survey to list their difficulties after the following statement: *Please list difficulties/barriers you think you may face for your educational plans.* Responses were gathered from surveys in which students chose to list their perceived potential barriers.

**Interviews**

Interviews were conducted with participation of Turkish-American middle and high school students and parents who live in Texas. Students who had participated in the survey were invited through the Turkish Cultural Center in Houston to participate in the interviews. In collaboration with the administrators and the educational coordinator of the center, the researcher communicated with parents and students (either by emails or phone calls) to invite them to participate in the study. Fifteen students (seven male and eight female) students and seven parents were included in the qualitative data collection. A focus group was held with four students and 11 students and seven parents were interviewed individually. The goal of the focus group was to explore any themes and issues that emerged from the data. The researcher encouraged all participants to talk and monitored if any student dominated the conversation (Creswell, 2007).
Interviews were done for an in-depth understanding of the students’ perspectives and experiences. The interview participants were selected based on their gender, generation level, and grade level (middle or high school students) to understand if there were any apparent differences in their aspirations. A sociology graduate student of Turkish background assisted with the interview procedures. Face-to-face interviews were conducted either in one of the rooms at the Turkish Cultural Center or in participants’ houses. Students and parents were interviewed separately to ensure that all participants could speak freely. Due to travel limitations, the interviews included only Turkish-Americans who live in Texas, which may limit the exploration of the issues. However, the open-ended question about difficulties and barriers may provide additional data about experiences of Turkish-American youth in other locations in the US. Interview protocols were used to triangulate the survey results. They were also helpful for exploring issues related to educational experiences of Turkish American students.

At the beginning of the interviews, the researcher introduced herself, explained the purpose of the study, and assured confidentiality of the responses. After obtaining the interviewee’s permission to record the interview, semi-structured interviews were conducted.

Data Analysis

Survey Data Analysis

Data Management and Screening. Survey items were entered in an Excel file and recoded into appropriate format that could be used with the statistical software package and then transferred into SPSS. SPSS descriptive frequencies procedure was followed; minimum and maximum values were checked to ensure of accuracy of data entry.

One hundred and eight Turkish American students and 77 students from other ethnic groups (N= 185) responded to the survey.
Educational aspirations: Responses were coded as from less than high school (1) to doctoral/professional degree (6) respectfully. The responses for the choice, I don’t know is coded as missing data and coded using the number 99.

Parents’ expectation: Responses for this question are numerically coded as educational aspirations ranging from less than high school (1) to doctoral/professional degree (6). I don’t know option category regarded as missing data coded as 98.

Students’ immigrant status (generation level) was evaluated using responses from students’, parents’ and grandparents’ birth place. First, second and third generations were calculated based on US Census bureau’s criteria. The U.S. Census Bureau uses the term generational status to refer to the place of birth of an individual or an individual’s parents. Questions on place of birth and parental place of birth are used to define the first, second, and third-or-higher generations. According to U. S. Census Bureau (2013) the first generation refers to immigrant youth who are foreign born and migrated to U.S. The second generation refers to those U.S. born children with at least one foreign-born parent. The third-or-higher generation includes those U. S.-born children with two U.S. native parents and at least one grandparent is foreign-born. Generational status then coded as 1 = first generation immigrant students 2 = Second generation immigrant students 3 = Third generation immigrant students and finally non-immigrant (native) students were coded as 0.

Ethnicity was coded as follows: 1 = African American, 2 = Asian American 3 = European American 4 = Hispanic/Latino American, 5 = Turkish American, 6 = Other

Time spent in U.S. This variable was coded as 1 = less than 2 years, 2 = 2-5 years, 3 = 5-10 years, 4 = 10-15 years and 5 = 15 years or more.

Gender was coded as 1 = Male 0 = Female.
First language coding: There were 19 different first languages, including English, spoken at home by the students including regional languages in India. Turkish was coded as 1 and English coded for 2 for the first language. Other languages were coded respectively. Students’ first language (mother tongue) fluency and English language fluency were calculated from their response on the survey.

Family economic status: Data screening indicated that 42.7% of students don’t know their family income. However, all students indicated their qualification for free/ reduced lunch. Therefore, for the family economic status free/ reduced lunch variable coded as yes (1) and no (0) was used.

The school engagement variable was calculated based on students’ responses on homework, concentration, attention and absence regarding their Math and English classes. The scoring process used by the developers of the scale was followed: an average score of attention and concentration for math and English was calculated before summing those scores with homework and attendance.

The school activities variable measured a composite score from students’ self-reported participation in the given areas. Higher scores indicated higher activity.

To understand influence of family, school and individual factors on Turkish immigrant students’ educational aspirations, data analysis included descriptive statistics, correlation, ordinal regression and Mann-Whitney U Tests.

Research questions were addressed by following statistical techniques:

1. What is the relationship between educational aspirations and family, school experience and individual characteristics for Turkish and other ethnic group students? Correlation analyses were conducted to answer this research question. Correlation coefficients for respective variables
were calculated through SPSS descriptive statistics crosstabs procedure for Turkish and other ethnic group of students. Significant Kendall’s tau b correlation coefficients and Cramer’s V were reported for respective variables.

2. Can educational aspirations of Turkish immigrant and other ethnic group students be predicted from family, school and individual factors? This question was addressed by SPSS ordinal regression procedure, PLUM (Polytomous Universal Model). Educational aspirations which range from high school to PhD, MD or other advanced degree, indicated ordinal levels of the dependent variable. Ordinal regression analyses were used to predict educational aspirations from family, school and individual factors for both Turkish American students and the group of other ethnic students included in the study. The results for Turkish students against a sample of other ethnic group students at the schools from which data were collected were compared. However, this group is unlikely to be representative of the larger population of “other” students. Therefore, results for Turkish students were also compared to results reported in previous studies of other ethnic groups. Assumptions for ordinal regression were checked. The proportional odds assumption which is each independent variable has an identical effect at each category of the ordinal dependent variable. In other words, the effect of the independent variables is the same for each logit function (Norusis, 2006). It is also called parallelism. Multicollinearity assumption was also checked. It was observed that grade and age were highly correlated (.951). Therefore, grade was dropped from the analysis. Wald statistics for each family, school and individual factors were calculated to determine the influence of these factors on educational aspirations of Turkish immigrant students and other students. Pseudo R- square values were also calculated to determine the model fit.
3. Do Turkish-American students differ from students of other ethnic groups in terms of educational aspirations? To address this question Mann-Whitney U Test was used to detect differences in educational aspirations between Turkish American and all other ethnic group students in the sample. Since these students less likely to be representative of the general population than other ethnic group students, the results for Turkish American students were compared to results reported in previous studies. The Mann-Whitney U Test is an appropriate nonparametric test choice for comparing two independent samples with ordinal or continuous dependent variable which do not meet normality assumption.

4. Do female and male Turkish American students differ in terms of educational aspirations? This question was addressed by Mann-Whitney U Tests and descriptive statistics. The Mann-Whitney U test was chosen to investigate if female and male Turkish students differ in terms of their educational aspirations. Because it is a non-parametric test, in other words, a distribution free test, the Mann-Whitney U test has fewer assumptions than the independent sample t test (Hinkle, 2003; Norusis, 2006). Normal distribution of the dependent variable is not required in nonparametric tests. Moreover it is an appropriate procedure when dependent variable was measured on the ordinal scale or interval/ratio scale. Assumptions for the Mann-Whitney U test were checked and independence of observations, randomness and non-normal distribution of the data, and having two independent groups (females and males) were met.

5. Which areas of studies do Turkish American and other ethnic/racial group students included in the study prefer for their future education? The students chose potential areas of studies from Arts & Humanities, Biological Sciences, Business, Sciences & Technology, and Social Sciences. It was possible to understand which occupational areas (Social or Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics [STEM]) are expected by Turkish and other ethnic
groups of students of the study. Frequencies were reported for each option. In addition, areas of
studies reported in the previous literature for other ethnic students were focused.

6. What kind of barriers do Turkish immigrant students experience for their educational
plans? This open ended question addressed by reporting frequencies of barriers Turkish
American youth feel. Responses categorized into themes and their frequencies and examples
were reported to understand the most common barriers for Turkish students.

Research questions related to Qualitative analysis were as follows:

7. How do Turkish-American parents perceive their children’s educational experiences
and how do they support their children?

8. How do factors related to family, school and culture shape educational plans of
Turkish American youth?

Open-Ended Question Analysis

Students’ responses about perceived potential barriers from open-ended question were
typed into a Word document. The answers to this question were helpful in understanding the
Turkish-American students’ experiences in more detail. Responses were investigated and coded
for common themes. Six groups of barriers/difficulties were identified. To ensure reliability, a
dual coding procedure was followed. A Turkish-American graduate student in the education
field also coded the responses in addition to the researcher, and inter-coder agreement was
observed (Creswell, 2009).

Interview Analysis

Interviews were recorded and transcribed after the interviews. A semi-structured
interview approach was followed to understand the respondent’s point of view and allow
participants to describe their experiences in detail. The researcher made notes during and after
the interview so that important details would not be lost or forgotten. Transcripts were double-
checked for reliability purposes. Collective themes that occurred across the group of
participants, and individual themes that were unique to one or a few individual participants were
explored to understand Turkish-American youths’ educational aspirations and related factors.

Summary

Quantitative and qualitative methods were utilized to conduct the research. The
methodology of the mixed-method approach was an appropriate procedure for unfolding
Turkish-American students’ educational aspirations and experiences. Instruments and survey
items were appropriate with the related theoretical framework and literature. Interview protocols
were designed to explore educational aspirations and related factors in detail. Thus, they were
helpful to triangulate the findings from the survey and gave deeper understanding of the
experiences of Turkish-American students and their parents.
CHAPTER 4
RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of the statistical analyses conducted to answer the research questions of this study. Descriptive statistics procedures were used to show the profile of the sample. There were 108 Turkish-American students in the sample and 77 students from other ethnic groups. The main focus of the study is the educational aspirations of Turkish American youth. However, other ethnic students were included in the study to appropriately locate Turkish-Americans’ aspirations within the spectrum of their peers. However, students from other ethnic groups in the sample were not representative of the general population of other ethnic group students. They were only suggestive of how the Turkish American students compare to other ethnic group students. This chapter consists of the following sections:

1) Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

2) Analysis of Survey Data

   a) Area of Study for Future Education

   b) Analysis of Open Ended Question

3) Analysis of Interview Data:

   a) Analysis of Parent Interviews

   b) Analysis of Student Interviews

4) Summary

Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

The sample consisted of 108 (58.4%) Turkish-American students and consisted of 77 (41.7%) students from other ethnic backgrounds. Table 4.1 shows the ethnic profile of the sample.
Table 4.1 Ethnic profile of Students in the Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian American</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European American</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>21.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(white)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/ Latino</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>32.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkish American</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>58.4</td>
<td>58.4</td>
<td>90.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although data included members of primary ethnic/racial groups in United States, due to small numbers of participations from these ethnic groups, a combination of all other ethnic group students were considered. However, these “other” students in the sample were unlikely to be representative of the larger population of other ethnic students. Therefore, Turkish-American students were compared to previous studies on other ethnic group students and results for all other ethnic group students included in the study also provided.

Generation level (Immigrant Status) was consistent with the history of Turkish immigrants in the United States. Most of the Turkish-American students in the sample were first generation (65.7%), 33.3% of them were second generation and only one student was a non-immigrant Turkish-American.
Table 4.2 Generation Level of Turkish American Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid First generation</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>65.7</td>
<td>65.7</td>
<td>65.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second generation</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>99.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nonimmigrant</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.9</td>
<td>.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gender: There were 38 (35%) male and 70 (65%) female Turkish-American students in the sample.

Table 4.3 Gender of Turkish American Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid Male</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>35.2</td>
<td>35.2</td>
<td>35.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>64.8</td>
<td>64.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students’ family economic status was evaluated through their eligibility for free/reduced lunch. Only 20% of Turkish-American students were eligible for free or reduced lunch and 80% of them were not eligible. They were children of families with middle to high income.

Table 4.4 Free/Reduced Lunch Turkish American Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid yes</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>20.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>79.6</td>
<td>79.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
School achievement was evaluated through grade point averages, which indicated that Turkish-American students’ achievement levels did not fall below 3.0. In fact, only 13.9% reported a GPA of less than 3.5, and 86.1% reported GPAs higher than 3.5.

Table 4.5 GPA Turkish American Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GPA Range</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.0 - 3.4</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 - 3.8</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>46.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.8 - 4.0 or higher</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>53.7</td>
<td>53.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>108</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

First language (Mother Tongue): One hundred and two (94%) Turkish-American students indicated that their first language is Turkish with six (6%) students reporting English was their first language. Most Turkish-American students come from homes in which only the Turkish language is spoken (88 students), 18 students were from bilingual homes, and only two students were from homes where only English is spoken.

Father’s education: The fathers of the Turkish-American youth in this sample have high levels of educational attainment, with 36% of the fathers holding a PhD, M.D., or other advanced degree. Overall, 60% of the Turkish-American fathers have a graduate degree, and only 13.9% of the fathers have not completed at least four years of college. The percentage of fathers that have a bachelor’s degree or higher were 86.1% in total; these numbers were indicating literature that shows higher rate of PhD graduates from Turkey who stayed in U.S after graduation. Between 2001-2011, Turkey was 6th country among those top 10 whose graduates stayed in US upon graduation (Open Doors Report, 2012).
Table 4.6 Father Education Turkish American Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than high school</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.9</td>
<td>.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school diploma</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate degree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's degree</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>25.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master's degree</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>24.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>36.1</td>
<td>36.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Moreover, previous studies found that immigrant parents’ education level varies based on the country of origin; parents from Asian countries more likely to have higher education levels than American-born parents and parents from Latin American countries. Turkish American fathers’ education level with highest percentage at highest education (36.1 % PhD or other advanced degree) also suggested similar trends as Asian parents’ education level.

Mother’s education: Turkish -American students’ mothers’ education showed 31.5% of them were four-year college graduates, and 42.6% of them held less than a bachelor’s degree. Almost 26% of them have graduate degrees; most of the graduate degrees were masters. Only 6.5 % of the mothers have PhD or other advanced degrees. Turkish American mother’s education was lower than Turkish American father’s education.

Turkish American mothers’ education level was found similar to other ethnic students included in this study. There were 6.5% (7) Turkish American mothers and 6.5% (5) other ethnic group mothers who have PhD or other advanced degree (Table 4.7 & Table 4.12)
Table 4.7 Mother Education of Turkish American Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Mother Education</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Less than High school</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High school diploma or equivalent</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>28.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Associate degree</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>42.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bachelor's degree</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>74.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Master's degree</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>93.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>108</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most of the Turkish-American students (39 %) spent 10-15 years in US.

Table 4.8 Time in the United States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Time in the United States</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>less than 2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2-5 years</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5- 10 years</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>45.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10-15 years</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>38.9</td>
<td>38.9</td>
<td>84.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15 years or more</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>108</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Descriptive characteristics of Other Ethnic Group Students in the Study

More than half of the other students in the sample were second generation (51.9 %) with equivalent percentages of non-immigrant and first generation students (27 and 21%, respectively). There were 37 (48%) male and 40 (52%) female students from other ethnic groups. Thirty percent of the students from all other ethnic groups included in the study reported being eligible for free or reduced lunch and 70% reported were not eligible.

Table 4.9 Free / Reduced Lunch for Other Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid No</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>70.1</td>
<td>70.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>29.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Among students from other ethnic groups included in the study, English and Spanish were the most common first languages. Thirty-eight percent reported that English was their first language, whereas 23, 9, and 8% indicating that Spanish, Urdu, and Arabic were their first languages.

Table 4.10 shows academic achievement (measured by GPA) of other ethnic students in the study. Achievement levels of other students included in the sample were not below 2.5. Eighteen percent of other students reported a GPA lower than 3.5 and 82 % of the students reported a GPA higher than 3.5.
Table 4.10 GPA Other Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>2.5 - 2.9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.0 - 3.4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.5 - 3.8</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>49.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.8 - 4.0 or higher</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>50.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>77</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.11 shows 5.2% of the fathers of students from other ethnic groups in the study held a PhD or advanced degree, 23% had graduate degrees, and 49.4% had not completed at least four years of college. The percentage of fathers who have bachelor’s degree was similar for Turkish-Americans (26%) and for all other ethnic group students (27%).

Table 4.11 Fathers Education of Other Ethnic Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>Less than high school</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High school diploma</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Associate degree</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bachelor's degree</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>27.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Master's degree</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>77</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The other ethnic students’ mothers’ education indicated that 31.2% of them holding bachelor’s degrees and 48.1% holding less than a bachelor’s degree (Table 4.13).
Table 4.12 Mothers Education of Other Ethnic Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid Education Level</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than High school</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school diploma</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>23.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate degree</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>48.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's degree</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>79.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master's degree</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>93.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>77</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Analysis of Survey Data**

The survey instrument for this study can be found in Appendix A. Students were asked, “How far in school would you like to go?” to learn their aspirations for future education. The results indicate that Turkish-American students’ educational aspirations were high, as almost 80% of them aspire to earn a graduate degree. In contrast, among students from other ethnicities in the sample showed that 44% of the African-Americans, 83% of the Asian-American, 42% of the whites, and 62% of the Hispanic students aspired to earn a graduate degree. However, due to the small number of participants from other racial/ethnic groups, Turkish-American students were compared to the combination of all of the other ethnic groups. All told, 65% of students from all other ethnic groups who were participated in the study aspire to graduate education.

However, these students from all other ethnic groups were unlikely to represent population of other ethnic students. Therefore, while analyzing the survey data and addressing the research questions of this study, the results for Turkish American students were compared to a sample of other ethnic group students at the schools from which data were collected as well as
they were compared to results of previous studies in the literature on other ethnic group students.

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between educational aspirations and family, school experience and individual characteristics of middle and high school students? To better understand factors influencing Turkish-American students’ educational aspirations, the relationship between educational aspirations and family, school, and individual variables was investigated. SPSS Descriptive statistics, crosstabs option was performed to check for the relationship between predictor variables and educational aspirations. The variables in bold in Table 4.6 were the factors from Hossler and Stage’s (1992) College Choice Model. Based on the literature, other variables were assumed to influence Turkish-American students’ educational aspirations. The significant correlations were marked with asterisks.

The following factors were found to be significantly related to educational aspirations of Turkish-American students: Parents’ expectations, family income status (free lunch), home language, GPA, school engagement, and the mother’s education level.

Correlation analyses revealed that perceived parental expectations have the highest correlation with Turkish-American students' educational aspirations (.685). Table 4.14 shows that the lowest parental expectation Turkish-American students reported was an associate degree (5.6%), and 52.8% of the students have reported that their parents expected them to get a PhD, M.D., or other advanced degree. While Only 18% of the Turkish-American students reported their parents expected them to get a master’s degree and 15% of them reported Bachelor’s degree.
Table 4.13 Correlations between Educational Aspirations and Other Factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Turkish students Aspirations</th>
<th>All other students Aspirations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents’ expectations</td>
<td>.685*</td>
<td>.609*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father Ed</td>
<td>.150</td>
<td>.347*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother Ed</td>
<td>.181*</td>
<td>.258*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.263</td>
<td>.230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free Lunch</td>
<td>.335*</td>
<td>.127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPA</td>
<td>.292*</td>
<td>.332*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Activities</td>
<td>.120</td>
<td>.248*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Engagement</td>
<td>.249*</td>
<td>.142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time in US</td>
<td>.011</td>
<td>-.162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation level</td>
<td>.127</td>
<td>.367*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home language</td>
<td>.323*</td>
<td>.280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Language Fluency</td>
<td>.079</td>
<td>-.251*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Fluency</td>
<td>.112</td>
<td>.024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.143</td>
<td>-.046</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Turkish American students’ perceived parents’ expectations showed similar results with white students’ parental expectations for future educational goals. Previous studies found perceived parents’ expectations influential for white students’ educational plans and outcomes (Kerckhoff, 1989; Smith, 1991). Moreover, perceived parental expectations of Turkish American students was in line with previous studies that emphasized the influence of higher educational expectations of immigrant parents for immigrant students’ educational performance and future goals. It was reported that, in comparison with native parents, immigrant parents have higher educational expectations from their children for educational performances and attending college or graduate school (Fuligni, 1997; Kao & Tienda, 1995). Hossler and Stage (1992) also found higher educational aspirations of minority parents.
Table 4.14 Perceived Parents’ Expectations of Turkish American Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Val. Percent</th>
<th>Cum. Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate degree</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's degree</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>22.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master's degree</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>41.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD, M.D. advanced degree</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>52.8</td>
<td>58.2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>90.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It was found that the percentage of students who were from lower income families who aspire for PhDs or other advanced degrees were higher than the percentage of students from higher income families (58 vs. 49%). The majority of the Turkish-American students in this sample were from middle to higher income levels, as indicated by the fact that 80% were not eligible for free or reduced lunch, and only 20% were eligible.

Table 4.15 Free Lunch * Educational Aspirations Crosstabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Aspirations</th>
<th>Associate BA Masters</th>
<th>PhD</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Free Lunch</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Count</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Free Lunch</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
<td>38.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Count</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Free Lunch</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
<td>.0%</td>
<td>26.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Count</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Free Lunch</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
However, when master’s degree included it was observed that 87.6% of Turkish American students from higher income families (children were not eligible for free or reduced lunch) aspired for graduate education whereas, 84.2% Turkish American students from lower income families planned for graduate education.

Table 4.16 Home Language * Educational Aspirations Crosstabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Aspirations</th>
<th>Associate</th>
<th>BA</th>
<th>Masters</th>
<th>PhD</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HmLan</td>
<td>Turkish only</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>% within HmLan</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilingual</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within HmLan</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
<td>42.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within HmLan</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
<td>50.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similarly, students from lower income families more likely to aspire for lower educational degrees than students from higher income families. In fact, 15.8% of Turkish American students who were eligible for free or reduced lunch planned for associate degree while only 1.2% of them did so among students who were not eligible (Table 4.16). This finding was consistent with previous literature that found family income was directly related to college education (NCES, 2001).

Home language was referred to language spoken at home. There were only 2 Turkish-American students reported that language spoken at home was English. Due to this small number, these cases were dropped from the data. The responses for Language spoken at home were Turkish only and bilingual (Turkish with English). Students who reported language spoken at home Turkish only, tend to have higher educational aspirations than students from homes
(bilingual) that both languages spoken together. Almost ninety three percent of Turkish American students, who reported Turkish as spoken language at home, aspired for graduate education and 63.2 % of the students who reported English and Turkish as home language, aspired for graduate education.

Results regarding the home language perspective confirm findings in the literature. Having a mother tongue other than English has a positive effect on the educational aspirations of immigrant students and bilingualism does not negatively affect students’ achievement (Liu, Thai & Fan, 2009). Even some researchers found that immigrant students (Cuban and Mexican) who do not speak English language at home would have stronger college aspirations than non-Latino whites who speak English at home (Bohon, Johnson, & Gorman, 2006). In fact, previous studies noted that ethnic language connects students to their culture and traditions and supports academic achievement (Bankston & Zhou, 1995).

Table 4.17 GPA* Educational Aspirations Crosstabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GPA</th>
<th>Educational Aspirations</th>
<th>Associate</th>
<th>BA</th>
<th>Masters</th>
<th>PhD</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.0 - 3.4</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within GPA</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>46.2%</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 - 3.8</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within GPA</td>
<td>.0%</td>
<td>21.9%</td>
<td>34.4%</td>
<td>43.8%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.8 - 4.0 or higher</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within GPA</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>35.2%</td>
<td>61.1%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within GPA</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
<td>50.5%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.17 above shows the educational aspirations and GPA of the Turkish American youth. Turkish American students with higher GPA’s tend to have higher aspirations for future education. Sixty-one percent of Turkish-American Students with GPA over 3.8 or higher aspired for Ph.D. or other advanced degrees. Previous studies also found academic achievement which was measured through different ways have high positive correlation with educational aspirations of the students (Sewell & Hauser, 1980; Qian & Blair, 1999; Hauser & Anderson, 1991). The difference between educational aspirations of Asian American and Latino American students was explained by their academic achievement ((Berkner, Chavez, & Carrol, 1998).

School engagement was positively correlated with educational aspirations of Turkish American students. School engagement indicated students’ behavior toward doing homework, attending classes, and paying attention in class and they related to educational plans of Turkish American students. Previous studies also found it important for school achievement of students (Steinberg, 1996; Kenny et al., 2003).

Mother’s education was correlated with Turkish American students’ educational aspirations. It was very interesting to find that the father’s education level was not related to Turkish-American students’ educational aspirations. Eighty-six percent of Turkish-American fathers in the sample have college degrees or beyond, with 36 % of them holding PhD’s or other advanced degrees, yet these highly educated fathers were not influential in Turkish-American students’ educational aspirations. All parents’ education in the data showed similar patterns except for Turkish American fathers. The educational levels of Turkish-American mothers and mothers and fathers from different ethnic groups included in the study all have similar to normal distribution. However, Turkish-American fathers’ education indicated a negatively skewed distribution with the majority of them having higher education levels. Previous studies focused
on parents’ education and found influential for educational aspirations of students (Sewell & Shah, 1968; Hossler & Stage, 1992).

Correlation analyses also showed that gender, how much time the student had spent in the US, generation level, first language Fluency, English language fluency and age were not significantly related to educational aspirations of Turkish-American students.

The difference between educational aspirations of first generation and second generation Turkish American students was not substantial. Second generation Turkish-American students tend to have higher aspirations; 87.3% second generation and 85.9% first generation Turkish-American students wanted to pursue graduate degrees. This finding may suggest consistency with previous nationally representative studies in which reported higher aspirations of first and second generation students.

**Other Ethnic Group Students in the Sample:** Correlation analyses showed positive strong correlations between parents’ expectations and educational aspirations of other ethnic group students (.609). Other ethnic students’ perceived parental expectations indicated 40% of Ph.D. or advanced degree, 22% of master’s degree and 18% of bachelor’s degree (Table 4.18).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Val.Percent</th>
<th>Cum. Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School diploma</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's degree</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master's degree</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>26.6</td>
<td>51.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD, M.D. advanced degree</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>40.3</td>
<td>40.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>83.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>98</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Generation level, father’s education, GPA, mother’s education, first language fluency, and school activities were significantly correlated to educational aspirations of other ethnic group students included in the study.

Both first and second generation students (85.7% and 51.4%) from other ethnic group in the current study were more likely to aspire for PhD or other advanced degrees than non-immigrant students (13.3%). This finding is consistent with studies that found immigrants have higher aspirations for college education than native-born students (Kao & Tienda, 1995; Fuligni, 1997). These results confirmed previous research results which found parents’ expectations, generation level (immigrant status), parents’ education, academic achievement (GPA), and school activities related with educational aspirations of students (Kerckhoff, 1989; Smith, 1991; Sewell & Hauser, 1980; Qian & Blair, 1999; Hauser & Anderson, 1991; Hossler & Stage, 1992).

On the other hand, analyses showed that gender, family economic status (eligibility for free/reduced lunch), school engagement, how much time the student had spent so far in the US, home language, English language fluency and age were not significantly related to educational aspirations of these students.

Research Question 2: Can educational aspirations of Turkish immigrant students be predicted from family, school and individual factors?

To answer the second research question, SPSS PLUM (Ordinal regression analysis) procedure was performed to assess prediction of educational aspirations. Dependent variable educational aspirations were measured on ordinal scale; therefore ordinal regression was better choice over other options. The data showed that the lowest aspiration for future education
reported by students was an associate’s degree, and the majority of the Turkish American students aspired to have graduate degree.

On the bases of the Hossler and Stage (1992) model, seven predictor variables were included. As recommended by researchers (Hossler & Stage, 1992), parents’ expectations, father’s and mother’s education, family income status (eligibility for free lunch), gender, school achievement (GPA), and school activities were included for to understand if these factors were influential for Turkish-American students. Second, other variables which were significantly correlated with educational aspirations were added to the model to see if $R^2$ value improves. School engagement, and home language were significantly correlated with educational aspirations for Turkish-Americans and they were added to the original model.

Assumptions were checked for ordinal regression analysis. Multicollinearity between age and grade (.951) was detected, so grade was dropped from the model. The proportional odds assumption (test of parallelism) was checked. Since chi-square statistic was not significant ($p=.754$), we fail to reject the null hypothesis that slope coefficients were the same across levels of dependent variable. Therefore, it was concluded that the proportional odds assumption, in other words, parallelism assumption was met.

There was a good model fit since goodness of fit for Turkish-American students revealed $\chi^2=125.28$, $p=1.0$, using deviance criterion. Model fitting information revealed that the overall model with seven predictor variables were significant. Thus, the probability of obtaining observed chi square statistics, if there were no effect of the predictor variables was less than .001 ($\chi^2=74.46$, $p<.001$). Therefore, the model was significant in predicting the educational aspirations of Turkish-American students.
The strength of the association between the educational aspirations and predictor variables were measured by Pseudo $R^2$ values. Table 4.20 shows Pseudo $R^2$ for Turkish-American students indicating there was strong association between educational aspirations and seven predictors for Turkish-American students.

Table 4.19 Pseudo $R^2$ for College Choice Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Turkish American Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cox and Snell</td>
<td>.551</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagelkerke</td>
<td>.624</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mc Fadden</td>
<td>.373</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.20 shows the estimated coefficients of Hossler and Stage’s (1992) model for Turkish-American students. The analysis revealed parents’ expectations and school achievement as measured by grade point average (GPA) were significant predictors for educational aspirations of Turkish-American students.

Table 4.20 Ordinal Regression Analyses of College Choice Model for Turkish American Youth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>Std. Err</th>
<th>Wald</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents’ Expectation</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>.405</td>
<td>34.34*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father Edu</td>
<td>-.033</td>
<td>.223</td>
<td>.022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother Edu</td>
<td>-.361</td>
<td>.213</td>
<td>2.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free Lunch</td>
<td>.342</td>
<td>.677</td>
<td>.255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.490</td>
<td>.573</td>
<td>.731</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPA</td>
<td>1.177</td>
<td>.399</td>
<td>8.68*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Activities</td>
<td>.052</td>
<td>.043</td>
<td>1.42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For the Turkish-American student group, an increase in parents’ expectations was associated with an increase in the odds of having higher level of educational aspiration, with an odds ratio of 2.37 (95% CI, 1.579 to 3.166), Wald $X^2(1) = 34.34$, $p < .001$. In other words, one unit increase in parents’ expectations would result in a 2.37 unit increase in the ordered log-odds of having higher educational aspirations while the other variables in the model are held constant. Similarly, an increase in school achievement (GPA) was associated with an increase in the odds of having higher level of educational aspiration, with an odds ratio of 1.177 while other predictors in the model were held constant (95% CI, .394 to 1.960), Wald $X^2(1) = 8.68$, $p < .005$. These results were consistent with previous studies that found strong influence of parental expectations on students’ educational aspirations (Mau, 1995; Mau & Bikos, 2000; Shepard, 1992; Smith, 1991; Wilson & Wilson, 1992; Hossler & Stage, 1992). In addition literature showed that academic achievement is one of the significant predictors for students’ educational aspirations (Mau & Bikos, 2000; Hossler & Stage, 1992).

Contributions of the other significantly correlated predictors were investigated through the SPSS PLUM procedure. In addition to predictors in the model, school engagement and home language variables were entered in each step to the model to understand if strength of association between predictors and educational aspirations of Turkish-American students (dependent variable) improved.

When school engagement was entered into the model for Turkish-American students, there was a good model fit. Although school engagement did not show significant coefficient estimation, the strength of association between predictor variables and educational aspirations improved. Improvement of pseudo $R^2$ values were represented in the table 4.14. Model 1 represents predictors as in the College Choice Model of Hossler & Stage (1992), and Model 2
represents the addition of significant predictors for Turkish American youth. Pseudo $R^2$ values improved from .551 to .563 for Cox and Snell, from .624 to .637 for Nagelkerke, and from .373 to .385 for McFadden. When home language was added to the model, Pseudo $R^2$ values improved little for Nagelkerke from .637 to .638, and for McFadden from .385 to .386. It remained the same, .563, for Cox and Snell.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.21 Pseudo $R^2$ for Turkish American Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cox and Snell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagelkerke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mc Fadden</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Other Ethnic Group Students in the Sample:** SPSS PLUM (Ordinal regression analysis) procedure was performed to assess prediction of educational aspirations of other students included in the sample. College Choice Model (Hossler & Stage, 1992) variables, parents’ expectations, father’s and mother’s education, family economic status, gender, school achievement (GPA), and school activities were included in the analysis. Generation level and first language fluency that were found significantly correlated with educational aspirations were also included in the analysis to investigate improvement of the Pseudo $R^2$ which indicates strength of association.

The proportional odds assumption (test of parallelism) was checked. Since chi-square statistics were not significant ($p = .981$), we fail to reject the null hypothesis that slope coefficients were the same across levels of dependent variable. Therefore, it was concluded that the proportional odds assumption, in other words, parallelism assumption was met for other ethnic students included in the study. Goodness of fit results showed non-significant result
indicating that model fits well, $\chi^2 = 98.72, p = 1.0$, using deviance criterion and $\chi^2 = 183.79, p = .138$, using Pearson.

Model fitting information revealed that the overall models with the seven predictor variables of College Choice Model were significant for other ethnic students in the study. Therefore, probability of obtaining observed chi square statistics, if there were no effect of the predictor variables, was less than .001($\chi^2 = 36.43, p < .001$). Thus, the model was significant in predicting educational aspirations. The strength of the association between the educational aspirations and predictor variables were measured by Pseudo $R^2$ values. Pseudo $R^2$ values were for Cox and Snell .461, for Nagelkerke .513, and for McFadden from .270.

Table 4.22 represents the estimated coefficients of Hossler and Stage’s (1992) model for other ethnic students included in the study. Parents’ expectation was the only significant variable for predicting educational aspirations other ethnic students in the sample.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>Std. Err</th>
<th>Wald</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents’ Expectation</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>.474</td>
<td>12.59*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father Edu</td>
<td>-.054</td>
<td>.322</td>
<td>.028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother Edu</td>
<td>-.004</td>
<td>.336</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free Lunch</td>
<td>-.826</td>
<td>.734</td>
<td>1.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.287</td>
<td>.687</td>
<td>.174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPA</td>
<td>.647</td>
<td>.390</td>
<td>2.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Activities</td>
<td>.079</td>
<td>.052</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For the “other” students group, it was found that an increase in parents’ expectations was associated with an increase in the odds of having higher level of educational aspiration, with an odds ratio of 1.680 (95% CI, .752 to 2.608), Wald $X^2(1) = 12.585$, $p < .001$.

Students from other ethnic groups who were eligible for free or reduced lunch were less likely to have high aspirations for future education than students who were not eligible for free and reduced lunch. For the “other” students, parents’ expectation was the only significant predictor for predicting educational aspirations.

In addition to variables in College Choice Model, variables that were significantly related to educational aspirations of other ethnic students in the sample (generation level and first language fluency) added to the model; to understand if strength of association between predictors and educational aspirations (dependent variable) improved. When generation level was entered into the model for other students, there was good model fit and coefficients for estimations were significant for first and second generations. Nonimmigrant students were treated as reference category. The odds of first generation students having high educational aspirations was 2.543 (95% CI, .116 to 4.970) times that of nonimmigrant (native) students, a statistically significant effect, Wald $X^2(1) = 4.218$, $p = .04$. In addition, the odds of second generation students having high educational aspirations was 1.763 (95% CI, .195 to 3.331) times that of nonimmigrant (native) students, a statistically significant effect, Wald $X^2(1) = 4.854$, $p = .028$. After, inclusion of generation level in the model the strength of association between predictor variables and educational aspirations improved well. Pseudo $R^2$ values improved from .461 to .509 for Cox and Snell, from .513 to .566 for Nagelkerke, and from .270 to .311 for McFadden.
As previously mentioned, findings were consistent with the literature on aspirations and immigration status. Most of the nationally representative studies reported higher aspirations of first and second generation students than native students (Kao & Tienda, 1995; Fuligni, 1997).

Adding first language fluency into the model, which had a significant relationship with educational aspirations, did not improve the model, however. In fact, the coefficient estimation was .001 and was not significant (p > .05). The strength of association remained the same for all R² measures. Improvement of pseudo R² values were represented in the following table. Model 1 represents predictors as in the College Choice Model of Hossler & Stage (1992), and Model 2 represents the addition of significant predictors for other ethnic group students included in the study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cox and Snell</td>
<td>.461</td>
<td>.509</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagelkerke</td>
<td>.513</td>
<td>.566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mc Fadden</td>
<td>.270</td>
<td>.311</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Question 3: Do Turkish-American students differ from students of other ethnic groups in terms of educational aspirations? To address this question, educational aspirations of Turkish-American students were compared to other ethnic group students that participated in the current study. However, since these students were not representative of the larger population, the results were compared to results reported in previous studies of other ethnic groups.

Table 4.13 and table 4.14 represent the educational aspirations of Turkish American and other ethnic group students. SPSS Non parametric tests procedure was followed. Mann-Whitney U Test was performed to detect significant differences in educational aspirations between
Turkish-American students and those from all other ethnic groups in the study. A total of 16 students in the sample did not indicate their educational aspirations.

Table 4.24 Educational Aspirations of Turkish American Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Associate degree</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bachelor's degree</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Master's degree</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>45.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PhD or adv. degree</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>50.5</td>
<td>91.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Missing system</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>108</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Turkish students were more likely to have higher educational aspirations. The mean rank for Turkish American students (88.42) was higher than the other students group (80.16).

Table 4.25 Educational Aspirations Mean Ranks Turkish and Others

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Aspirations</th>
<th>Turkish</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>Sum of Ranks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>99</td>
<td>88.42</td>
<td>8754.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td></td>
<td>70</td>
<td>80.16</td>
<td>5611.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>169</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It was found that observed differences were not significant between the two groups of students. Mann –Whitney U= 3126, and asymp sig. = .240 > .05. Therefore, it can be concluded
that Turkish American students and other ethnic groups students included in the study did not differ significantly in terms of future educational aspirations.

Table 4.26 Mann-Whitney Test Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Aspirations</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mann-Whitney U</td>
<td>3126.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilcoxon W</td>
<td>5611.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z</td>
<td>-1.176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.240</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Grouping Variable: Turkish1 and Others2

The majority of Turkish-American students (86.9%) were aspired to graduate education and 97% of them planned at least for college education (Table 4.16). Asian American students in the current study have the highest percentage for graduate education (93.7%). Asian Americans were followed by Turkish-Americans (86.9%), Hispanic Americans (65%), African Americans (57.2%) and white (41.7%).

Table 4.27 Educational Aspirations of Other Ethnic Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate degree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's degree</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>26.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master's degree</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>48.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD or adv. degree</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>90.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing system</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Previous studies have found that Asian American students have highest educational aspirations and Hispanic students have the lowest educational aspirations (George, 1990; Mau, 1995; Mau & Bikos, 2000). Usually in literature Asian students’ aspirations reported higher than white (European American) students and African American students’ aspirations reported higher than Hispanic American students. It was found that 49 % of Asian Americans, 30% of whites, 16 % of African Americans, and 6 % of Latinos in schools earn bachelor’s degree (Williams, 2003).

Research Question 4: Do female and male Turkish American students differ in terms of educational aspirations? This question was analyzed using SPSS descriptive statistics, crosstabs, frequencies and SPSS Non parametric tests, Mann- Whitney U Tests,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.28 Gender * Educational Aspirations of Turkish American Students Crosstabulation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educational Aspirations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Female Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Male Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Total Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Seventy female (64.8 %) female and 38 male (35.2%) Turkish-American students participated in the survey. Seven females and two males had missing values, so 63 females and 36 males provided responses for the survey items. Male students’ educational aspirations were higher than female students. Ninety four percent of Turkish American male students and 83 % of female students planned for graduate education.
The mean rank observed was higher for male students (56.17) than female students (46.48), but this difference was not found to be significant. Mann-Whitney U = 912, and Asymp sig. = .075 > .05. Therefore, it was concluded that Turkish female and male students do not differ in terms of educational aspirations.

Literature reported mixed findings about gender and educational aspirations. Unlike the tendency among Turkish American youth, recent previous studies have found that female students have higher aspirations than male students (Mau, 1995; Hao & Bonstead-Bruns, 1998; Mau & Bikos, 2000; Cooper, 2009). According to a nationally representative study, (Kao & Tienda, 1998) Asian American boys mostly aspired for graduate education (48.7 %) while
Hispanic (32%), Black (36%) and white (37%) boys mostly aspired for college education. Similarly, Asian girls mostly aspired for graduate education (52.7%) than other level of education. Hispanic, Black and White girls also mostly aspired for graduate education.

**Area of Study for Future Education**

Research Question 5: Which areas of studies do Turkish-American and other ethnic/racial group students prefer for their future education? In the survey, students indicated their interest of areas of studies among Arts and Humanities, Biological Sciences, Business, Sciences and Technology, and Social Sciences. A list of disciplines was included in parentheses to help students determine the appropriate areas for their future educational plans. Some students indicated more than one area they found acceptable. This is normal, since students might have interests in various disciplines for their future education. It was observed that Turkish-American students mostly prefer Science & Technology and Biological Sciences, followed by Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities, and Business. The following table shows the frequency of their choices:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Study</th>
<th>Turkish Americans (N=108)</th>
<th>Asian Americans (N=17)</th>
<th>Hispanic/Latino American (N=20)</th>
<th>African American (N=9)</th>
<th>European American (N=12)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Art &amp; Humanities</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biological Sciences</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science &amp; Tech</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Science</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

84
Science and Technology was the most popular area of study for all ethnic groups of students except African-Americans. Biological Sciences were most popular among African-American students, followed by Science & Technology and Business. Hispanic/Latino American students also favored Science and Technology for their further education, but their second choice was Arts and Humanities. European-American students also favored Science and Technology, followed by Biological Sciences and Arts and Humanities.

Turkish-American students’ choice of study for further education was found to be similar to Asian-American students’, as both groups considered Science & Technology their preferred area, with Biological Sciences as a second choice. On the other hand, Business was the least preferred area for Turkish-Americans while Social Sciences were the least preferred area for the Asian-Americans. However, the number of Asian-American students who preferred business and social sciences was low for each area (5 vs. 4). Given the popularity of Science & Technology and Biological Sciences among Asian-Americans and Turkish-Americans, it is possible to state that Turkish-American students’ tendency for future educational and career choices indicated similarity with Asian-American students’.

In addition, when choices were combined as STEM and biological sciences; art and humanities, and social sciences; and business, all of the ethnic groups showed similar trend except for African American students. African American students were found more likely to pursue business rather than art & humanities and Social sciences. All other ethnic group students mostly indicated to pursue education in STEM and biological sciences following art & humanities, and social sciences and then business. However, it should be noted that in the current study the number of participants from other ethnic groups except Turkish Americans was small. In addition, the schools from which the data were collected from focused their attention on
science and technology. For example, participation in science fairs for students is strongly encouraged and influenced their science grades.

Previous studies on choice of college major found that when other characteristics were held constant, Asians and blacks were less likely to major in business; and Hispanics were more likely to major in business than whites (Leppel, 2001). Literature also noted Asian students, foreign students, or immigrant students who can speak another language as a child have higher percentage in entering STEM fields (Chen & Weko, 2009). It was reported that African American and Hispanic students were less likely to major in biological sciences and science and technology fields (Young, 2005).

Analysis of Open–Ended Question

Research Question 6: What kind of barriers do Turkish immigrant students experience in pursuing their educational plans?

To be able to understand experiences of Turkish-American youth, an in depth an open-ended item was included in the survey. Students were given ample space to list potential difficulties or barriers they thought they might face in pursuing their future educational goals. This open-ended item was helpful to allow students to elaborate on their experiences in education and provided further insight about potential difficulties they anticipated. Of the 108 Turkish-American students surveyed, 63 responded to that question. The responses were transferred into a Word document and frequencies of the potential barriers were counted. A Turkish doctoral student from the education field and the researcher dual coded the responses to increase reliability. Based on the responses, barriers were then reorganized into six theme groups: Financial, English Language, Academic, College/Major Related, Personal, and Occupational. Frequencies and the examples of the barriers are presented in the following table.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barriers/Difficulties</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Economic difficulties, financial issues, money, scholarship, expensive schools, college funding, student loans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Language, English level, English fluency, English, ELA, grammar, English is not my strongest subject and it might be a problem in my future school life, vocabulary (3), spelling, and essay writing abilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>SAT scores (4), Math(3), homework assignments(2), my grades, history, algebra, lack of computer knowledge, lack of interest in a specific subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College/Major</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>College education, getting into MIT, get into Harvard with scholarship, getting into college that favors my career of interest, getting into law school, scared of challenging atmosphere in medical school, getting into a great college, finding a good college, studying the right courses, difficult to decide the field I want to work in (2), not sure about the field, not learn well how to work being a guidance counselor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Skills</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Time management (5), laziness(4), procrastination(2), memorization skills, working on two or more projects at the same time (multi-task capability), my disability, video games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-Psychological</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Focus, not enough concentration public speaking fear (2), trusting others, team work, isolation, betrayal, social anxiety, social environment, sadness, death, obsession (2), social work, fear of the dark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Opening up my own company/business, managing and living alone, To work in a big company.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents’ Expectations /Pressure</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>I want to use my acting skills but it will not fulfill my parents’ expectations. I just feel like I have no choice but to be a teacher.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Turkish-American youth most often cited financial barriers as being possible impediments to their educational aspirations. College funding, scholarships, and expensive schools were all listed in that category. This may be related to the price of higher education in the United States which is described one of the most expensive in the globe.

Turkish-American youth also listed a variety of personal psychological barriers to their future educational plans. These difficulties can be broken down into difficulties related to skills and socio-psychological factors. Time-management and laziness were most frequent barriers mentioned, with other difficulties being procrastination, multi-tasking capabilities, and memorization skills. In addition, Turkish-American youth also were concerned about perceived barriers related to their socio-psychological well-being, including focus, concentration, social anxiety, fear of public speaking, social environment, team work, trusting others, betrayal, and isolation.

Not surprisingly, academic difficulties involved the competitive nature of the higher education process, which might lead students to worry about not being able to get higher grades and scores that are crucial to college entrance. Turkish-American parents’ emphasis on academic achievement for future life happiness might have been translated into potential barriers from their children’s perspective.

Even though English language fluency was not the most feared obstacle to educational aspirations, it still held a crucial place in the Turkish immigrant students’ future educational plans. Barriers related to college and major indicated that Turkish students are aspiring to high level institutions, as evidenced by the fact that some students mentioned law school, medical school, “great college”, “Harvard” and “MIT,” even though they were aware that getting into
those colleges and pursuing those career paths would be difficult. However, some students indicated they were not sure about the field they wanted to study.

Consistent with the goal of education to lead people into better lives in the future, students extended their perceptions about barriers toward their lives after graduation from educational institutions. They listed potential barriers for establishing their own company and getting into a big company to work. One student even expressed her dilemma about not training the profession she wanted to follow.

**Analysis of Interview Data**

Interview data analysis was helpful to triangulate the quantitative data. The questions were developed for gaining a deeper understanding of Turkish-American students’ and parents’ experiences. Analysis revealed Turkish immigrant students’ and parents’ perspectives on education and how family, culture, school and individual factors shape Turkish-American students’ educational plans.

**Analysis of Parent Interviews**

The information of the participants of parent interviews was summarized in the Table 4.33. Two parents spent 5 years or less in US and others reported 8 years to 22 years. Most of their children were first generation, only two parents reported their children were born in US (second generation). Based on Hossler & Stage (1992) theoretical model and characteristics of Turkish culture the following aspects were focused during interview with parents: Agreement of parents with students’ educational plans and their expectations, parental support, school experience and performance, home language, perceived barriers, and involvement with Turkish culture and ethnic community.
Table 4.33 Parent Interview Participants’ Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID cod</th>
<th>Parents’ Education</th>
<th>Time In US</th>
<th>Child Generation level</th>
<th>Free Lunch</th>
<th>Parents’ Expectation</th>
<th>Child’s Aspiration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PR1</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>Masters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR2</td>
<td>Associate</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>Masters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR3</td>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>MD</td>
<td>MD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR4</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>PhD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR5</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>PHD/ MD</td>
<td>PHD/ MD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR6</td>
<td>Less than high</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>PhD (law)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR7</td>
<td>Less than high</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>BA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Expectations and Agreement of Parents with Students’ Educational Plans.** The analysis of parents’ interviews showed that there was a consistency between parents’ expectations and Turkish children’s educational aspirations. Even though in the literature expectations and aspirations used interchangeably, there are differences in what they may refer to. Expectations refer to “what do you think will happen in future” and take into account any conditions, restrictions or barriers when thinking about future plans. On the other hand, aspirations refer to “what do you hope will happen in future” and do not take into account any conditions, restrictions or barriers.

In the literature, parents’ educational expectations was found most influential factor for students’ educational aspirations (Kerckhoff, 1989; Smith, 1991; Hossler & Stage, 1992; Fuligni, 1997). Interviews with the Turkish-American parents revealed that not only parents’ expectations, but also parental aspirations in terms of future career are important for the development of Turkish students’ future educational and occupational aspirations. Actually, the area of future education was the point on which that some parents expressed different opinions than their children. Four out of seven parents mentioned career aspirations related to their children’s future choices. Among those, two of the parents’ concerns were related to gender
roles. These mothers have daughters in middle and high school and as a parent they hope for certain major for their daughters. They believe that certain occupation will be more beneficial for their children’s future life. PR3 mentioned that she has female friends who were engineers and at some point in their lives (after they got married or had children) they had to quit their jobs and all the education and training they received became useless. She said that it was “much more suitable” for women to be medical doctors than engineers, adding, “If they are in [the] medical field they can continue their career.”

PR6 also has concerns related to gender roles and her daughter’s college plans. She explicitly stated her disagreement with her daughter’s choice, saying, “No, I don’t support her desire to follow law school. I want her to be [a] teacher. It is less time-consuming and she can be less tired and can spend time on her family in the future.” On the other hand, this girl’s father wanted her to go into the accounting field in the future to help him with his business.

Turkish parents were not shy about expressing their desires for future occupations for their children, but they are also aware that this decision belongs to their children. For instance, parent PR7 wanted her daughter to be a pediatrician but she wants to be psychologist. “A medical profession [would suit her,] but psychology is also good,” the mother said. Freedom of choice of a future profession was emphasized by PR1 and PR4. They support their children regardless of the profession they choose as long as it is the right choice and suitable with their children’s abilities. PR1 said,

I am not insist[ing that] my boy should be [an] engineer, lawyer, or medical doctor-regarding [a] male child especially. This is not my topic. I want him to find the right profession that he likes, in harmony with his abilities, and practice it very well and be successful.
This opinion both indicated the freedom that she gave her son and also hints at the importance of gender roles concerning children’s education in Turkish culture. Regarding other participants’ statements, gender roles are very important for Turkish parents’ agreement with their children’s future educational plans. As PR2 stated about her son, “…at the end you will be the breadwinner of your future family.” From a similar point of view, PR6 thought her daughter only needed to earn enough money to cover her own expenses. Since the mother thought that supporting the family will be her daughter’s husband’s job, the mother saw no need for her daughter to pursue a time-consuming, physically demanding job such as lawyer.

Parents also evaluated their children’s educational and occupational goals as to whether they suited their children’s personality and abilities. For instance, PR7 is concerned that her daughter’s sensitive nature may cause her too much stress if she chooses psychology for future education. Parents PR1 and PR2 indicated that, based on their children’ attitude toward reading, research and extra work, they only assumed their children could complete masters’ degrees.

On the other hand, some parents encourage their children to develop certain skills so they can follow in the career path their parents’ desire. Such children were given opportunities to experience the skills needed for that particular career. One parent whose background was teaching shared their expectations and encouragement for their son as follows:

We want him to be a teacher but at the end it is his choice. If he chose education for his future profession, we believe he will be more helpful for his environment and humanity…We made him tutor his brother to make him understand how you feel when you teach, when you help someone to learn. He likes sacrificing from himself do things for others. Therefore we encourage and motivate him into teaching profession and try to make him like teaching.

According to Predisposition stage of College Choice Model (Hossler & Stage, 1992), parents play crucial roles on their children’s educational plans. This parents’ attitude is a
confirming example for the theoretical framework of the current study with showing a strong influence of Turkish parents’ on their students’ educational plans.

**Parental Support.** Turkish American parents support their children for their future success in variety of ways. Academic success is very important and all the support and encouragements were shaped to reach academic success and awareness. Three main themes found through analysis of parents’ interview data: Strategies for academic success (verbal support), logistic support, and emotional support.

Strategies for academic success: Parents verbally encourage them with strategies that will help their future success. Studying was the most frequent concern among the Turkish American parents. Parents reported that they emphasize more, effective, planned, and disciplined studying. Time management was very important and parents wanted their children put more time on studying. Holding high GPA, paying attention during the instruction time in class was among other strategies they advised to Turkish adolescents.

Logistic support (outside assistance): Parents reported that they provide outside assistance for their children in the areas they need for their academic progress. Tutoring, monitoring, extracurricular activities, volunteering, exposing them to college courses and extra math courses are such examples of logistic support. One parent said, “We support him if something useful and reasonable as much as we can… we try to get outside tutoring for him”. Another parent said, “I let her join extracurricular activities, hired English tutor, [and] sent her SAT course”.

Emotional support: Emotional support and encouragement were mentioned by variety of the way by Turkish parents. Putting trust in the child that parents believe they will be successful is one of the common way Turkish parents used. “You can do it” was a common emotional
support tactic reported. Through emotional support, parents wanted motivate their children, having broad vision for future and having awareness of the current situation so that they can act responsibly for their education. To reach that motivation, vision and awareness, parents used positive role modeling, gave negative real life examples, provide instructions to avoid conflicts with teachers, and talk to them about problems. One of the parents used his older son as an example and role model for his younger son to motivate him for success in SAT exam. He said: “Get an example from your brother in the beginning, he did not study at first for the SAT but then he understood the seriousness of the issue. He studied well and he got good score on the SAT.”

Similarly, another parent said that they tried to expose their son to people who could be good role models and examples to him. The father got involved in a school trip with students of high ideals in the belief that their son’s contact with such students will change his perspectives and vision. The mother shared:

We try to expose him to people who can be good models good examples for him. His dad got involved in a school trip with students who got scholarship of school with students with high ideals good ideals so we believe he is being contacting with such students will change his perspectives and vision.

Parents often brought not only positive examples but negative real-life examples to their children’s attention as a way to motivate them to achieve high educational goals and success. One parent said:

“We try both negative and positive way. We say “Do you want to work at Walmart for $6 an hour? This may be not the best way but at some point we cannot help but give this example.”
Another parent reported similar approach:

I give example from people’s life. I am not sure if it is good or bad to give such an example I am showing him people working outside in the hot weather and telling him, Look, my child, how hot the weather is outside. When they don’t continue [in] school they work constructing roads; they work [at hard labor.] People work under the sun in the hot weather to win their bread. But if you continue your education you can earn your bread in the office environment in the more comfortable situation. Use your brain. At the end you will be the breadwinner of your future family. At the end, as a man your responsibility is much different (higher) than a woman’s. You know you decide.

These two male students were motivated by their parents through real life examples.

Another parent motivated her daughter by saying “go further in your education and save your life”. The given examples and motivation words used by Turkish parents indicated their perspective toward future success. Turkish parents value education insomuch as they view it as similar to saving one’s own life. Therefore, they use extreme examples to improve their children’s motivation for future success. Even though there would be other options for their children’s future plans other than being construction workers or working for minimum wage, Turkish parents used these extreme examples to motivate their children. In the literature Kao and Tienda (1995) suggested and higher educational expectations and optimism of immigrant parents lead greater educational achievement. Even though Turkish parents have high expectations and optimism they also used relatively pessimistic examples to motivate their children for future achievement.

In addition, parents motivated their children so that emotions and conflicts will not intervene with their academic work. One parent, PR4, said:

“Don’t conflict with your teachers and other personalities. If you have some conflicts about homework or grades do not lose your interest toward that class. Focus on your class rather than people.”
Another parent PR2 gave similar advice to her son:

Be good boy, be smart boy, listen your teachers, obey their rules, do not respond them back. I am constantly reminding him these things. Even though you are angry you can’t talk back to your teacher be silent whatever teacher talk never ever do not talk back. I always tell him like that.

The role of the teacher in Turkish sociocultural view indicates third authority figure in children’s world after their parents (Isik- Ercan, 2010). Accordingly, the latter parent advises her son to be respectful to teachers as you do in Turkish culture.

School Experience and Performance. Interviews with parents revealed that parents of Turkish American youth feel their childrens’ performance needs improvement. Even the parents of children who get mostly all A’s in their classes indicated this need. Almost all of the parents whether they were satisfied with their child’s school performance or not, stated that “it could have been better”. Most parents complained that their children do not study much and spend inadequate time on homework. Forgetting to turn homework in, careless, disorganized attitudes, lack of motivation, lack of passion or competitive attitudes were the common themes occurred from the data. Turkish parents do not find their children motivated enough for academic and future success. They compared their children attitude toward school work and study with their own and found it inadequate for future success. One parent commented:

My son might need more motivation [for future educational plans] because extra motivation needed especially for children who are growing in United States. We always study very hard in Turkey [when we were students] children here think that they studied very hard even though they actually studied much less.

Another parent similarly complained that:

When we were students [in Turkey] we never needed external motivation from our parents for studying. We barely help house chores due to long study hours. It was in our blood so we study hard. But in my child, I don’t see this. He is not putting enough effort or enough time for studying. So we try to motivate him.
It is important to note that these parents were students in Turkey. It is important to know their background to understand their perceptions about children’s attitudes toward studying. In Turkey, college education is very important and key for future success. The admission process is different than in United States. Turkish parents in this study were students in Turkey where 2 steps 3 hour- long college entrance exam was held once a year. Students who score above certain point in the preliminary exam have an opportunity to enter the second exam. A good score on the entrance exams along with high GPA was the only way to be able to get in good colleges. Since, number of colleges and quota were limited and less than number of students; many students also did not have a chance to attend and had to postpone their educational plans to next year’s exam. For instance, the number of high school seniors applied for the 2003 preliminary exam was 521,331 and the number of students from previous years was 873,311 (OSYM, 2003). It means 873,311 students from previous years had postponed their plans to 2003 exam. In total 1,451,811 students entered the preliminary exam in 2003 (OSYM, 2003). To date annual college entrance exams and related conditions are still effective. However, in early 2014, Turkish Education Ministry planned to change the college admission process from one exam to multiple exams during high school education years starting in 2016-2017 academic year.

In Turkey, many students’ future dreams and success were tied to the score they obtained from these exams. Therefore, students develop anxiety and understand entrance exam as life or death issue (Sahin, Gunay & Bati, 2006). According to a research done by Turkish Education Ministry in 1986, the anxiety students have for university entrance exams was higher than the anxiety of patients for surgery (Baltas, 2003). Therefore, studying for university entrance exams and get a good score has much meaning for Turkish students. They did not need much external motivation for this study, because their environment and social context that they lived in
nurtured the feeling of “I need to study more”. Therefore, students usually study very hard especially in their high school senior year and studying hard become natural thing for those students. Similarly, one mother in this study expressed “studying hard was in our blood”. Turkish parents who were students of education system that motivated them for longer study hours having difficulty to accept relatively short studying hours and they complain about lack of passion of their children for studying. Therefore, as parents they felt pressure to motivate their children for future success.

One of the parents who was pursuing her master’s degree mentioned that she has concerns about low standards of the state and lack of challenge for her child. Even though he gets all A’s, the mother was not happy with it because she fears he is not preparing him future success on the SAT exam.

This finding was consistent with literature that reported foreign born parents valued the importance of education and they emphasize receiving good grades, completing high school and attending college (Fuligni & Fuligni, 2007; Caplan, Choy, & Whitmore, 1991; Gibson& Bhachu, 1991; Waters, 1999).

Most of the parents reported that their child attended school activities. Only PR6 and PR7 reported their child were not very active in extracurricular activities.

**Home Language.** All of the parents reported that the spoken language at home was Turkish. However, not all Turkish American adolescents preferred Turkish when they communicated with their siblings or Turkish friends. PR1, PR3 and Pr4 reported their kids prefer Turkish when they communicate with their siblings and rarely do they use English for the conversations. Three parents reported that their children spoke to each other or to Turkish friends in English. One parent who finds both languages used in same level by his children said
conversation starts in Turkish but all of the sudden it turns into in English. Almost all parents reported that their children lose Turkish vocabulary and continue conversations by using English words in Turkish structure and mixing vocabularies from two languages. Actually, one of the Turkish American youth named this tendency as “speaking Turklish language”. Even though they can communicate both languages, English is dominant and takes priority when children communicate with their friends and siblings. English was reported as most comfortable language for their kids by the parents. Only one parent (PR5) believed both languages were at the same comfort level for her child.

**Perceived Barriers by Parents.** Codes constructed from the open-ended question about the difficulties and barriers students perceived were used as basis for parent interview coding. The following themes were identified from the parents’ interview data about difficulties and barriers parents think that their children encounter: financial, academic, psychological, personal skills, changing environment, and occupational.

Financially, U.S. higher education is expensive and it was seen as an obstacle by parents for their children’s educational plans. Parents were also worried about academic difficulties, and unfamiliarity with the U.S. college admission system. One of the parents who had only been in the U.S. a few years also expressed that she didn’t know the US education system well enough. She needed more guidance and counseling. Another parent who had been in the U.S. more than 10 years said:

I am not very familiar with college admission system, so I am concerning that I am not support him enough. We are trying our best, but if we were in Turkey I would know the system with all the updates and everything and I would be more comfortable to help him or guide him. I am learning here along the way so this may be factor as a difficulty for his future educational plans. There are some factors that we are not experienced or our kids are not involved back in our country so I am afraid to skip these things for him and realize that when it is too late.
The concern of Turkish parents has been reported in literature. According to Developmental Contextual Framework (Vondracek, Lerner & Schulenberg, 1986), individuals live in multiple social contexts. Each context may have risks (barriers) and protective factors (support); higher level of school engagement and aspirations were related to fewer barriers and more support from family. Turkish parents find their unfamiliarity with the U.S. education system as a barrier for their children’s education since it may weaken their support for their children’s educational goals. This is consistent with previous studies that reported lack of information about postsecondary education system, economic resources and language ability might be barriers for parents to support their children adequately (Fuligni & Fuligni, 1997).

In addition to unfamiliarity of the system, lack of effort, not spending adequate time studying, the SAT exam, and lack of study skills were reported by parents as barriers for their children’s educational goals. Psychological barriers included lack of motivation, boredom, distraction, and self-confidence. Personal skills included difficulties such as lack of memorization skills, inadequate time management, being not organized. One parent concerned difficulty related to occupation and reported job finding would be barrier for her children. Changing environment is also reported by parents as cause of difficulty. One parent PR4 said:

“If they (her children) go to out of town for education, they may have difficulties.” This barrier may be more concerning especially for female students. Another parent PR7 expressed her concerns about possible stereotypes toward her daughter said:

She lives in a Turkish environment: she has Turkish friends at school; she spends time with Turkish friends at the Turkish Cultural Center. When she leaves that environment for college she may face difficulties regarding her Islamic identity, stereotypes may occur. She is not ready yet. She is not mature enough.

This parent pointed out protective factors offered by social context that her daughter live in. Her daughter lives in Turkish American social context and currently it nurtures her needs and
supports her identity. However, once she leaves for college in new social context she may not have support she used to felt (protective factors) and may feel barriers related to her identity and stereotypes since she is covering her hair with headscarf.

Similarly, for another parent changing environment, moving from Turkey to the U.S., affected their children in a negative way. She reported that there were cultural differences between Turkey and that U. S. that concerned her. “There are cultural differences and I am afraid if my children degenerated and get affected by the different culture in universities here.”

**Involvement with Turkish Culture and Ethnic Community.** To better understand the Turkish-American youth experiences, parents were asked following questions regarding their children involvement with Turkish Community: Does your child participate in The Turkish cultural center’s programs and activities? How attractive are those programs to your child? Are those programs helpful or not? And in what way are they helpful?

It was observed that parents perceived their children’s involvement with Turkish Culture and ethnic community a positive support for their development. All of the parents said their children attend Turkish Cultural Center programs and they are attractive for their children. Parents’ responses were coded and then using axial coding (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, 1998) was performed to find relationship of codes. Major themes, such as social benefit, cultural benefit and individual benefit were observed from the data.

Social benefit: Almost all of the parents reported that their kids enjoy socialize with their Turkish-American friends through participation in Turkish cultural center programs. Following excerpts from parents indicated social benefits: “Yes he likes to involve with people contact with people. He is looking forward to going there.”; “He attends (to programs in Turkish cultural
center). He became more socialized person”; “She likes to go.”; “With his peers he enjoys more doing activities with them together”. One parent pointed out the social benefits by following:

Our kids do not know how to play together they only know technologic games. They need to learn how to play together. In cultural center they attend outside activities together and learn how to play together. Since relatives extended family members are not here in U.S. They have that function for him as well.

Cultural benefit: Turkish cultural center activities and programs were seen as an opportunity for the Turkish American youth to get familiar with Turkish culture, learn and practice traditional Turkish arts, and get religious and moral education. One parent shared:

Whenever there is an opportunity he enjoys being volunteer in cultural festival and similar organizations. He is learning Turkish culture and history by participating in programs of Turkish Cultural Center.

Individual benefit: Parents reported variety of benefits for Turkish American youth by attending Turkish Cultural center’s program. They reported that their kids became more independent, more mature, more relaxed. Parents found that the mentorship program that is coordinated through Turkish Cultural Center was essential for their children’s education and cultural identity:

He impressed with nice ideas of mentor Turkish college students. I think he got positive energy from them. There comes some occasions and topics that he may take into account his mentor college student more than his parents.

Another parent commented:

She is getting rid of her stress, she came back in a relax mode to home after activities. She spends time with to mentor university students and I found her more mature after her spending time with them. I am also satisfied.

Based on these examples, it is possible to conclude that interview with parents indicated consistent findings with The Developmental Contextual Model (Vondracek, Lerner & Schulenberg, 1986). Developmental Contextual Model suggests studying individuals and
context together due to their interaction that plays important role for individuals’ development. Individuals may face risks (barriers) and protective factors (family support) in social contexts that influence their educational and career development. According to parents’ interview data, involvement with Turkish cultural center provided protective factors such as social, cultural, and emotional supports for young Turkish-American individuals who experience multiple social contexts that offers both supports and barriers.

**Analysis of Student Interviews**

The following table shows the profile of the student interview participants:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Aspiration</th>
<th>Expectation</th>
<th>Parent Educ. Dad/Mom</th>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Comfort Language</th>
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Based on Predisposition stage of College Choice Model (Hossler & Stage, 1992) and Developmental Contextual Model (Vondracek, Lerner & Schulenberg, 1986) and the characteristics of Turkish culture following aspects were focused during interview with Turkish
American students: parents’ role on students’ educational plans including expectations and support, school experience and performance, home language, perceived barriers and involvement with Turkish culture and ethnic community.

**Parent Expectations and Agreements for Educational Plans.** Almost all of the students participated in the interview reported that their parents ‘expectation for future education was consistent with their own plans and higher for some students. A female student whose parents were both holding PhD and M.D. degrees reported that she aspired for master’s degree whereas her parents think that she can obtain PhD.

Almost all of the students reported higher levels of aspirations. Only one student aspires for Bachelor’s degree. Other students reported they aspire to get graduate education or other advanced degrees.

Turkish student interviews revealed consistent results with results of quantitative analysis. Generation level, for example, was not associated with educational aspirations in the quantitative analysis. Similarly, first generation and second generation Turkish American the students who participated in the interviews reported similar educational aspirations (60% of both groups were aspired for PhD or M.D.)

Interviews with students indicated importance of their mother’s education which was found associated with educational aspirations of the students in correlation analysis. Even though mothers did not obtain high educational degrees as related to the fathers as, their influence and support of their children’s educational goals were substantial. One of the male student reported that her mother strongly encourage him and his brother and put trust in them. He said “My mom support and says: ‘You can be anything you want.’ But my dad is encouraging me toward teaching profession”. Another male middle school student reported that her mom
have higher aspirations for him. His mother has education less than high school and his father has master’s degree. He said:

    Mom wants more than my father; my father thinks it would be ok masters, but mom wants me to get more in education because my mom did not go to school as far as my dad. [Mom has less than high school degree and Dad has graduate degree]. That’s why she may want me go to more in school.

Two students whose fathers both have PhD’s shared that they don’t want to spend much time for advanced degrees. A male high school student whose father is an administrator in a higher education institute said: “I want to finish university, maybe obtain a master’s degree but PhD is [too] much time.” A female student whose father was holding a PhD also said, “I just want to finish the required amount and get a job. I don’t want to go on and on…”

These findings are in line with the literature. It was reported that mothers’ aspirations were higher than fathers’ and it significantly more influential and the children’s educational plans than fathers’ aspirations (Meng, 2009).

Turkish parents and students mostly agreed on educational aspirations and indicated higher level of educational aspirations. The difference was observed between parents and students on career aspirations. Interview with students showed that parents’ aspirations for careers differ from students’ own future plans. Parent interviews also revealed the same results. Medical doctor and teacher were most common career choices for parents. There was variety of reasons behind parents’ career aspirations. Gender roles in Turkish culture, religious concerns, social mobility and altruistic expectations were among reasons both parent and student interviews revealed. Turkish parents more likely encourage their children to specific occupation rather than forcing them. For instance, the following statement made by male high school student whose father helped him find internship in business and finance areas for the summer even though he preferred him to be a teacher.
…but my dad is encouraging me toward education and teaching profession. He says you can be more helpful for the humanity. It is better to be more helpful for the humanity. However, I am thinking following my path now. I am doing internship and discovering the finance profession.

Another male middle school student shared the following:

My parents also think I will be a doctor. My parents do support me in my plans. I’ve always wanted to be a doctor and they’ve always helped me… I want to be a doctor because I like helping people and want to help people that are why my parents want me to become a doctor… My parents are also pushing me to become a teacher, I think if I don’t become a doctor I could become a math or physics teacher.

Another male middle school student said, “My father (who is a math teacher) wants everybody in our family to become a teacher. But I think I would not be a good teacher.” It was observed that these male students would not readily change their career aspirations based on their parents’ desire. They determined to keep their career choices and take into account parents’ suggestions as second options. In relation to the Developmental Contextual Model’s perspective, depending on the degree, parents’ encouragement for certain occupation may suggest potential risks (barriers) for students’ future aspirations. One of the students in the survey also described this conflict as: “I want to use my acting skills but it will not fulfill my parents’ expectations. I just feel like I have no choice but to be a teacher.”

This barrier may become more apparent for female students who feel restrictions for future educational goals due to discrepancy between general atmosphere, conditions of desired career and her identity. A female high school student shared conflict of her plans with her parents’ expectations for future career. She emphasized that her aspiration for future career may not be suitable for her in religious perspective and being a Muslim in less representative career area can be a difficulty for her future plans:

I want to finish college (media and art) and want to be a director or producer. My parents think I will go to great places and achieve great things. My mother wanted me to become a news reporter, but they actually want me to become whatever I want, however they
want me to become a teacher more than go into media because movies and producers
don’t necessarily have Muslims and the environment isn’t considered very suitable.

Her comment emphasized both risks and protective factors suggested in Developmental
Contextual Model (Vondracek, Lerner & Schulenberg, 1986) for future career aspirations.
Conditions and traditional atmosphere at desired career choice, indicated risks for her future
plans and development. On the other hand, her perceptions about parents’ support” indicated
protective factor (parental support).

Parental Support. Perceived parental support, as a protective factor for development of
students’ educational aspirations, was also explored through student interviews a. Perceived
parental support by Turkish American students showed similar pattern with parent interview
data. Academic success was main focus of advice and support that students received from their
parents. Strategies for academic success, logistic support, and emotional support were also
common themes found in the analysis.

Strategies for academic success: These were verbal encouragements that student
received from their parents about how to success academically. Study hard, work hard, do not
waste your time, and limit time on internet, read more books, attention in class, and study extra
after completing homework were among the verbal encouragements reported by Turkish-
American students. Students mostly expressed that they find these strategies helpful for their
education. However, during interviews some students found some strategies hard to employ:
(Parents encourage him to study 6-8 hours). “Sometimes this is helpful. But 6-8 hours to study is
not easy for teenagers. I need to go outside.”

Logistic support (outside assistance): Students reported that their parents support them
with additional help from outside resources. Tutoring, monitoring, and searching for internships
and extracurricular activities, financial support were examples of logistic support.
Emotional support: Students reported that their parents motivated them and encouraged them by sharing their trust in them:

“Don’t be shy one, be a leader”, “Be successful we are here for you.” These are what they told me, and that did help me because I know whatever I do, they will always support me and that motivated me to be able to so much more with my interest.”

The type of support students mostly reported were strategies and logistic support from their parents. However, there are some occasions parents support the student even though student was not aware of it. “He [is teenager], acts like he can solve every problem he has. But I involve in his problems behind the scene”.

**School Engagement and Experiences.** It is possible to conclude that school engagement which refers to amount of time for homework, paying attention in class has much valued both by Turkish American youth and Turkish parents. Parental support, for example, usually revolved around improving academic success of the students. School activities were important for students and some of them reported high interest in them. Most of the students involved in and some students stated the importance but for some they were not crucial, “They are very important, because, they might bring you on a level for scholarships.” The importance of school activities and clubs for Turkish students was related to college acceptance and scholarship purpose or seen as secondary importance level. Another high school student said: “I don’t think clubs are things that need a lot of effort, after all it’s just a club, and I am interested in but not as much as my classes.”

Regarding parents emphasize on academic success, and future college acceptance are much related to school achievement (GPA), SAT scores, and scholarship, Turkish American youth mostly mentioned these factors as barriers for their future educational plans. Therefore, it
is not surprising that result from quantitative study revealed that school engagement factor was significantly related to educational aspirations of Turkish-American youth rather than school activities.

**Home Language.** The spoken language in Turkish American students’ households was mostly Turkish. However, when students have difficulty remembering the word in Turkish they switched to English if their parents or siblings know English. One student described the situation of mixing two languages as talking in “Turklish”. The majority of the interview participants reported that they feel most comfortable using English rather than Turkish. The ability of Turkish-American students’ to speak Turkish is a supportive factor for their educational plans. In fact, ability of ethnic language was found advantageous for students’ academic achievement (Bankston & Zhou, 1995). Turkish students speak Turkish at home with their parents until they have difficulty to remember the Turkish word for the conversation. Having Turkish language ability improves communication of educational plans and contributes to educational aspirations. Turkish language ability is an important tool for the communication of parents and children. Possible conflicts or dilemmas between career choices of students and parents would only be solved through communication. The literature noted that unless communicated to children parental expectations have little effect on students’ educational performance (Chen & Lan, 2006).

**Perceived Difficulties and Barriers by Turkish American Youth on Educational Plans.** Codes constructed from the open-ended question about the difficulties and barriers students perceived, as well as codes from parent interview data were used as basis for student interview coding. The following themes were identified from the students’ interview data about
difficulties and barriers: Financial, academic, psychological, personal skills, environment, and occupational.

Financial difficulties and hardship of getting scholarship were mostly concerns of the high school students for their future educational goals. One female high school student shared:

I want to go to University New York we live in Texas that is kind a far. From you know my family it’s kind of hard for them to let me go. Live over there by myself. Also because isn’t it more expensive to go college outside the state? So, that is a lot of money. It is also being hard for me to go there and get in to that school.

Her thoughts reflected difficulties related to academic, financial, emotional and environmental. Due to these barriers, the student planned to attend a college in the city that her family lives in. Even though student has aspirations for future plans due to the barriers they experience, they modify their aspirations so that they can achieve them. However, those modified aspirations are more likely to be called expectations because they imply what students think will happen in future not what they hope for (aspirations).

Another student who was new in the U.S. also mentioned difficulties related to new environment and culture:

I am already a shy person, I cannot easily make friends. Now, in the United States, it is new environment, new culture. I was raised in different environment, I am new here. Therefore, I hesitate if I say something and it would be inappropriate or wrong and people get me wrong.

This student’s experience emphasized the importance of context for students’ educational aspirations development. To understand her aspirations and decision the context she lives in plays crucial role. Because she is new she keep herself back and not participate in class. At the very important stage of her life when she is forming her future plans and developing her skills this student experienced cultural and individual barriers that affect her plans and decision. It is
highly likely that students tend to indicate higher aspirations for their future but in their mind they might have expect from themselves another education level or occupation.

Academic difficulties reported were GPA, SAT exam, essay writing for college application, and inadequate study skills. Barriers related to personal skills included lack of being punctual and inadequate time management. Psychological barriers included lack of motivation, boredom, and distraction, and attention, anxiety, social fears, being new in US, stereotypes toward headscarf. Following the clothing practice according to the Religion of Islam was perceived a potential barrier for occupational plans of one female student. The following statement represents both psychological and occupational barrier:

I see that my hijab might become a barrier for me, as in media there are people that don’t like or approve of Muslims and I practice my religion. But they won’t be able to know if I don’t wear hijab. If I did go work for a Turkish TV, I don’t think that would be a major problem.

Turkish-American students who feel difficulties or barriers toward their educational plans, tried to find a more comfortable environment so that they can keep their future plan. Previous studies have found high aspirations related to fewer barriers (Kenny et al., 2003). It may require modification of their aspirations according to barriers and risks that they experienced. Instead of following their aspirations and being a pioneer in a certain area as an immigrant youth, they modify their aspirations in certain level so that it can be achievable. This last female student tried to find a secure place that is a job in Turkish TV or media so that she will not be subject of disapproval of Muslims in some media. This modification of the educational aspirations makes clear distinction necessary between aspirations and expectations of Turkish American students. Then it would be easier to help those students to overcome barriers.
**Involvement with Turkish Culture and Ethnic Community.** Involvement with Turkish culture and ethnic community was explored by asking following questions to the students: Do you participate in The Turkish cultural Center’s programs and activities? How attractive are those programs to you?

In consistency with the Developmental Contextual Model and other previous studies, involvement with Turkish Culture and ethnic community provided positive support for educational aspirations development.

All of the students participated in the interview attended programs and activities that Turkish Cultural Center organized. Students found programs very attractive and helpful. Students are volunteering in the programs such as cultural festivals, parties. This helps them to involve with Turkish culture and keep their ties with Turkish American community and even other cultures. One male high school student shared that he also has an opportunity to learn about new people and cultures in the center. Since programs are open to people from other cultures, they also attend the programs. Students have opportunity to meet members of other cultures through those programs.

The interview results indicated that The Turkish Cultural Center not only gives students a space to learn about Turkish culture but also to meet with Turkish American peers and socialize with them. As suggested by the literature, the students’ connection with Turkish culture gave them an opportunity to have special social context in which they can feel less risks or barriers and feel more support from people who have similar background (Vondracek, Lerner, Schulenberg, 1986).

Almost all of the students emphasize the attractiveness of the involving, socializing with Turkish American friends. In addition, they were taking religious education in the center and
read Turkish books to retain and improve their Turkish fluency. The center also coordinates a mentorship program among Turkish-American youth similar to big brothers big sisters program. As a focal point for Turkish Americans in a large southern city, the center matches middle and high school students with college/graduate students from Turkey. Students from similar age groups have a mentor sister or a brother who encourage and motivate them. Sometimes students study with their friends sometimes mentor brother tutor them and do activities together. Turkish American students who involve with the center have an opportunity to go movies, to play soccer, to go dinner with their Turkish American peers. One student said in addition to her American friends, cultural center provided her a space that she can have another friend circle consisted of Turkish Americans. Another student said: “I feel I became more socially active person.”

Cultural center also offered traditional Turkish art courses such as ebru (water marbling), Ney (a traditional Turkish musical instrument) as well as other modern art courses (drawing, guitar). Student stated that:

Before [attending] cultural center activities I had no relationship with cultural or art clubs and activities. The programs and activities helped my horizon expanded on variety of things. I play nay right know but would like to improve it, or I can learn how to play guitar. I also would like to learn how to play violin.

Turkish American youth through Turkish Cultural center keep their ties strong with their ethnic community. Students have an opportunity live their cultural atmosphere there and the effect of being first or second generation would be very little. This may explain why generation level was not significant for Turkish American students’ educational aspirations.

**Summary**

This study was designed to understand factors related to Turkish American youth’s educational aspirations. The survey provided information about important factors found in the
literature of both educational aspirations and immigrant students’ educational experience. Data included students from other ethnicity groups and even though there was a small sample size, it was possible to compare Turkish American students with all other ethnic group students. Perceived barriers for future educational plans both by parents and students were also explored for Turkish American youth to understand their experience better. Areas of studies for future education were also explored for Turkish American and other ethnic group students. Interviews with parents and students contributed to the exploration of the Turkish-American youth’s experience more in depth and provided valuable information.
CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to understand the educational aspirations, plans and experiences of Turkish American youth. The study explored the influence of factors related to school, family, and the individual on the educational plans of Turkish American middle and high school students. The study also identified what kind of obstacles and difficulties Turkish American youth feel, which areas of study they mostly prefer for future education and occupation. Moreover, to have deeper understanding of their experience, characteristics’ of Turkish culture and involvement with Turkish community, perceived parental support, and parents’ perceptions of students’ educational plans were also explored. The conceptual framework of this study was developed based on Hossler & Stage’s (1992) College choice model and the Developmental Contextual Model (Vondracek, Lerner & Schulenberg, 1986). Additional factors that are discussed by researchers in the literature of immigrant students were included in the model to address the unique experiences of Turkish immigrant students.

This study aimed to contribute to the current literature on educational aspirations and immigrant children’s educational experiences. A mixed –method approach provided quantitative and qualitative data to answer all research questions. The results allowed the researcher to draw conclusion about the data and to make recommendations for future studies. This chapter is organized into following sections: 1) Discussion of findings 2) Conclusions 3) Limitations 4) Recommendations for future studies
Discussion

Quantitative data collected from Turkish American students and other racial ethnic group students were the main source for addressing the research questions. Qualitative data collected from Turkish American students and parents provided additional support and explanation of the quantitative results thus yielding triangulation of findings and expand understanding of their experiences.

The result of this study indicated that the most influential factors for predicting Turkish American students’ educational aspirations were parents’ expectations and school achievement (GPA). This finding is consistent with the result of Hossler and Stage’s Predisposition stage of College choice Model (1992). According to their reduced model, Hossler and Stage (1992) found that most influential factors for predicting students’ educational aspirations were parents’ expectation, school achievement (GPA) and high school activities.

Figure 5.1 Reduced Model of Predisposition (Hossler & Stage, 1992)
School activities which indicated involvement levels of the students in school clubs and activities were not found to be related to Turkish American students’ educational aspirations. It was reported that active involvement in school clubs and extracurricular activities was beneficial for a student’s future educational attainment (as cited in Hossler & Stage, 1992; Spady, 1975; Otto, 1976). However, instead of school clubs and activities, Turkish American students’ educational aspiration has significant association with school engagement. Even though, this relationship was not found to be strong enough to predict aspirations in the quantitative part of the study, in the qualitative part of the study, student interviews and parents’ interviews indicated school engagement was essential for Turkish American students’ educational plans and performance. The addition of the school engagement factor improved the strength of association between factors and educational aspirations (from Nagelkerke = .624 to .637). Moreover, the interview data indicated that even though Turkish parents and students value extracurricular activities and school clubs for future educational goals, they value academic achievement and school engagement more. Turkish American youth success in future educational goals very much corresponded with GPA and students’ engagement with classes. School activities, extracurricular activities and clubs were not significantly related to educational aspirations as was school engagement which indicates student attitude toward Math and English classes. The results indicated that spending time on homework, attending classes, concentrating in class, and paying attention to class work were more important for Turkish American students rather than being involved with school clubs and such activities in school. Instead of school activities, school engagement has relationship with educational aspirations of Turkish Americans. School activities related to other ethnic students’ educational aspirations in similar way as school
engagement related to Turkish American students. However, this relationship was not strong enough also to predict educational aspirations of other ethnic students.

Turkish as spoken language at home has positive association with educational aspirations of Turkish American students. This finding was consistent with the literature that having mother tongue other than English has a positive effect on educational aspirations of immigrant students (Liu, Thai & Fan, 2009). Family economic status, which was measured through eligibility of free or reduced lunch, was another factor which seemed to be related to educational aspirations of Turkish American students but it was not significant predictor for educational aspirations. Overall, high socioeconomic status of the students is related to high educational aspirations for Turkish Americans. However, for PhD education there were more students (58%) from lower socioeconomic status aspired than higher socio economic status (49%). This may be explained by the effect of social mobility, which motivates students to aspire for higher levels of education for better future.

Mother’s education has significant relationship with educational aspirations. Interestingly, despite their higher education level (36 % PhD), the father’s education was not related to students’ aspirations. Moreover, interviews with students and parents revealed that Turkish American mothers were much likely to involve with their children’s educational plans, encourage and support them. Turkish immigrant mothers who could not further their own education motivated their children for further more in education. Mothers who could not go beyond a middle school education strongly supported their children for future success. “Go further in education and save your life” This encouraging statement from a Turkish mother who has less than high school education indicated how much she values education for her daughter’s future. This finding was supported by earlier researchers who found that parents who
felt less secure about their status in U.S. gave more attention to their children’s educational progress so their children will have more secure and higher status (Fuligni, 1998; Fuligni & Yoshikawa, 2004).

Generation level was not significantly related to the educational aspirations of Turkish American students. Being a first generation or second generation immigrant does not affect the level of educational aspiration of Turkish American students. There was only one Turkish nonimmigrant student in the sample; therefore there was no possibility to determine the differences between immigrant and nonimmigrant Turkish students.

The reduced theoretical model of Turkish American students’ educational aspirations is shown in the following figure:

![Figure 5.2 Reduced Model of Predisposition Model for Educational Aspirations of Turkish American Youth](image)

The results of this study add to the studies emphasizing the importance of involving parents in programs and policies. Kao and Tienda (1995) found immigrant parents’ optimism and second generation immigrant students’ language ability important for the students’ achievement and aspirations. Therefore, it was suggested that a similar optimism needs to be generated within the
U.S. born parents. This study contributed to this knowledge from another perspective. Turkish American parents should be involved with programs and policies so that they will develop moderate standards for their children’s educational goals. Turkish parents, who were raised in Turkey where future success in life solely depends on the higher score they obtained at general university entrance exams, have developed an “all or nothing” notion for future educational goals for their children. This notion may have been applicable in Turkey, but United States higher education is well-varied depending on the institution, students’ academic achievement and abilities. It is possible to find appropriate institution for each student who wants to pursue higher education. There are more career options that fall in entering well respected universities (ivy league universities) or working on minimum wage Turkish American students who were raised in United States are unlikely to have as strong a motivation toward academic success as their parents did. Interviews with both students and parents revealed that parents find their students’ motivation low in comparison to their motivation and longer hours of studying. High motivation of Turkish parents for their students’ educational and occupational goals may need to be adjusted to the United States context so that students will feel more support and less anxiety for their future plans. Since these parents are also new to the United States education system, the Turkish parents’ strong “all or nothing” strategy for motivation may need to be modified. Parents’ understanding the US higher education admission system, options for future careers in addition to classic careers will help both students and parents to have better experiences for their future goals.

This study confirmed previous studies about aspirations and expectations of minority youth. Some Turkish students felt difficulties and barriers toward their future aspirations and assumed that instead pursuing dream career student may end up what conditions offer for
him/her. One student commented, “I feel like I have to be a teacher …” Previous studies noted that minority youth may have high aspirations for future but may not believe that they can attain these aspirations due to economic and structural barriers (Smith, 1983).

Figure 5.3 Educational Aspirations of Turkish American Youth

Based on the findings of the current study educational aspirations of Turkish American youth is showed in Figure 5.3. Academic achievement, parents’ expectations and aspirations are the most influential factors for aspirations. In addition, barriers and supports that Turkish American students experience in social contexts shape their future plans. High parent expectations are influential for educational aspirations of Turkish American students. However, depending on the student and parents, these expectations and aspirations may function as barrier or support for the future plans of the student. Constant emphasize of parents on studying hard may function as a barrier for a student who finds it difficult to study longer hours. In addition,
students may understand parents’ strong aspiration for certain profession as a barrier for their own career plans.

On the other hand, as literature suggested having immigrant parents and their emphasize on education support Turkish American students’ plans for higher education. Parents’ logistic support, emotional, and verbal encouragements along with involvement with Turkish ethnic community that supports their social, individual and cultural skills may play protective factors for Turkish- American students’ future plans.

The study results also indicated that Turkish –American students perceived more personal skills and psychological barriers together than financial or academic barriers. Supporting them on these areas and helping them to overcome barriers may facilitate their reach to their educational goals.

Turkish American students have advantage of immigrant parents who comes from strong study skills. It would be a protective factor for them. However, it would be also a risk factor for them if it would be used without parents’ understanding the context of Turkish-American youth currently live in. It is crucial for Turkish parents to understand the United States education system and the context that their children experience. Diminishing the gap between parents’ and students’ understanding of US education system may improve Turkish American students’ educational experiences and help to reach future educational goals.

Other Students in the Study

The application of the Hossler & Stage Model (1992) to all other ethnic students revealed that only parents’ expectation was a significant predictor for educational aspirations of other ethnic students. The results of the study also revealed that father education, mother education, school activities, generation level and first language fluency were factors that have significantly
related to educational aspirations of other students. These associations were not surprising since in literature these factors were found important for students’ educational aspirations. On the other hand, not all of them were found significant predictors for educational aspirations for other ethnic students. In addition to the Hossler & Stage Model (1992) the significantly related factors were also added to investigate their influence on educational aspirations of other ethnic students. These factors were generation level and first language fluency. It was found that first generation students have higher educational aspirations than both nonimmigrant students and second generation students. First language fluency was not influential for the other ethnic students’ educational aspirations.

Figure 5.4 Reduced Model for Educational Aspirations of Other Ethnic Group Students
Conclusions

This section includes the conclusions based on the research findings. Conclusions are categorized by research question.

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between educational aspirations and family, school experience and individual characteristics of middle and high school students?

Correlation analysis revealed that parents’ expectation, mother education, eligibility for free lunch, GPA, school engagement, language spoken at home have significant relationship with Turkish American youth’s educational aspirations. The survey results indicated that parental expectation has strongest relationship with the students’ educational aspirations. Parents’ expectation, GPA and mother education factors have significant relationship with educational aspirations of middle and high school students of both Turkish American and other ethnic group of students included in the study. Turkish American students’ educational aspirations were also associated with eligibility for free or reduced lunch, language spoken at home and school engagement. These results for Turkish American youth were consistent with literature on educational aspirations. Parents’ expectations, education level, and academic achievement, were reported influential factors for the educational aspirations of the children. Parents’ expectations, which were reported as most influential for educational aspirations, were found to have strongest relationship with educational aspirations of Turkish American students.

However, for the other ethnic student included in the study, educational aspirations were associated with father education, school activities, generation level (immigrant status) and first language fluency.

Research Question 2: Can educational aspirations of Turkish immigrant and other ethnic group students be predicted from family, school and individual factors?
Educational aspirations of Turkish American students can be predicted from Parents’ expectations and school achievement (GPA). Education aspirations of the “other” ethnic group students can be predicted from parents’ expectation and generational level (immigrant status). Family and school factors were influential for Turkish American students while family and individual factors (being first generation or second generation immigrant) were influential for all other students.

Research Question 3: Do Turkish-American students differ from students of other ethnic groups in terms of educational aspirations?

There were no significant difference between Turkish American students’ and other students’ educational aspirations. However, Turkish American students reported higher percentage for aspirations beyond college education. 33.3% of Turkish American students while 22.1% of other students aspired for master’s degree. Similarly, 46.3% of them and 42.9% of other students aspired for PhD degree or advanced level of education.

Research Question 4: Do female and male Turkish-American students differ in terms of educational aspirations?

Even though survey results indicated that male students were more likely to have higher aspirations than female students there were no significant differences observed between Turkish American female and male students. The students who participated in interviews showed that female students have higher levels of aspirations (62.5% for PhD or M. D.) than male students (57.14% PhD or M.D.).

Research Question 5: Which areas of study do Turkish-American and other ethnic/racial group students prefer for their future education?
Turkish American middle and high school students planned to pursue mostly STEM and Biological sciences which were followed by Social science, art & humanities, and business. Asian American, Hispanic/Latino American, and European American students mostly preferred STEM sciences while African American students preferred biological sciences.

Research Question 6: What kind of barriers do Turkish immigrant students experience in pursuing their educational plans?

The survey results indicated that financial/ economic barriers were the most frequently perceived difficulty for Turkish American students, especially for high school students. This was followed by barriers related to socio-psychological and personal skills. Both survey and interview results indicated that difficulties which have direct or indirect effect on academic performance were taken seriously by Turkish American students and their parents. For instance, in addition to SAT exams, and high GPA, personal skills such as time-management, memorization skills, multi-task capability, organizational skills, focusing problems, getting bored with long hours of studying were perceived as barriers for future educational goals. Interviews with students and parents also revealed that there were some hesitations about Turkish female students who chose to wear a headscarf. It was expressed that by wearing headscarf, which adds visible difference from majority of other females, might bring stereotypes from others when the student gets to college or chooses certain profession. English language fluency was problem for recent Turkish immigrant youth.

Research Question 7: How do Turkish-American parents perceive their children’s educational experiences and how do they support their children?

Turkish parents, especially mothers, were closely involved with their children’s academic progress. Logistic, strategic (verbal encouragement) and emotional supports were identified from
parents’ interview data. Academic success is very important and perceived as a key for future success. One of the most frequent advices they give to their children was “study hard, study well, and don’t waste your time”. They used real-life examples to motivate their children to study more and be successful.

Turkish parents acted to prevent any probable obstacles from the path of their children’s academic success. They also re-visit their own student years in Turkey and make comparison in evaluating their children’s attitudes toward studying. Most of them do not find them adequate and want them to improve more.

In relationship to future educational plans, some of the parents also suggest certain areas of study or profession to their children. Gender roles, cultural expectations, and altruistic concerns were influential factors. Some of the parents value education very much and they want their children to be an educator. However, they still give their child a freedom to choose but do not hesitate to inform / encourage them about the other options.

Research Question 8: How do factors related to family, school and culture shape educational plans of Turkish-American youth?

Parents’ expectations and school achievement were the most influential factors in shaping a Turkish American youth’s educational aspirations. Good education is very important for both Turkish parents and youth. In fact, for Turkish students and parents, obtaining a bachelor’s degree was a natural consequence for schooling not extraordinary accomplishment. Turkish American Youth has strong ties with their own ethnic communities. This connection brings multiple contexts to their life. Their family, school and Turkish community play important role in shaping their educational plans, and identity. The contribution of Turkish cultural center for the students’ motivation for further education was an important one. Similar to Big Brother, Big
Sister program their mentorship program keeps Turkish American youth involve with older mentors who college /graduate students. Consequently, students have an opportunity to learn about college options and career opportunities.

Limitations

This study employed survey research and interviews to collect the data. However, participants of the survey were members of the Turkish Cultural centers in East Coast and Southern United States. It would be helpful to include students from other geographic locations in US. Many of the Turkish students were from middle- high economic status and their fathers have higher levels of education. Even though Turkish immigrants’ median family income and education level was not very low (According to US Census, 2010, the median family income was around $63,000 and 52% of the 25 years old or older Turkish immigrants have bachelors or graduate degree), inclusion of the participants from other economic status and educational background would have improved the generalizability of the results.

Another limitation of the study is the students from other ethnic groups in the sample were not representative of the general populations of each ethnic society. The other ethnic group students were only suggestive of how the Turkish American students compare to other ethnic groups. It would have been very beneficial, if participants of the study from other ethnic groups were representative of the general population. However, due to participants’ self-selection for the participation in the study rather than random selection and limited sample size, other ethnic group students in the sample were not representative of the general population. Therefore, it is not possible to make meaningful comparisons of Turkish American students with each ethnic/racial background students.
Recommendations for Future Research

This study explored the factors related to Turkish American students’ educational aspirations. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used in this study to obtain deeper understanding of the Turkish American youth’s experience. A mixed-method approach with larger sample from various regions of the US will be helpful for making comparison with other ethnic/racial group students and should be considered if replicated. It would also useful conduct survey research with Turkish American parents and compare expectations of Turkish American mothers’ and fathers’ for their children’s educational plans and performance.

This study focused on predisposition stage of the College Choice process. It would also be beneficial to investigate Search and Choice phases of College Choice model for Turkish American students (Hossler & Stage, 1992). Since interview analysis revealed parents were concerned about their insufficient knowledge about the U.S. higher education process, it would be helpful to unfold these phases for Turkish American students.

The results of this study indicated that studying occupational aspirations of Turkish American students and related factors, such as parents’ expectation would be helpful for further understanding their plans and experiences.
REFERENCES


Hutchinson, S. (2012). First steps in designing quantitative research: Asking the right questions [PowerPoint slides]. Retrieved from University of Northern Colorado [http://www.unco.edu/ctfl/faculty_development/workshops%202012.html#summer2012](http://www.unco.edu/ctfl/faculty_development/workshops%202012.html#summer2012)


http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/immigration.html
http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservlet/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_10_1YR_S0201&prodType=table


Please fill out this survey to the best of your ability. The survey should take approximately 25 minutes. Thank you for your participation.

**What is your age?**

**Gender**
- Female
- Male

**Grade level**
- 6th
- 7th
- 8th
- 9th
- 10th
- 11th
- 12th

**How far in school would you like to go?**
- Less than high school
- High school diploma or equivalent
- Associate degree (2 years college degree or vocational technical degree)
- Bachelor's degree (graduate from 4 year college)
- Master’s degree
- PhD (doctorate), M.D. or other advanced degree
- I don't know

**How far in school do your parents think you will go?**
- Less than high school
- High school diploma or equivalent
- Associate degree (2 years college degree or vocational technical degree)
- Bachelor's degree (graduate from 4 year college)
- Master’s degree
- PhD (doctorate), M.D. or other advanced degree
- I don't know

Please respond each of the following questions by choosing the numbers that best fit your English level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 (very poor)</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5 (very good)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is your present level of English fluency?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 (never)</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5 (always)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How often do you communicate in English?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How comfortable are you communicating in English?</td>
<td>1 (not at all comfortable)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What is your mother tongue (first language)?

Language spoken at home

Please respond each of the following questions by choosing the numbers that best fit for your first language (mother tongue)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is your present level of first language fluency?</th>
<th>1 (very poor)</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5 (very good)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How often do you communicate in your first language?</th>
<th>1 (never)</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5 (always)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How comfortable are you communicating in your first language?</th>
<th>1 (not at all comfortable)</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5 (very comfortable)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please respond the following question by choosing the numbers that best fit for your involvement in school activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1 (not active)</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>4 (very active)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>art</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>athletics</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cultural events</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>debate or speech</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drama</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>journalism</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>social/special clubs</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>music</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>student government</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please answer following questions for your Math and English classes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>None</th>
<th>About 15 minutes</th>
<th>About 30 minutes</th>
<th>About an hour</th>
<th>About 2-3 hours</th>
<th>About 4 hours or more</th>
<th>Not taking this class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How much time do you put into Math homework each week, including reading assignments?</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much time do you put into English homework each week, including reading assignments?</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Almost every day</th>
<th>once or twice a week</th>
<th>A few times a month</th>
<th>A few times a year</th>
<th>Never cut</th>
<th>Never taken this subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How often do you cut (an unexcused absence) Math class?</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often do you cut (an unexcused absence) English class?</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>Fairly Often</td>
<td>Usually</td>
<td>Always</td>
<td>Never taken this subject</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How often do you really pay attention during **Math** classes?

How often do you really pay attention during **English** classes?

How often does your mind wander in **Math** class?

How often does your mind wander in **English** class?

---

**Which area of study do you want to pursue in your future education?**

- Arts & Humanities (Architecture, Art, History, Language, Literature, Music, Philosophy, Religion)
- Biological Sciences (Agriculture, Environmental Sciences, Genetics, Medicine, Zoology)
- Business (Accounting, Economics, Finance)
- Sciences and Technology (Chemistry, Computer Science, Engineering, Geology & Geophysics, Mathematics, Physics & Astronomy)
- Social Sciences (Anthropology, Education, Geography, Mass Communication, Political Science, Psychology, Social Work, Sociology)

**Please list difficulties/barriers you think you may face for your educational plans:**

---

**Where were you born?**

**Where were your parents born?**

**Where were your grandparents born?**
Ethnicity

- African-American
- Asian-American
- European-American
- Hispanic/Latino-American
- Turkish-American
- Other

So far how many years did you spend in USA?

- less than 2 years
- 2-5 years
- 5-10 years
- 10-15 years
- 15 years or more

Grade point average

- 3.8 - 4.0 or higher
- 3.5 - 3.8
- 3.0 - 3.4
- 2.5 - 2.9
- 2.0 - 2.4
- below 2.0

Father’s education level

- Less than high school
- High school diploma or equivalent
- Associate degree (2 years college degree or vocational technical degree)
- Bachelor’s degree (graduate from 4 year college)
- Master’s degree
- PhD (doctorate), M.D. or other advanced degree

Mother’s education level

- Less than high school
- High school diploma or equivalent
- Associate degree (2 years college degree or vocational technical degree)
- Bachelor’s degree (graduate from 4 year college)
- Master’s degree
- PhD (doctorate), M.D. or other advanced degree

Qualify for a free or reduced lunch?

- Yes
- No

Annual total family income

- 20,000 or less
- 20,001- 50,000
- 50,001- 75,000
- 75,000 or higher
- I don’t know

If you chose Other for Ethnicity please write your ethnic background or Country of Origin:
APPENDIX B
STUDENT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Hello, my name is Dilek Suslu. Thank you for participating in study of educational plans of Turkish American students. I will ask questions about your educational plans. Your responses will be confidential. The interview may last about 30 minutes. May I record the interview?

Time of Interview:
Date:
Place:
Interviewee:

Background characteristics:
1. How old are you? What is your grade?
2. Where were you born? Where were your parents and grandparents born?
3. How long have you been in USA?
4. What is your parents’ education level (highest degree they earned)?
5. Are you eligible for free or reduced lunch in school?

Student Predisposition and parents’ expectations
6. Tell me about your educational plans. How far in school do you want to go?
7. How far your parents think you will go?
8. Which area of study do you want to pursue in your future education? (For example, Arts, humanities, Social or STEM sciences)
9. Do your parents agree with you in this decision? Why or why not?

Student Experience factors
10. What is your current GPA?
11. Do you participate in school activities and clubs? What kind of activities you are involved in? How active you are? How important are those activities for you?
12. How many hours each week do you spend on homework for Math and English?
13. How often do you really pay attention in your Math and English classes?

Factors related to Turkish Americans
14. What language spoken at home?
15. Do you speak Turkish to your siblings?
16. Do you feel comfortable communicating in Turkish?
17. Are you fluent in English? Are you comfortable communicating in English?
18. Which language do you feel the most comfortable when communicating in?
19. Could you tell me about people who have influenced your educational plans?
20. What kind of difficulties/barriers you face or expect to face for your future educational plans?
21. Tell me how do your parents support you in your educational plans?
22. What kind of advice did you get from parents? Tell whether it was helpful or not. If it was helpful, in what way? If not, why not?
23. How do you plan to overcome those barriers and difficulties?
24. Do you participate in The Turkish Cultural center’s programs and activities?
25. How attractive are those programs to you? Are those programs helpful or not? And in what way do they help?
Hello, my name is Dilek Suslu. I am studying students’ educational plans and would like to ask questions regarding your child’s educational plans. Your responses will be confidential. The interview may last about 30 minutes. Thank you for participating in this study. May I record the interview?

Time of Interview:
Date:
Place:

Interviewee:

Background characteristics:
1. How many children do you have in middle and high school? Are they boys or girls?
2. Where were you born? Where were your parents born?
3. How long you have been in the United States?
4. What is your highest degree completed? What about your spouse’ education?
5. Is your child eligible free or reduced lunch from the school? Do you receive any social aid such as WIC?

Student Predisposition and parents’ expectations
6. How far is school your child wants to go?
7. How far in school do you think your child/children will go?
8. Which area of study does your child want to study? Social or STEM sciences
9. Do you agree and support you child in his/her decision for their educational plans? Why?

Student Experience Factors
10. What do you think about your child’ school performance? GPA?
11. Does your child participate in school activities and clubs? How active he/she is? What do you think about those activities? How important those activities for your child’ education?
12. Does she/he put adequate time for her homework? For example how many hours each week she/he spend on homework?

Factors Related to Turkish Americans
13. What language is spoken at home?
14. Does your child speak Turkish to his/her siblings at home?
15. Does your child feel comfortable communicating in Turkish?
16. Does your child feel comfortable speaking in English?
17. Which language he/she feel the most comfortable when communicating in?
18. Tell me what kind of difficulties your children are facing for their educational plans?
19. How do you support your child’s educational plans?
20. How do you encourage your child for his/her educational plans?
21. Tell me about what kind of advice you give to your children about their educational plans.
22. Does your child participate in The Turkish cultural center’s programs and activities?
23. How attractive are those programs to your child? Are those programs helpful or not? And in what way are they helpful?
APPENDIX D
STUDY CONSENT FORM

Doctoral Research Study Consent Form

1. Study Title:  Educational Aspirations of Middle and High School Students: A focus on Turkish American Youth

2. Performance Site:  ___________ School, United States

3. Investigators:  Dilik Atmaca-Suslu is the primary researcher, supervised by Dr. Eugene Kennedy. For any questions pertaining to this research, you can reach Ms. Dilik Atmaca-Suslu at (225) 241-7510 and email: dassuslu@tigers.lsu.edu or Dr. Eugene Kennedy via email: ekennef@lsu.edu

4. Purpose of the Study:  The purpose of this research study to understand educational aspirations of students from various backgrounds and factors influencing their aspirations. The study will also focus on exploring Turkish-American students’ aspirations.

5. Subject Inclusion:  The participants in this study include high school and middle school students in the US.

6. Number of Subjects:  The anticipated number of students participating in this study is five hundred (500).

7. Study Procedures:  The study will be conducted in two phases. Subjects will fill out a survey about their educational plans which will take approximately 25 minutes. Then a focus group interview will be done with students from Turkish background. Students and parents will be asked to participate about 30 minute interview that will focus on educational plans of Turkish American students.

8. Benefits:  The subjects will not receive any monetary benefits from this study. The study will benefit to secondary administrators, school counselors and policy makers to address unique needs of Turkish American students on their educational path.

9. Risks:  This study poses no known risks to the participants. It will not be possible to identify subjects from the study. In addition, every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality of the study records.

10. Right to refuse:  Participation is voluntary, and a student will become part of the study only if both student and parent agree to the students’ participation. At any time, either the subject may withdraw from the study or the subject’s parent may withdraw the subject from the study without penalty or loss of any benefit to which they might otherwise be entitled.

11. Privacy:  Results of the study will be published the investigator’s doctoral dissertation. No names and identifying information will be included. No names will be collected in the survey. Subject identity will remain confidential unless disclosure is required by law.

12. Signatures:  The Study has been discussed with me and all my questions have been answered. I may direct additional questions regarding study specifics to the investigator. If I have questions about subjects’ rights or other concerns, I can contact Robert C. Mathews, Chairman, Institutional Review Board, (225)578-8692, irb@lsu.edu, www.lsu.edu/irb. I agree to participate in the study described above and acknowledge the investigator’s obligation to provide me with a signed copy of this consent form.

Subject’s signature: ___________________________ Date: ________________

Study Exempted By:  
Dr. Robert C. Mathews, Chairman  
Institutional Review Board  
Louisiana State University  
203 B-1 David Boyd Hall  
225-578-8692 | www.lsu.edu/irb  
Exemption Expires: 5/28/2016
APPENDIX E
PARENTAL PERMISSION FORM

Project Title: Educational Aspirations of Middle And High School Students

Performance Site: School, United States

Investigators: Eugene Kennedy, PHD, Associate Professor and Dilek Atmae-Sulu, MA, graduate student. For any questions you have pertaining to this research, you can reach Ms. Dilek Atmae-Sulu at (225) 241-7530 and email: da1@louisiana.edu or Dr. Eugene Kennedy via email skennedy@benton.edu

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this research study is to understand students' educational aspirations for college and the factors influencing their aspirations.

Inclusion Criteria: Middle and high school students who live in the United States

Description of the Study: The students will be asked to fill out a survey about their educational plans during their homeroom time. It would take 25 minutes to complete the survey questions. Then selected students and parents will be asked to participate in interviews that will focus on educational plans of students.

Benefits: The study will benefit to secondary administrators, school counselors and policy makers to address specific needs of middle and high school students on their educational path.

Risks: This study poses no known risks to the participants. It will not be possible to identify the students' identity from the study. Every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality of the study records.

Right to refuse: Participation is voluntary, and a student will become part of the study only if both student and parent agree to the students' participation. At any time, either the subject may withdraw from the study or the subject's parent may withdraw the subject from the study without penalty or loss of any benefit to which they might otherwise be entitled.

Privacy: Results of the study will be published in the investigator's doctoral dissertation, but no names and identifying information will be included. No names will be collected in the survey. Subject identity will be kept confidential unless disclosure is required by law.

Financial Information: There is no cost for participation in the study, nor is there any compensation to the students for participation.

Signatures:

The Study has been discussed with me and all my questions have been answered. I may direct additional questions regarding study specifics to the investigator. If I have questions about subjects' rights or other concerns, I can contact Robert C. Mathews, Chairman, Institutional Review Board, (225) 578-8692. I will allow my child to participate in the study described above and acknowledge the investigator's obligation to provide me with a signed copy of this consent form.

Parent/Guardian Name: ____________________________ Signature: ____________________________ Date: ____________________________

Study Exemption #7
Dr. Robert C. Mathews, Chairman
Institutional Review Board
Louisiana State University
203 E-1 David Boyd Hall
225-578-8692 / www.lsu.edu/irb
Exemption Expires: 5/20/2016
The parent/guardian has indicated to me that he/she is unable to read. I certify that I have read this consent from the parent/guardian and explained that by completing the signature line above he/she has given permission for the child to participate in the study.

Signature of Reader: ___________________________ Date: ____________________
APPENDIX F
CHILD ASSENT FORM

Child Assent Form

Title of Study: Educational Aspirations of Middle And High School Students

You are being asked to be in a research study to help understand educational plans of middle and high school students and related factors. You will be asked to complete a survey which will take approximately 25 minutes. No names or other identifying information will be collected, so no known risks for you. You can decide to stop being in the study at any time without getting in trouble.

I, __________________________, agree to be in a study to help better understand students' future educational plans and related factors.

Signature: __________________________ Age: ______ Date: __________

Witness: __________________________ Date: __________

Institutional Review Board
Dr. Robert Mathews, Chair
203 B-1 David Boyd Hall
Baton Rouge, LA 70803
P: 225.578.8692
F: 225.578.6792
irb@lsu.edu | lsu.edu/irb

Study Exempted By:
Dr. Robert C. Mathews, Chairman
Institutional Review Board
Louisiana State University
203 B-1 David Boyd Hall
225-578-8692 | www.lsu.edu/irb
Exemption Expires: __________

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APPENDIX G
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

Application for Exemption from Institutional Oversight

Unless qualified as meeting the specific criteria for exemption from Institutional Review Board (IRB) oversight, all LSU research projects using living humans as subjects, or samples, or data obtained from humans, directly or indirectly, without their consent, must be approved or exempted in advance by the LSU IRB. This Form helps the PI determine if a project may be exempted and is used to request an exemption.

1. Applicant: Please fill out the application in its entirety and include the completed application as well as Parts A-F, listed below, when submitting to the IRB. Once the application is completed, please the completed application to the IRB Office or to a member of the Human Subjects Screening Committee. Members of this committee can be found at http://research.lsu.edu/Compliance/PoliciesProcedures/InstitutionalReviewBoard/6381889729724737.html

2. A Complete Application Includes All of the Following:
   (A) A copy of this completed form and a copy of parts b thru f.
   (B) A brief project description (adequate to evaluate risks to all subjects and to explain your responses to Parts 18/2)
   (C) Copies of all instruments to be used.
   *If this protocol is part of a grant proposal, include a copy of the proposal and all recruitment materials.
   (D) The consent form that you will use in the study (see part 3 for more information).
   (E) Certificate of Completion of Human Subjects Protection Training for all personnel involved in the project, including students who are involved with testing or handling data, unless already on file with the IRB. Training link: (http://phptrainingtraining.com/users/login.php)
   (F) IRB Security of Data Agreement: (http://research.lsu.edu/files/67474.pdf)

3) Principal Investigator: Dink Kuwala
   Dept: ELRC
   Ph: 225-241-7530
   Rank: Graduate Student
   E-mail: dlkuwala@lsu.edu

4) Co-Investigator(s): Please include department, rank, phone, and e-mail for each
   (Dr. Eugene Kennedy, Associate Professor
   ELRC, School of Education,
   225-578-2193
   eugene.kennedy@lsu.edu

5) Project Title: Educational Aspirations of Middle and High School Students: A focus on Turkish American Youth

6) Proposal? (yes or no) No
   If Yes, LSU Proposal Number

7) By checking the box, I certify that this application completely matches the scope of work in the grant and all IRB Applications will be filed later.

8) Subject pool (e.g. Psychology students) Middle and high school students
   *Circle any “vulnerable populations” to be used: (children <18, the mentally impaired, pregnant women, the elderly, etc.). Projects with incarcerated persons cannot be exempted.

9) PI Signature: Date 5/9/2013 (no per signatures)

** I certify my responses are accurate and complete. If the project scope or design is later changed, I will resubmit for review. I will obtain written approval from the Authorized Representative of all non-LSU Institutions in which the study is conducted. I also understand that it is my responsibility to maintain copies of all consent forms at LSU for three years after completion of the study. If I leave LSU before that time the consent forms should be stored in the IRB Office.

Screening Committee Action: Exempted

Signed Consent Waived: Yes

Category/Paragraph

Reviewer: Matthew
Signature: Date 5/21/13
VITA

Dilek Atmaca-Suslu grew up in Istanbul, Turkey. She received a Bachelor’s degree in Turkish Language and Literature from Istanbul University in 1993. She had worked for 6 years as a Turkish Language and Literature teacher before coming to the United States along with her husband who pursued a graduate degree in the United States. She received a Master’s degree in Education at Louisiana State University in 2008. She worked as a research assistant and teaching assistant at LSU. Her research interests are immigrant students, educational aspirations, and educational attainments.