# ACADEMIC TRAJECTORIES OF NEWCOMER IMMIGRANT YOUTH BY CAROLA SUAREZ-OROZCO, FRANCISCO X. GAYTAN, HEE JIN BANG, JULIANA PAKES, ERIN O'CONNOR, AND JEAN RHODES.

A longitudinal study summary of three factors affecting newcomer immigrants' academic trajectories. Using the stories of immigrant youth, the authors reviews the failures of existing methods and frameworks provided in the field.

This article summarizes the results of a longitudinal, mixed-methods study conducted to measure three factors affecting newcomer immigrants' academic trajectories. The authors first provide a summary of existing theoretical frameworks used to discuss newcomer immigrant youth experiences in schools, such as the following:

- New immigrants face higher poverty levels
- Greater needs met by less-resourced schools
- Racially/economically segregated schools also limit them
- Parental education and employment is a factor
- English language fluency helps
- Psychological distress
- Gender gap among minorities - girls outperform boys

They then suggest that these existing frameworks and methods fail to account for the personal discrepancies in individual experiences. "These studies fail to control for macrosystemic variables, making conclusions about the effects of immediate contextual and individual factors shaky at best. Hence, we employed an... approach designed to bring the circumstances faced by this population and the impact of contextual and individual factors into high relief" (604). Their proposed person-oriented perspective assumes that results are interpretable on the individual level; likewise, it acknowledges that "questions and prompts that are valid for one group may be neither valid nor culturally and linguistically unbiased for another group" (605).

The study used data from the five-year Longitudinal Immigrant Research Adaptation (LISA) study, which gathered participant statistics in the following categories: age, years in the US at grade 1, family characteristics (3 subsets), school characteristics (4 subsets), and individual characteristics (6 subsets). The current study recruited 407 participants. Data for each participant was collected in the following reference groups: school characteristics, family characteristics, academic engagement, academic English proficiency, psychological symptoms, age, and gender. Measurement techniques included parent interviews, case studies, a 10-item scale of student perceptions of violence, a self-report scale for academic engagement, and other curated and developed tools. At the study's conclusion, the 75 case studies were sorted and coded according to latent growth class modeling analysis.

The study found 25% of participants to be high achievers after 5 years, 11% to be improvers, 25% slow decliners, 27.8% precipitous decliners, and 14.4% low achievers. The authors conclude their article with descriptions of each group as well as a discussion of consistencies and inconsistencies within the study's results.

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<https://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/releases/dev-46-3-602.pdf>