

Cross-generational differences in educational outcomes in the second great wave of U.S. immigration

Umut Ozek, American Institutes for Research/CALDER
David Figlio, Northwestern University and CALDER

+ Introduction

- In the second half of the 20th century, both the U.S. and Western Europe experienced large immigration waves
- Western Europe: Share of foreign born individuals rose from 3.5% to 10.3% over past five decades
- USA: Since 1965, 2nd largest immigration in history
 - Share foreign-born rose from 5% to 13%
 - Mostly from Latin America or Asia
 - First/second generation immigrants to account for 1/3 of school-aged children by 2050
- How immigrant youth fare in school has significant implications



Summary of existing literature

- Lots of research on educational attainment of immigrants but comparatively little regarding immigrant performance in school
- Two streams of research – based on survey data and administrative data
- General conclusions from literature:
 - Early entering immigrants perform comparably to or better than natives
 - Significant variation by country of origin
 - Once differences in SES and language proficiency are accounted for, first generation outperform comparable natives

+ Limitations with existing data

- Survey data
 - Allow comparisons between first, second, third generations
 - Limited number of student outcomes, no information on schools
 - Small sample size, hinders subgroup analysis
- Administrative data
 - Large sample size, detailed info on educational experiences
 - Limited information on family characteristics
 - Comparisons limited to first generation vs. all other U.S. born students

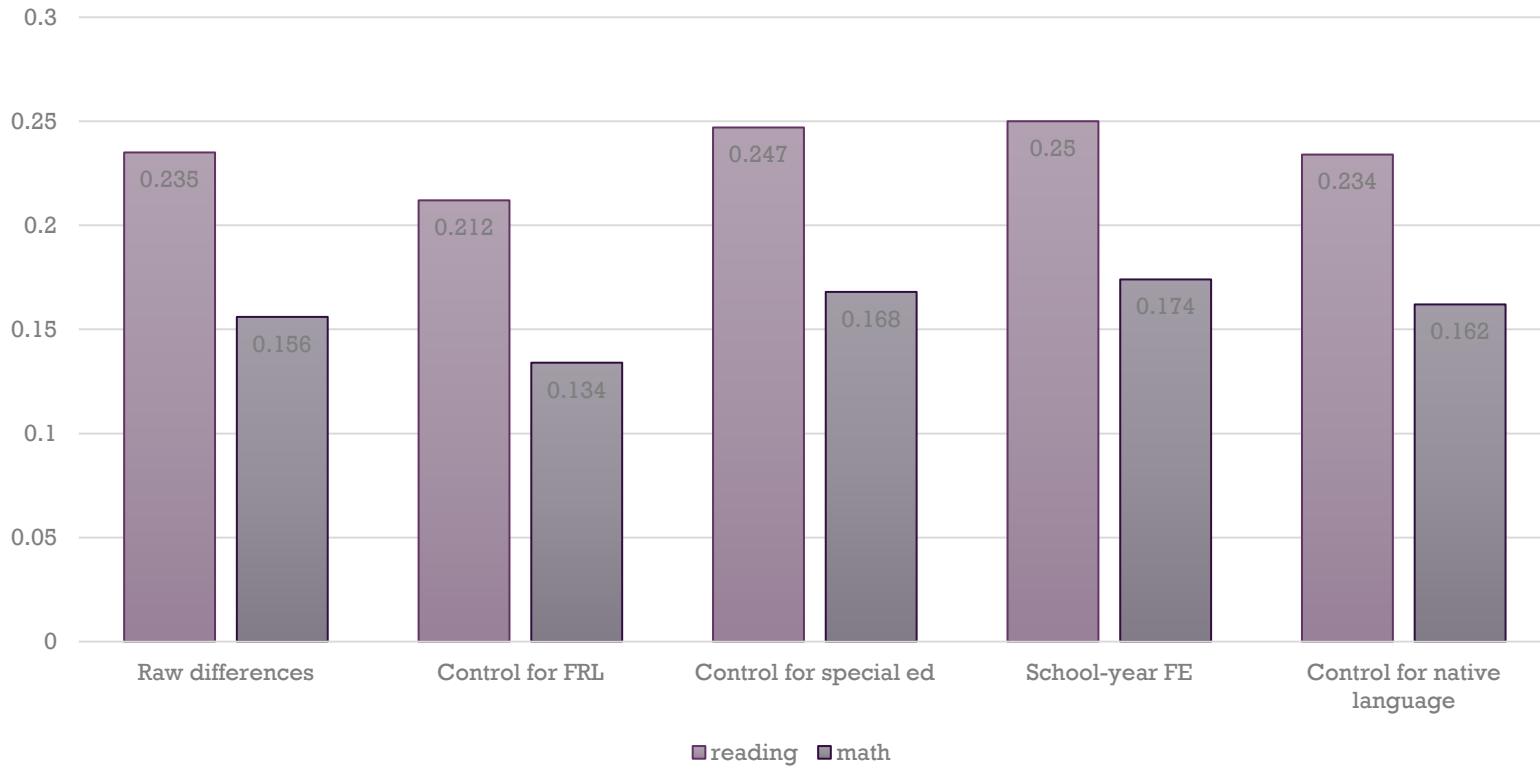
+ What we do

- Unique student-level data from Florida, linked to birth records
 - Allows us to distinguish second generation immigrants
 - Provides variables not observed in school records (e.g., parental education, marital status, maternal age)
- Follow 2 million individual students from 2002-2011
 - Look at progress of individual immigrant students over time
 - Conduct subgroup analysis and observe explanations for gaps
 - Hispanic students: 210k 1st gen, 213k 2nd gen, 103k 3rd gen
 - Asian students: 28k 1st gen, 21k 2nd gen, 3k 3rd gen
- Wide array of outcomes
 - Test scores, high school graduation, disciplinary incidents, truancy



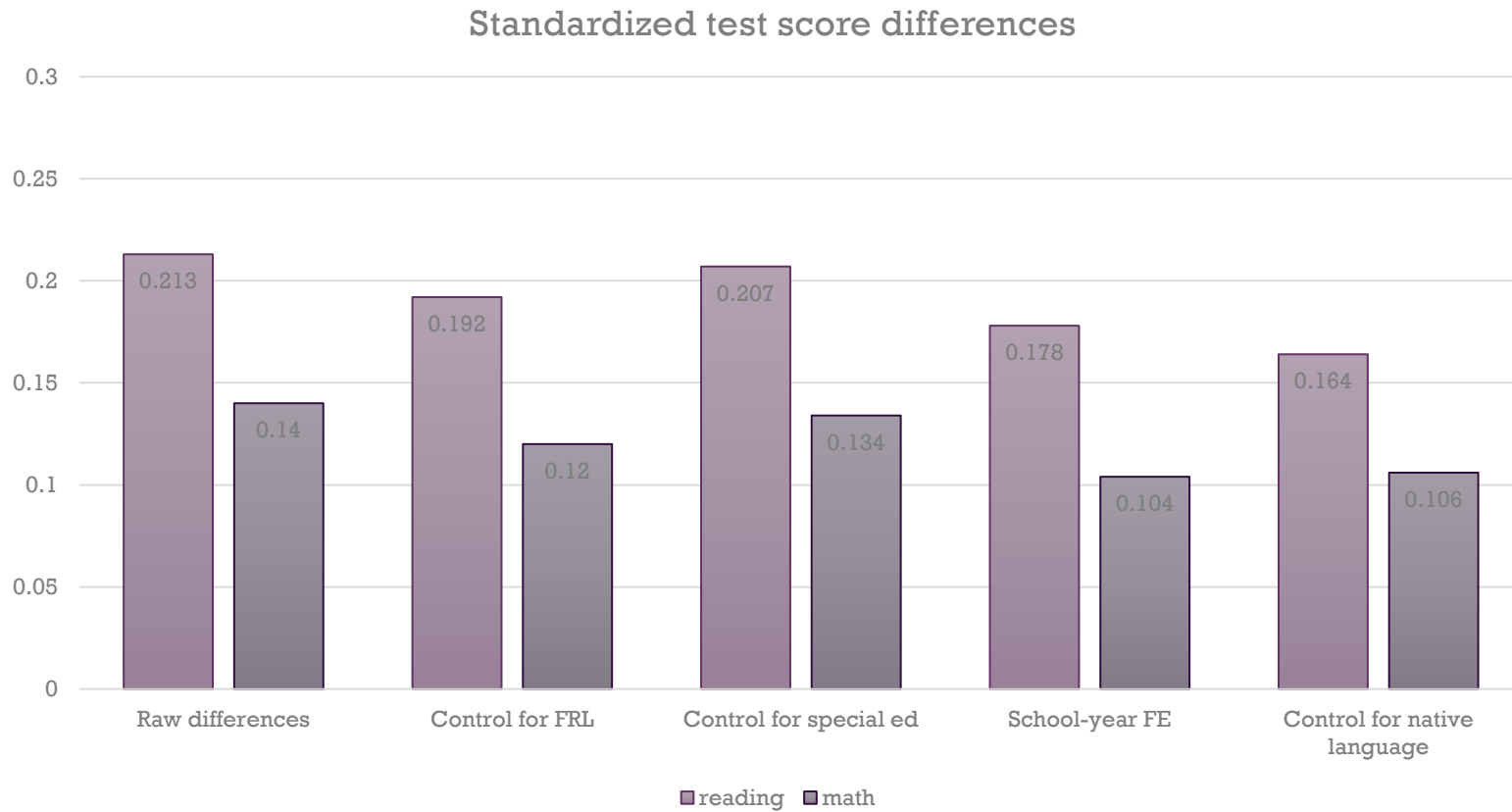
Comparing 2nd vs. 1st generation Hispanic students

Standardized test score differences



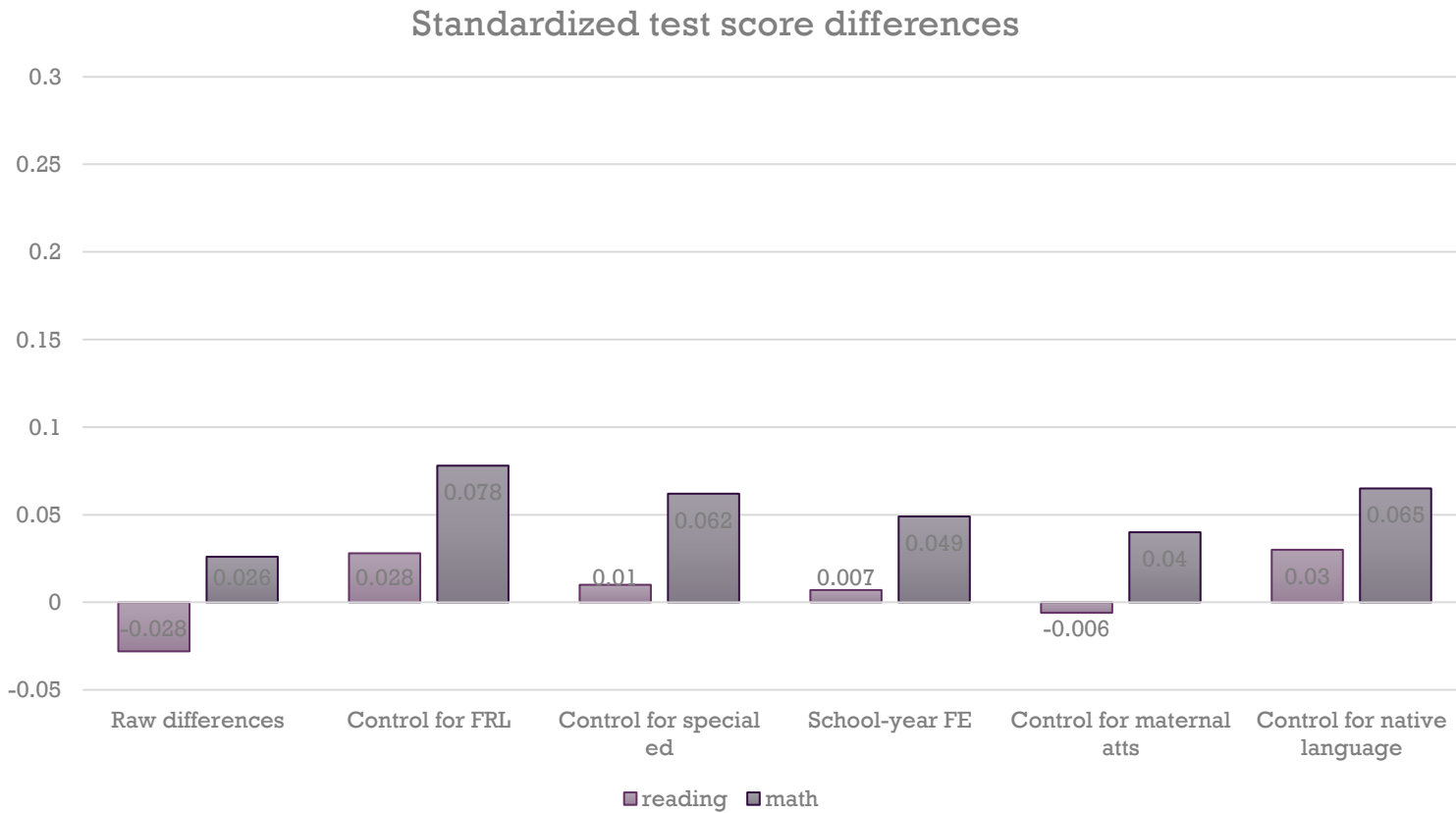


Comparing 2nd vs. 1st generation Asian students





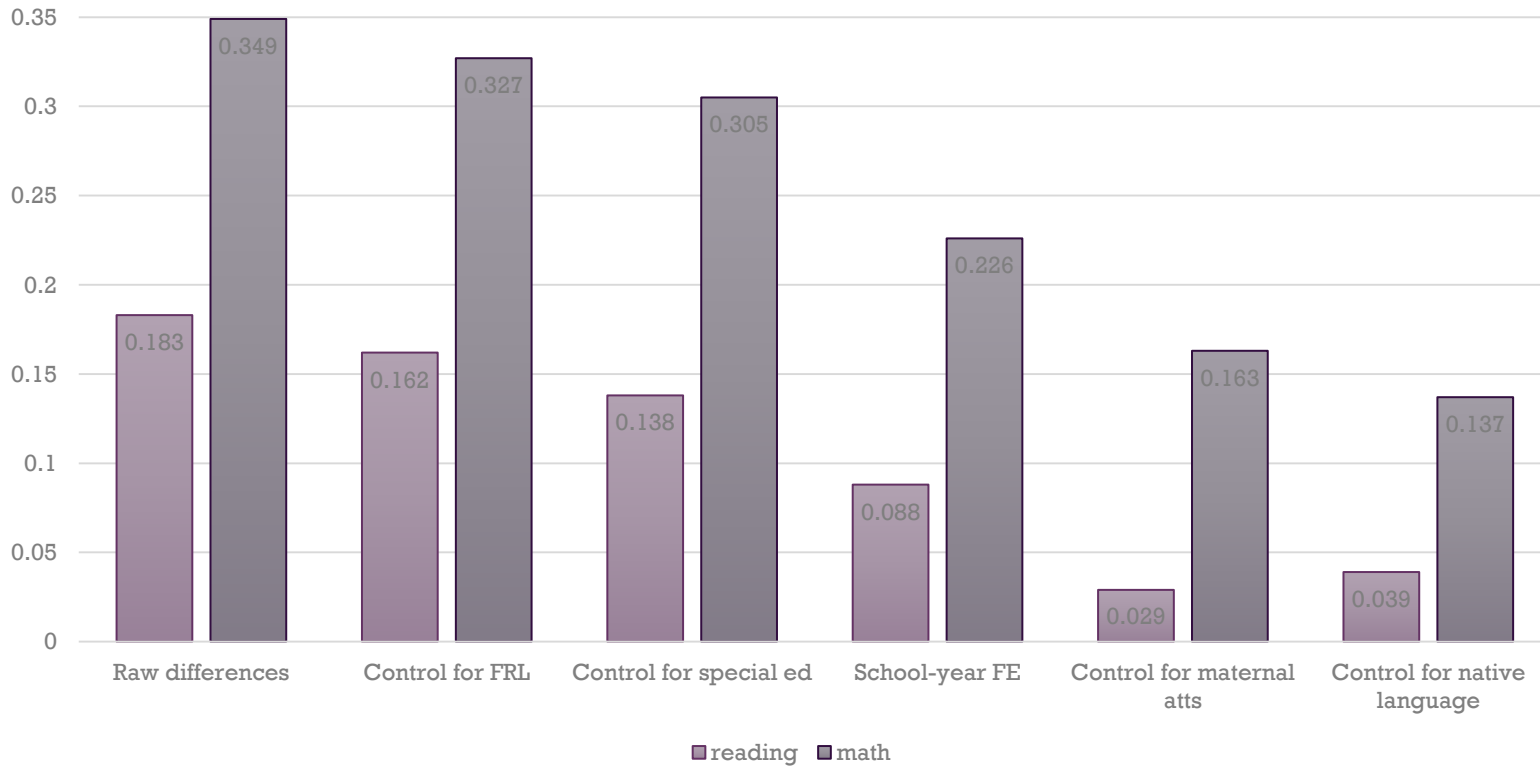
Comparing 2nd vs. 3rd generation Hispanic students





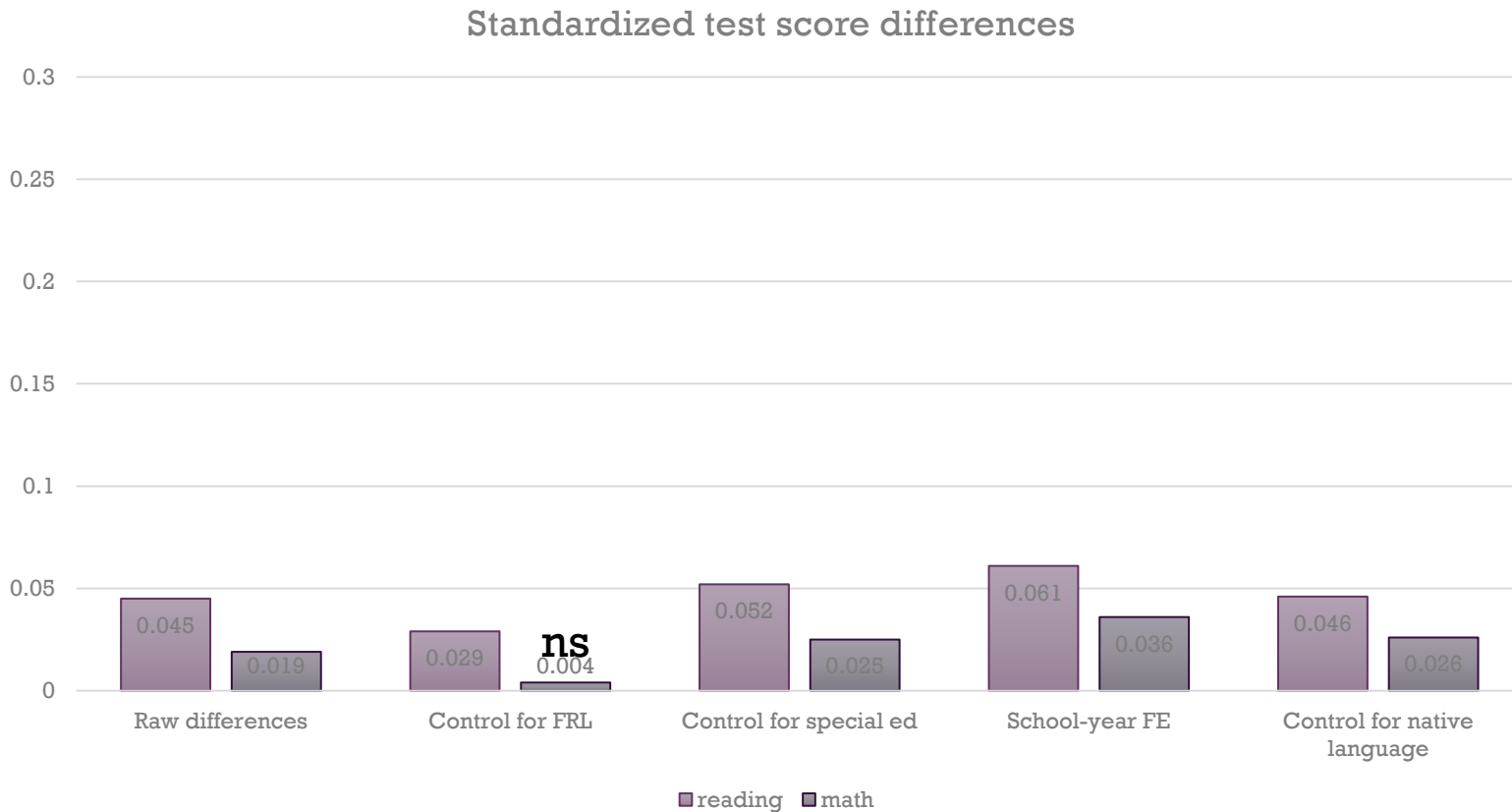
Comparing 2nd vs. 3rd generation Asian students

Standardized test score differences



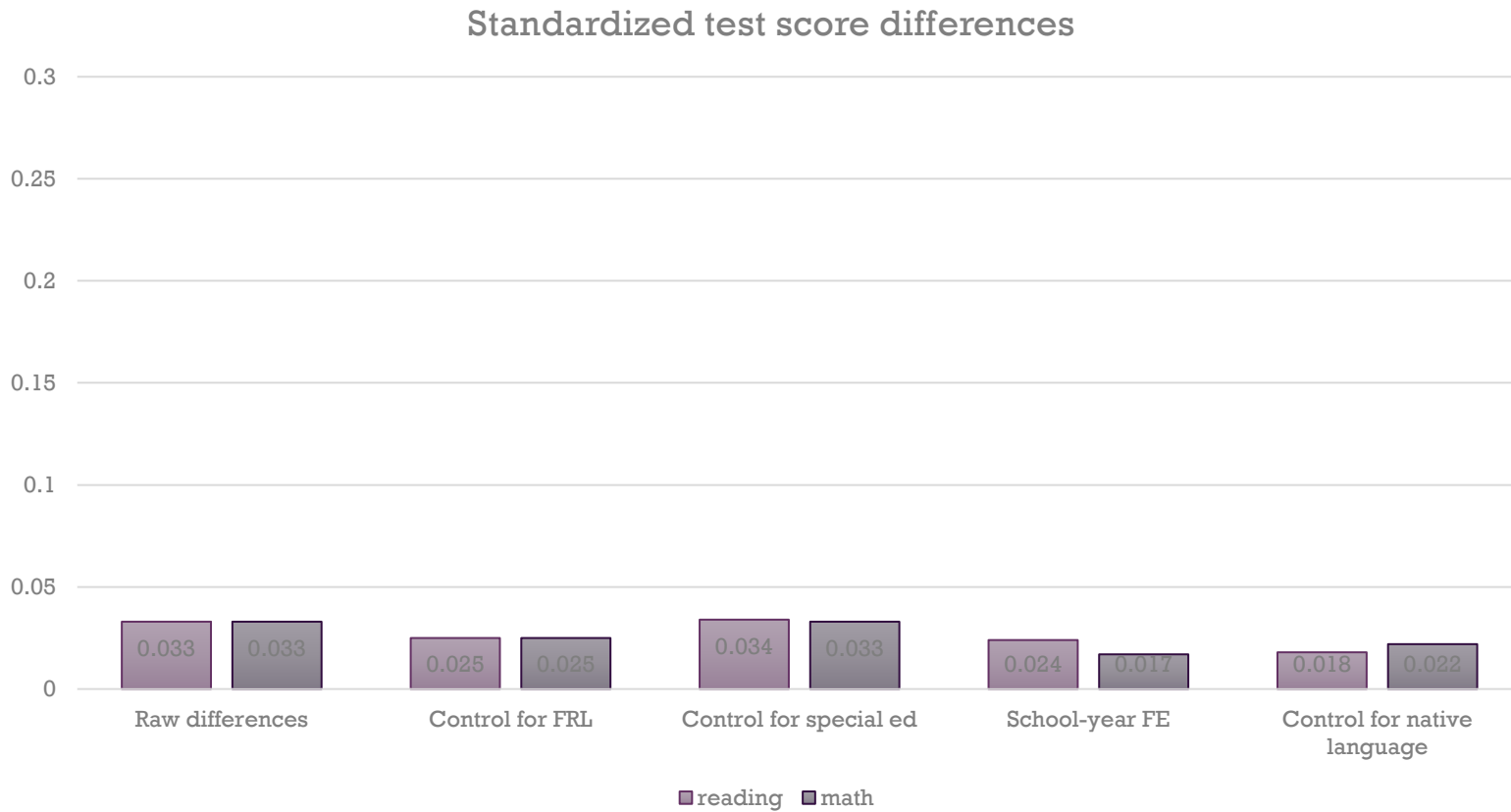


Comparing 2nd vs. early-arriving 1st generation Hispanic students



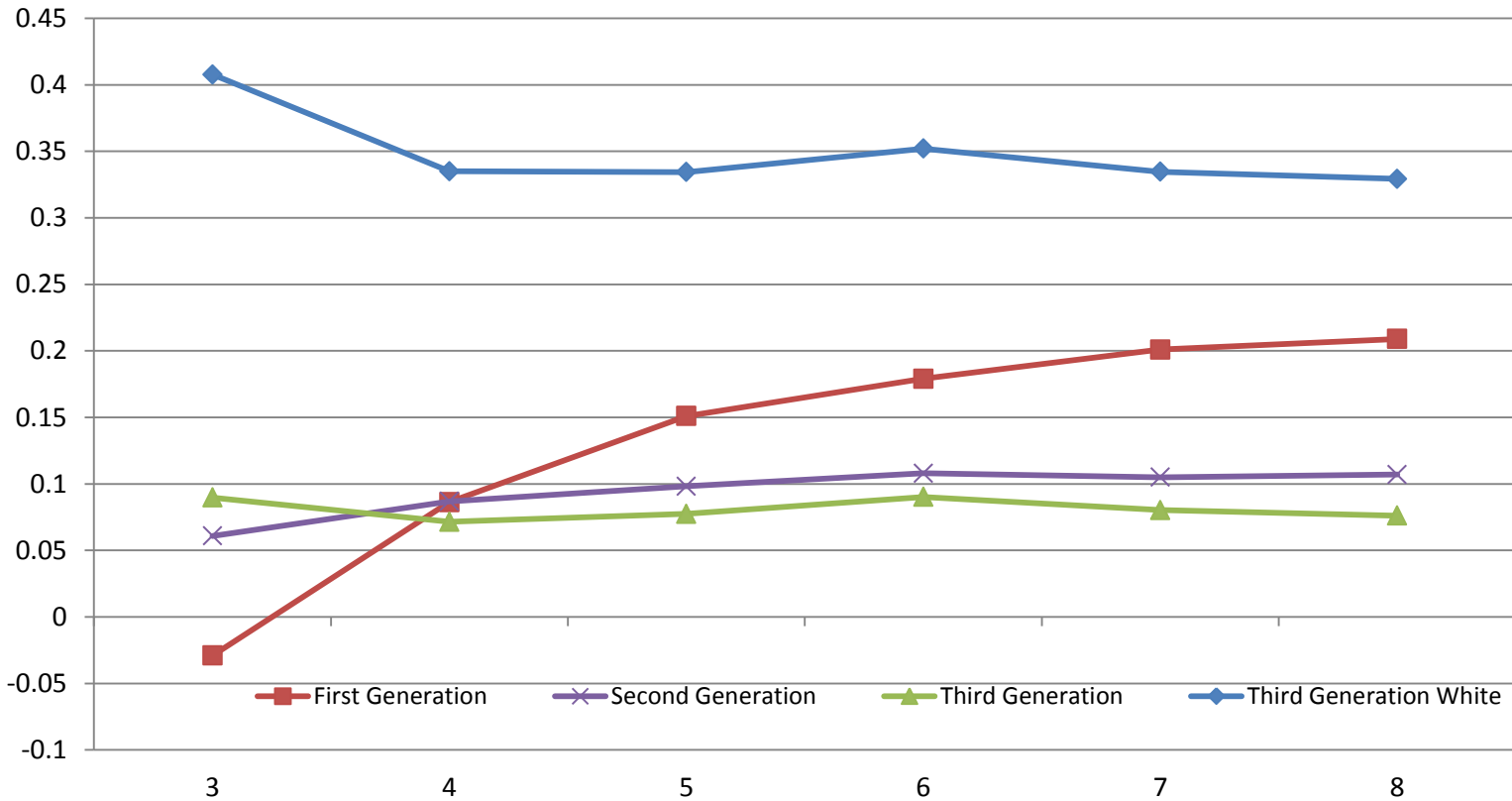


Comparing 2nd to early arriving 1st generation Asian students



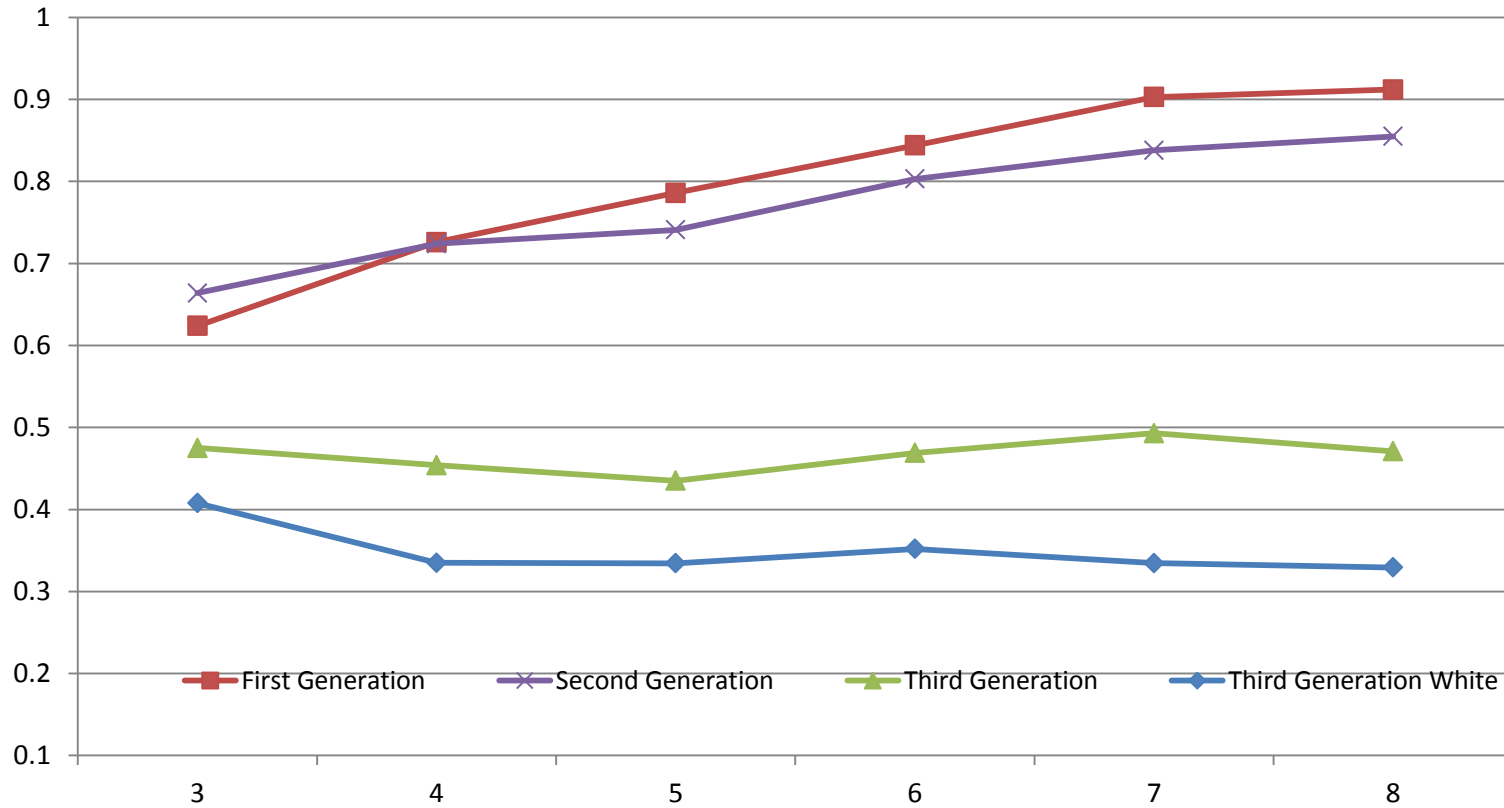


Early-entering first generation Hispanic students vs. others: math



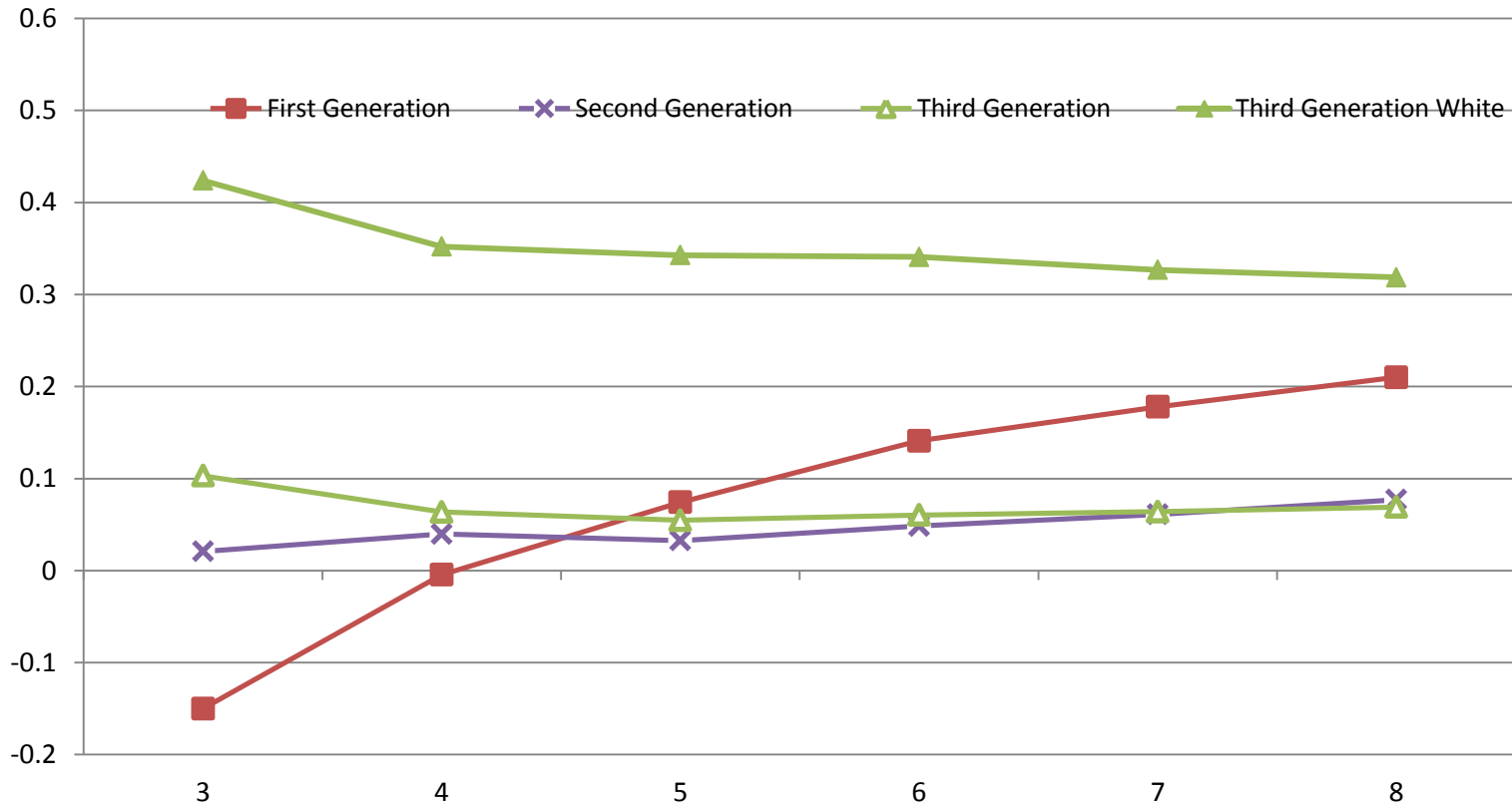


Early-entering 1st generation Asian students vs. others: math



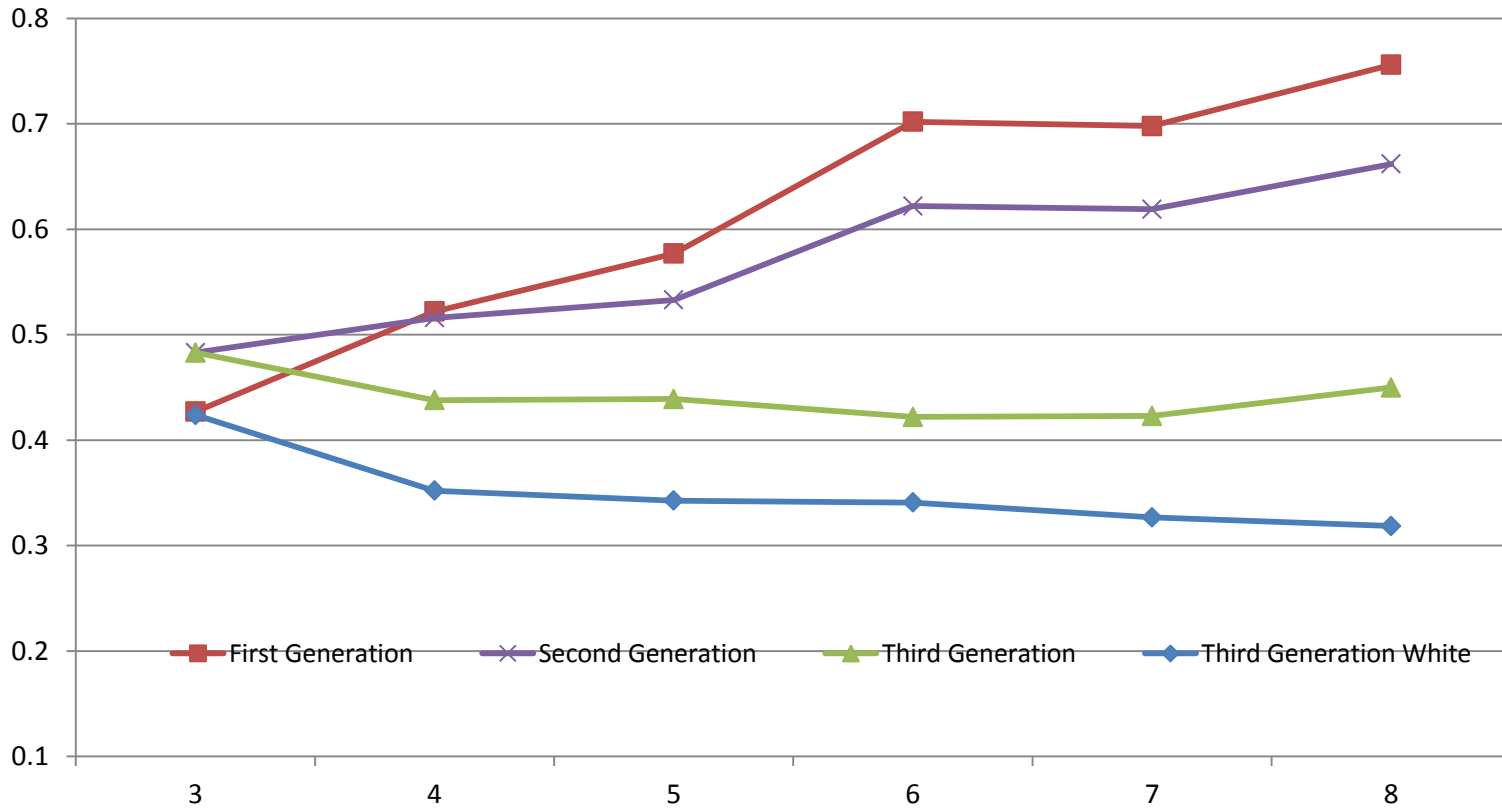


Early-entering 1st generation Hispanic students vs. others: read





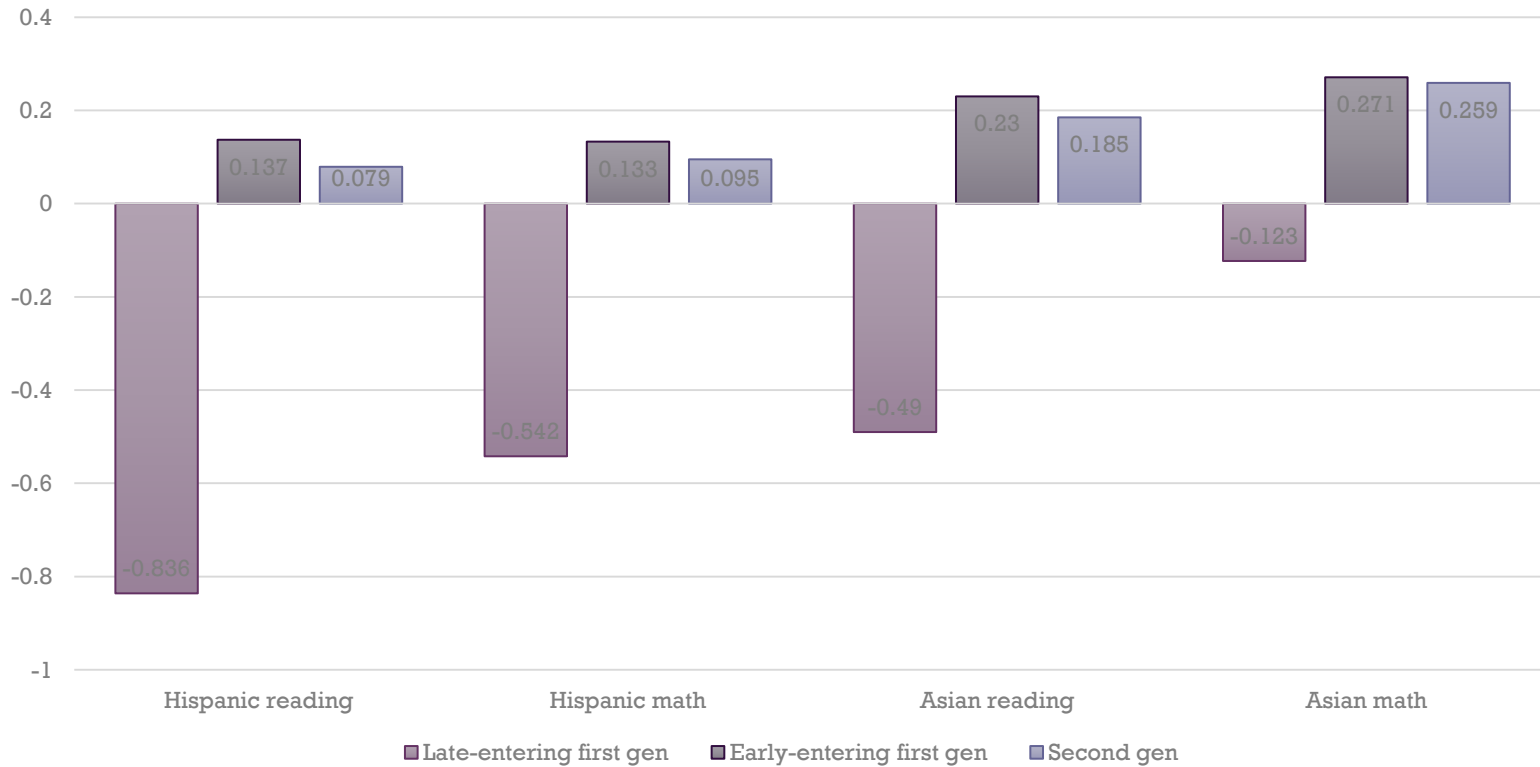
Early-entering 1st generation Asian students vs. others: reading





Summary of findings: Test score differences vs. 3rd generation

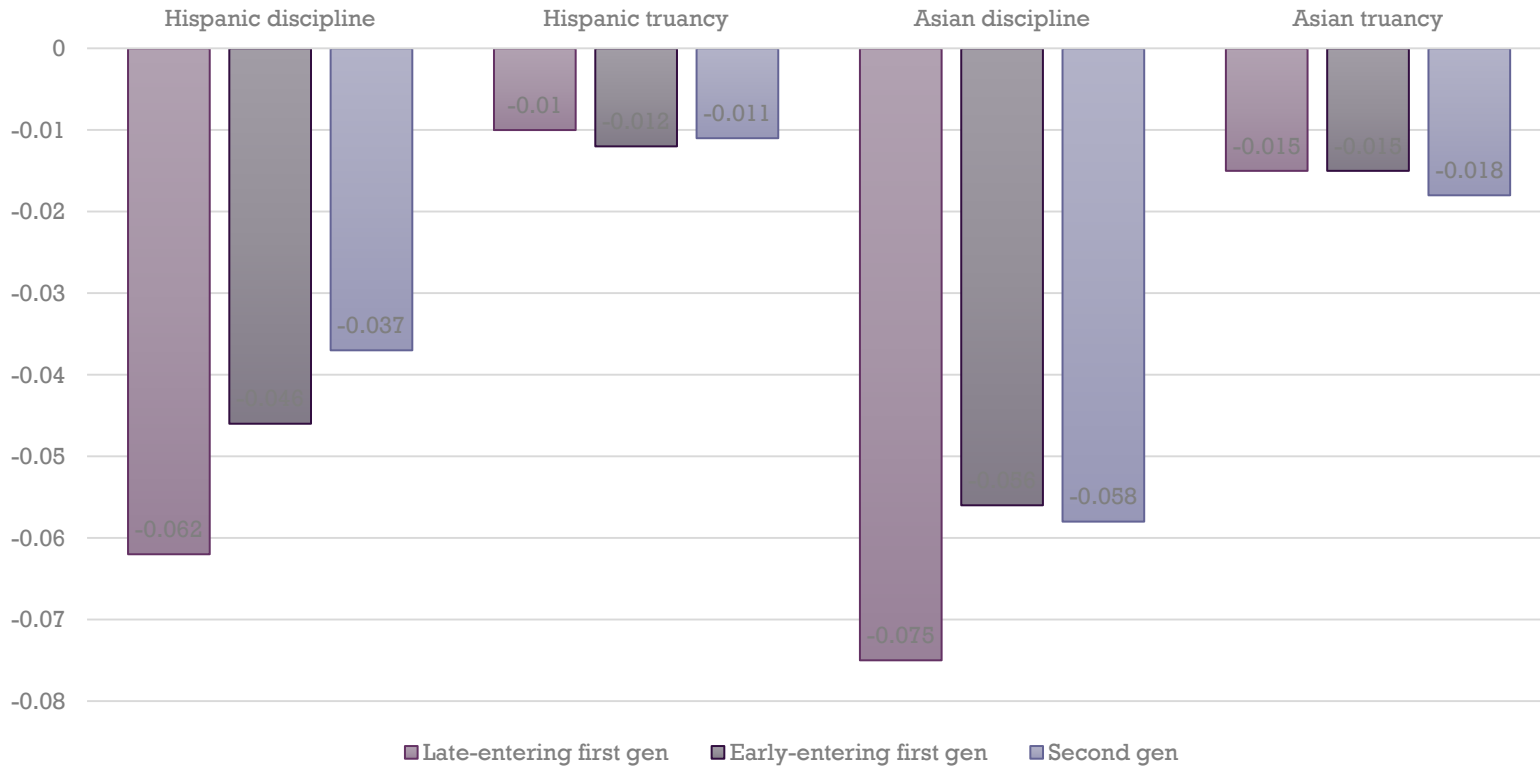
Comparisons to third generation





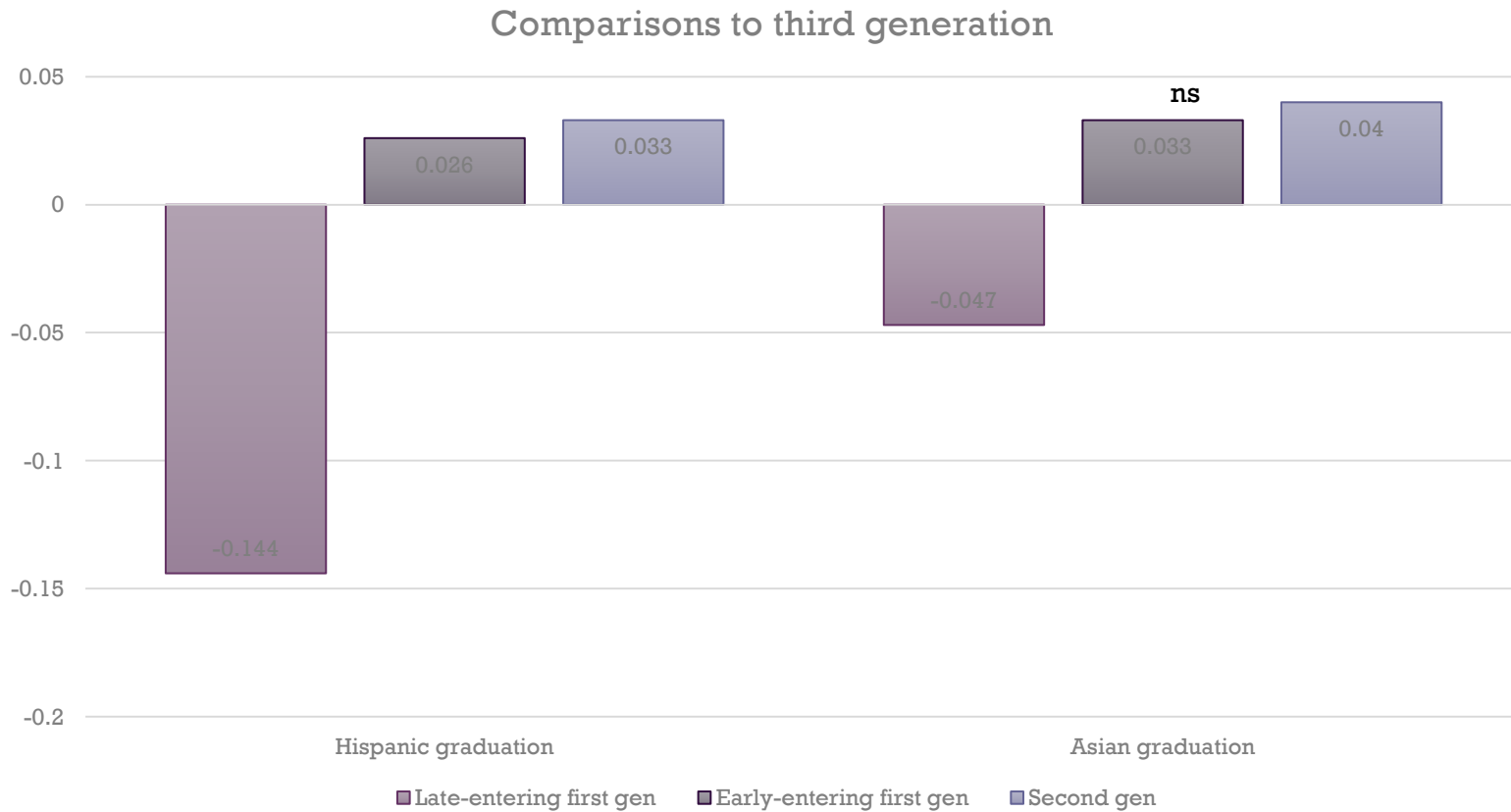
Summary of findings: Behavior vs. 3rd generation

Comparisons to third generation





Summary of findings: graduation vs. 3rd generation



+ Preliminary conclusions

- Steady decline in academic performance across immigrant generations
 - Contradicts traditional straight-line assimilation theory
 - Presents evidence supporting new immigrant optimism dissipating over time
- Frictions in integration
 - Mass transportation and communication technologies
 - Increasingly diverse (multilingual and multicultural) mainstream
 - Decline in demand for low-skilled labor, discrimination, prejudice?
- Modest evidence of differences in outcomes depending on whether children of mothers who self-identify as Hispanic/Asian themselves self-identify as Hispanic/Asian