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First-Generation College Students' Recollections of the Educational Advice Received from Their Parents

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Introduction

- First-generation college students reportedly receive less help from their parents in preparing for and applying to college than their peers (Choy, 2001; Engle, 2007).
- Although parents without college educations may be less adept at helping their children with technical aspects of college preparation, they may give appropriate and pertinent educational advice to them.
- Parents' educational advice is associated with adolescents' academic self-efficacy and likelihood of enrolling in college (Fan et al., 2011; Kim & Schneider, 2005).
- Less is known about the educational advice that college students, and first-generation college students specifically, receive from their parents.
- Advice may be particularly important for first-generation college students, as they often have less access to forms of social capital associated with success in college (Nichols & Islas, 2016).

Present Study

- We examined whether first-generation college students recalled receiving educational advice from their parents.
- For students who recalled receiving advice, we examined what types of advice they received.
- Finally, we examined whether types of advice were consistent with students' reports of their parents' academic socialization (parents' practices, values, and beliefs related to education).

Method

Participants

- $N = 133$ first-generation college students attending a mid-sized public university in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States
 - Gender: 78% female
 - GPA (self-reported): $M = 3.14$, $SD = 0.49$, Range = 1.89 – 4.00
 - Transfer status: 44% transfer students
 - Race/ethnicity: 38% Asian, 29% White, 16% Black, 10% Latino, 7% Bi- or Multiracial

Procedure

- Data were collected online through a survey hosted on Qualtrics as part of a larger study.

Measures

- "What advice did your parent(s) give you about school?"
- Parental Academic Socialization Questionnaire (Suizzo & Soon, 2006)
 - Emotional Autonomy Support & Responsiveness (15 items; $\alpha = .91$)
 - Active Involvement (11 items; $\alpha = .92$)
 - Demanding Hard Work (14 items; $\alpha = .92$)
 - Competitiveness (9 items; $\alpha = .88$)

Method

Coding

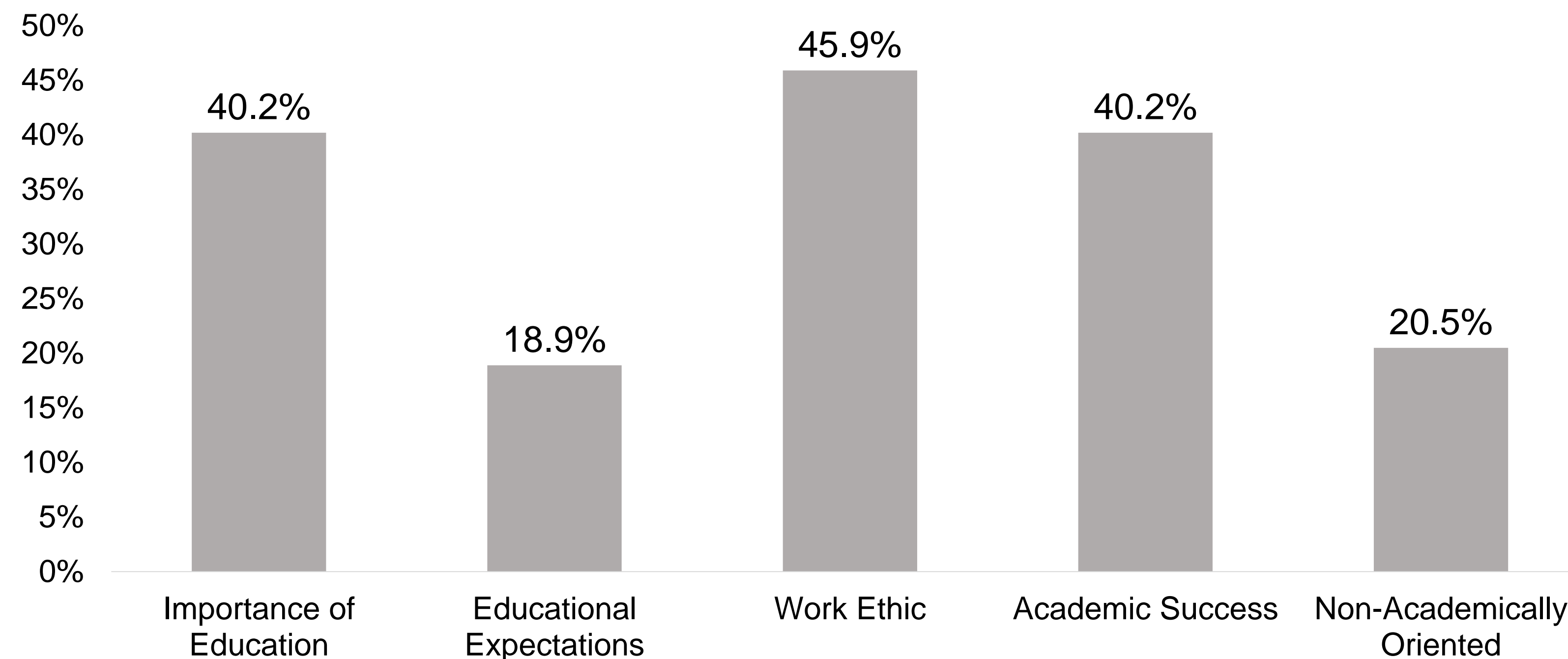
- Six themes were identified using thematic coding of participants responses.
 - Themes:** Importance of Education, Educational Expectations, Work Ethic, Academic Success, Non-Academically Oriented, No Advice
- Responses were coded if a theme was mentioned at least once in a participant's response. As such, it was possible for participants' responses to receive a code in more than one theme.

Results

Did participants recall receiving educationally-related advice from their parents?

| Recalled Receiving Advice | N (%) | Avg. Number of Themes |
|---------------------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| Yes | 122 (91.7%) | 1.65 (Range: 1 – 4) |
| Did not receive advice | 11 (8.3%) | N/A |

What were the most common advice themes?



Is advice correlated with parents' academic socialization?

| Advice Themes | Parents' Academic Socialization | | | |
|--------------------------|---|--------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| | Emotional Autonomy Support & Responsiveness | Active Involvement | Demanding Hard Work | Competitiveness |
| Importance of Education | .13 | .18* | .27*** | .09 |
| Educational Expectations | -.02 | .03 | .22* | .20* |
| Work Ethic | .18* | .10 | -.08 | -.14 |
| Academic Success | .20* | .29*** | .22** | .17 |
| Non-Acad. Oriented | .16 | .12 | .02 | -.03 |

- $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Results

"They would always give you heir [sic] own examples as they could only get jobs which would include physical job than mental. They...have always **made me aware of consequences of not going to college.**"
Importance of Education

"**Work hard** so that you can accomplish more than we did when we were younger. When I graduated high school with my diploma they said **keep going to school** and be somebody in life."
Importance of Education, Work Ethic

"They would always want me to focus on school and **getting good grades...** and **asking questions to teachers.** My mom would always tell me to **get my education** so no one would ever be able to put me down.."
Importance of Education, Educational Expectations, Academic Success

"...**take good advantage of my available resources.** Always **try my best** and not [let] anything/person distract me from achieving my dreams."
Work Ethic, Academic Success

"**No cheating or lying.** Just **do your best** even if it doesn't seem good enough."
Work Ethic, Non-Academically Oriented

"My mom always told me what not to do. She wanted me to learn from the mistakes she made when she was younger. She told me to **stay in school** no matter what, to **never give up**, even though we didn't have a lot of money, anything was possible."
Importance of Education, Work Ethic

"They **never gave me advice**, always wanted me to get straight As but didn't understand school so they offered little advice."
No Advice

Discussion

- Most of the students in this study recalled receiving some form of educationally-related advice from their parents.
- The types of advice, such as working hard and being persistent, that students recalled relate to concepts associated with success in school, such as working hard and being persistent (Dweck, 2008).
- Parents without college degrees may be aware of the advantages of obtaining a higher education and pass this understanding to their children through the advice they give.
- Results indicate that the advice parents give is related to their educational practices, values, and beliefs.
 - Students may recall advice that is consistent with their parents' academic socialization more easily.
- Future research should examine if and how first-generation college students act on the advice they receive from their parents.
- Whether students act on their parents' advice may impact the relation between parents' advice and students' educational outcomes, such as GPA.