

SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS, NEIGHBORHOOD AND HOME,
PEER AND FAMILY INFLUENCE, AND SOCIAL CAPITAL
AS PREDICTORS OF EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of
California State University, Stanislaus

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
of Master of Social Work

By
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May 2021

CERTIFICATION OF APPROVAL

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DEDICATION

To every first-generation student, know that it may be tough, but possible. To every student who grew through barriers, know that your perseverance will pay off. To every student currently struggling with unspoken battles, know that you are seen. To every student who feels like giving up, keep going. This thesis is dedicated to you.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge Dr. Sevaughn Banks, PhD, who served as my thesis chair and valuable mentor throughout the duration of the Master of Social Work program. From Turlock to Ghana, I have learned so much from you and I am incredibly grateful. I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Kilolo Brodie, PhD, who served as my thesis reader and provided innumerable support especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. To my advisor, Dr. Katie Galvin, PhD, thank you for your support, joyous spirit, constant encouragement, and guidance. To Dr. Jane Rousseau, PhD, thank you for your continuous guidance and affirmations. To Dr. John Garcia, PhD, thank you for causing the greatest panic attack of 2019. I do appreciate your guidance and masterful reframing that has opened my eyes to greater possibilities. To Nancy Zamora, thank you for your attentive coordination in making each internship placement successful.

A special thank you to Jess and Mariah for creating a circle of support, sanity, coffee, charcuterie, and tacos. Thank you to the rest of my cohort, Ana, Austin, Brenda, Charlotte, Erika, Frank, Holly K., Holly V., Jackie, Joanna, Lupita, Mary, Natalie, Olga, Paloma, Portia, Roberto, and Tyna. You have all become family to me and I appreciate the friendship and camaraderie we developed immediately. I genuinely believe, with absolute bias, that we are the best cohort to have ever graced the MSW program.

Thank you to my friends and family for being patient and understanding. A special thanks to Crystal, Tara, Tegan, Alyson, and Kaitlin. The five of you are an incredibly strong, valuable, and incomparable foundation in my life.

And most importantly, thank you to my fiancé and best friend, Michael. Your immeasurable support and encouragement have been my rock and my strength. You have known when to force me into much-needed breaks and when to let me power through. You are, without a doubt, simply the best. I cannot wait to marry you and hope you are ready to lather, rinse, repeat on my journey toward a PhD.

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ABSTRACT

Federal funding does not compensate for the impact that socioeconomic status, neighborhood and home, peer and family influence, and social capital has on educational success. Federal funding for public schools is intended to reduce barriers and bridge education attainment gaps for students of lower socioeconomic statuses, but there is still a notable gap in educational attainment. In previous research, the variables socioeconomic status, neighborhood and home, peer and family influence, and social capital have been discussed individually but not collectively. These variables hold differing definitions across fields of study, with limited studies taking place in the field of social work. Because these variables hold varying definitions, there lacks a standardized or universal measurement. Using a combination of resources such as the Social Capital Measurement Tool, U.S. Census, American Community Survey, and the Community Equity Initiative, a measurement tool was created to address possibility of variable intersections. Collected data was analyzed using a multiple regression to assess the variables as predictors of educational success, as indicated by educational attainment and upward mobility. Results of this study did not support statistical correlational evidence between socioeconomic status, neighborhood and home, or peer and family influence, but did indicate a strong correlation between social capital and educational attainment.

CHAPTER I
STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Background

According to the U.S. Census American Community Survey (2018), there are 72,335 people living in Turlock, and 26.8% of that population is under the age of 18. There are approximately 14,000 students enrolled in a Turlock Unified School District (TUSD) K-12 school (Turlock Unified School District, 2018). The TUSD School Accountability Report Card (2018) shows eight of the nine TUSD elementary schools have a student population comprised of more than 50% being disadvantaged or low-income per the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation stated that the FPL for a family of five in 2018 was \$29,420 (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2018). The U.S. Census American Community Survey (2018) shows the per capita income in Turlock was \$26,852.

In an effort to create an equitable educational experience and bridge the gaps of academic achievement for K-12 students, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) indicates a school with a student population of 40% or more at or below the FPL is eligible to receive “Title I, Title II, or Title III” federal grant funding (2015). The ESSA Comprehensive Guide explains Title I funds are intended to:

Improve basic programs operated by state and local education agencies (LEAs) by ensuring that high-quality academic assessments, accountability systems, teacher preparation and training, curriculum, and instructional materials are aligned with challenging state academic standards so that students, teachers, parents, and administrators can measure progress against common expectations for student academic achievement (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015).

This title also emphasizes accountability, and prevention and early intervention of student dropouts or at-risk behaviors (Every Student Succeeds Act, §1002, 2015). Title II intends to:

Increase student achievement consistent with the challenging state academic standards; improve the quality and effectiveness of teachers, principals, and other school leaders; increase the number of teachers, principals, and other school leaders who are effective in improving student academic achievement in schools; and provide low-income and minority students greater access to effective teachers, principals, and other school leaders (Every Student Succeeds Act: A Comprehensive Guide, Title II, 2015).

Title III funds are designated for “language instruction for English learners and immigrant students” (Every Student Succeeds Act: A Comprehensive Guide, Title III, 2015).

Although the majority of TUSD schools receive Titles I-III funding to bridge educational gaps, and TUSD has an average high school graduation rate of 90% (Turlock Unified School District, 2018), only 23.7% of Turlock’s residents aged 25 and older hold a bachelor’s degree or higher (U.S. Census, 2010). With a four-year university in the heart of the city, the question becomes whether or not the funding

provided through ESSA is adequate in bridging the gap in academic achievement, or are there other predictors for educational attainment or academic success?

Socioeconomic Status

According to Hardaway and McLoyd (2009), there is a noticeable link between socioeconomic status and educational attainment. A common example of educational attainment is an “upwardly mobile” child who achieves notably higher education than their parent(s) (Aiello, Garcia, Haan, Lee, To, & Ward, 2016, p. 461). However, low-income students must often work harder to become upwardly mobile due to political and socioeconomic factors that impact their engagement in school or academic achievements (Hardaway & McLoyd, 2009). Many socioeconomically disadvantaged neighborhoods experience infrastructural barriers unseen by non-disadvantaged neighborhoods. The Community Equity Initiative (CEI) defines disadvantaged neighborhoods as a “disadvantaged unincorporated community” (Flegel, Mann, Rice, & Tran, 2013, p. 6).

Conditions within these disadvantaged unincorporated communities evidence a distinct lack of public and private investment that threatens the health and safety of the residents of these communities and fosters economic, social, and educational inequality. Many of these communities lack basic infrastructure, including, but not limited to, streets, sidewalks, storm drainage, clean drinking water, and adequate sewer service (Land Use, General Plans, and Disadvantaged Communities, 2011).

Families living in disadvantaged unincorporated neighborhoods have a higher risk of experiencing hypermobility - “involuntary mobility that lacks benefits to compensate for the disruption of moving,” due to living in “unaffordable,

overcrowded, dilapidated, and unsafe housing situations that elicit frequent and unwanted moves” (Fowler, Metzger, & Swanstrom, 2016, p. 775-777). This hypermobility is considered a barrier to education for its ability to cause school-aged students to disengage and disconnect from their education as they may come to anticipate changing schools before the school year is complete (Fowler, Metzger, & Swanstrom, 2016, p. 781).

Neighborhood and Home

In their analysis of the 2010 U.S. Census, the CEI estimated 31,127 people lived in disadvantaged unincorporated communities in Stanislaus County, which is just over 10 percent of the 310,000 people they estimated living in these communities throughout the San Joaquin Valley (Flegel, Mann, Rice, & Tran, 2013). The CEI also found that families in disadvantaged communities were predominately low-income, “where half of all households have a median household income of less than 80 percent of the state’s median household income” (Flegel, Mann, Rice, & Tran, 2013, p. 12).

The condition of many of these homes were a result of redlining. Redlining was a government approved practice that occurred between the 1930’s and 1970’s, allowing banks and mortgage lenders to refuse home loans to certain neighborhoods that were coded as “declining” (Nier, 1999, p. 3). The act of redlining resulted in many minority and poor families being denied eligibility to owning their own home, or receiving home rehabilitation loans, which in turn forced families to reside in and

around homes in disrepair (Appel & Nickerson, 2016). Although the legalized practice of redlining ended in 1970, the ripple effect it had on communities continues as the inability to remodel, purchase, or upgrade homes added to the problem of decreasing property values, thus creating decreased property tax investment in neighborhoods (Appel & Nickerson, 2016).

Property values in the United States are assessed by the property's local government to determine how much property tax real estate owners are required to pay annually. These taxes are commonly used as a funding source for public amenities such as fire and emergency services, public schools, and government administration. According to the Stanislaus County Tax Assessor, property taxes are typically assessed using a calculation that takes the assessed property value, subtracts any exemptions, then multiplies the difference by the current state or county tax rate, and then adds any additional direct assessments (Stanislaus County, 2020). A property valued at \$185,000 may owe approximately \$1,900 in annual property tax, and a property assessed at \$370,000 may owe approximately \$3,800. The higher the property value, the higher the taxes. These property taxes are utilized by the state and local government as investments for public amenities. Neighborhoods producing higher property tax investments yield greater return in available public amenities.

According to Murphy and Paluch (2018) of the Public Policy Institute of California, "California public schools received a total of \$97.2 billion in funding from three sources: the state (58%), property taxes and other local sources (32%), and the

federal government (9%)” (p. 1). When neighborhoods receive less taxes to invest in local public schools, it impacts children’s educational experiences. However, as part of the ESSA, public schools serving students from low-income homes can receive an allotment of Title I, II, or III federal grant funding (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015). Local educational agencies (LEA) are required to spend 20% of the federal funding on “well-rounded educational opportunities”, 20% on “activities to support safe and healthy students”, and the remaining 60% in areas that “support effective use of technology” (Every Student Succeeds Act, §§ 4107-4109, 2015). The main goals of ESSA are that children in public K-12 schools are provided the opportunity for a fair, high-quality, equitable education and achievement gaps in education begin to close (Every Student Succeeds Act, §1001, 2015).

Peer and Family Influence

Although LEAs receive a supplementation of federal funding for a low-income student population, students from low-income families or disadvantaged unincorporated communities face other external factors that hinder their educational attainment. Low-income families who may struggle with housing security are also frequently found to have one parent, or a pair of poor, working-class parents that barely make enough to make fiscal ends meet. Parents in low-income families are often less involved with their child’s education due to various factors such as a mistrust in the school, school district or school personnel issues, a sense of disrespect or disregard from their child’s teachers, their strenuous work schedules, or an overall

lack of economic resources, including child-care or transportation (Hardaway & McLoyd, 2009, p. 249).

Social Capital

“A number of studies have found that parental involvement in school is related to children’s school success and even college attendance,” (Hardaway & McLoyd, 2009, p. 249). Hardaway and McLoyd (2009) further note families who have achieved middle-class status or greater, as indicated by factors of income, homeownership, or the educational attainment of a 4-year degree or higher, are typically more involved with their children’s educational experience and provide opportunities for their children to engage with their peers in things such as sports, clubs, music, dance, and other activities that enrich the student’s learning or academic engagement (p. 244). Hardaway and McLoyd (2009) indicate these activities not only set the student up for academic success but begin to develop “cultural and social capital,” which are both valuable assets that enhance upward mobility (p. 250).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the ESSA goals of equitable fair educational opportunities and decrease in achievement gaps through a retrospective analysis of California State University, Stanislaus students who matriculated through the TUSD K-12 system. A quantitative study, utilizing multiple regression, will assess the predictors of socioeconomic status, neighborhood and home, peer and family influence, and social capital on educational success, as indicated by attainment

and upward mobility. This quantitative study will involve administering electronic surveys to current CSU Stanislaus students to identify which, if any, of the four variables predict educational success. This study is guided by the research question: Which combination of educational opportunities (socioeconomic status, neighborhood and home, peer and family influence, social capital) best predict educational success? The underlying hypothesis is federal funding through ESSA is not enough to compensate for the lack of funding each public school receives through property tax, nor does the funding through ESSA compensate for the impact of socioeconomic status, neighborhood and home, peer and family influence, or social capital afforded some students over others.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is to examine whether federal public-school funding creates a discernable pathway for students of socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds to attain post-secondary education. The ESSA was enacted under the premise that schools that serve socioeconomically disadvantaged students would receive additional funding to compensate for a lack of district funding, which would in turn help bridge the gap on educational attainment. The findings of this study aim to identify which components of socioeconomic status, neighborhood and home, peer and family influence, or social capital have greater impact on the gaps on educational success. The results of this study can be used to

inform local K-12 school policy and serve as a foundation for advocacy for students of lower socioeconomic status who are seeking post-secondary education.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

This literature review will define and explore socioeconomic status, neighborhood and home, peer and family influence, and social capital as individual concepts and how they relate to education. These terms may hold varying definitions across disciplines. This chapter, while using a multiple-disciplinary lens and a Systems Theory framework, aims to also identify areas for further research. This review will look at the historical context of the educational system and current or recent educational policies in the United States.

Socioeconomic Status

As defined by the American Psychological Association,

Socioeconomic status is the social standing or class of an individual or group. It is often measured as a combination of education, income, and occupation. Examinations of socioeconomic status often reveal inequities in access to resources, plus issues related to privilege, power and control (2021, p. 1).

“[Socioeconomic status] is a broad construct representing a family’s access to social and economic resources” (Altschul, 2012, p. 14), whereas, components of socioeconomic status can be measured by parents’ education or occupation, and family income.

Socioeconomic Status and Education

“Parents in lower-socioeconomic families often have fewer years of education” (Hill & Taylor, 2004, p. 162) and often face unstable housing situations that include unaffordable and undesirable living conditions that “elicit frequent and unwanted moves” (Metzger, Fowler, & Swanstrom, 2018, p. 777). “Low-income families have higher rates of residential mobility than do middle- and upper-income families” (Crowly, 2003, p. 23) and children from low-income families are at an increased “risk of school performance problems related to residential mobility” (Crowley, 2003, p. 23). Individuals who grew up in poor families are more likely to complete fewer years of school (Hardaway & McLoyd, 2009). Studies have shown family socioeconomic status as a “significant predictor of youth academic outcomes, including test scores, grade point average, and school drop-out” (Altschul, 2012, p. 14). “Children from low [socioeconomic status] homes, who experience less academic support, are likely to perform worse than high [socioeconomic status] children across levels of intelligence” (Stumm, 2017, p. 58). By comparison, “children from high [socioeconomic status] families may do better in school, even when they have lower intelligence, because they receive the help they need to do well” (Stumm, 2017, p. 58), as parents with higher socioeconomic status commonly have the social resources to support their children (Birditt, Davis, Fingerman, Furstenberg, Kim, & Zarit, 2015). Children from lower socioeconomic statuses may receive less experiences that encourage development of fundamental literacy skills

(Buckingham, Wheldall, & Beaman-Wheldall, 2013), while children who have parents of higher attained education levels are often provided intellectually stimulating activities (Altschul, 2012).

Neighborhood and Home

It is important to acknowledge socioeconomic status as one factor in studying an individual's educational attainment, but also noting that an individual's neighborhood or home as another factor because "household and neighborhood conditions partially account for associations between household educational achievement" (Glass, Roth, Samuel, Szanton, & Thorpe, 2015, p. 71). According to Gephart with the Social Science Research Council (2017), neighborhood characteristics can be measured by,

the concentration and persistence of poverty; the extent of residential segregation; the extent of social isolation; the quality of the housing stock; the extent of crime and drug use... the number and functioning of institutions, especially schools, social welfare and child-care organizations, businesses, community-based organizations, and recreational facilities; [and] the number of available jobs... (p. 2).

"Neighborhoods serve as an important developmental context for young children, affecting development through their provision (or lack) of institutional resources (e.g., schools, health care), relationships (e.g., social support, peer influences), norms, and collective efficacy" (Morrissey & Vinopal, 2018, p. 758).

Morrissey and Vinopal (2018) also state poverty rate is a key characteristic when evaluating neighborhoods, whereas communities riddled with higher poverty rates typically have access to fewer resources institutionally and relationally.

Disadvantaged neighborhoods are often exposed to environmental stressors such as pollution, noise, crime, and disorder, however, better resourced neighborhoods offer more stable and safe neighborhoods (Dupere, Leventhal, Crosnoe, & Dion, 2010). Neighborhoods are central to the connectedness and socialization of families, peers, schools, and communities (Elwert, Harding, & Wodtke, 2011).

Neighborhood and Home and Education

Neighborhood and home environments “have the potential to strongly affect a child’s ability to perform academically and adapt socially” (Mueller & Tighe, 2007, p. 375). Mueller and Tighe (2007) continue to state “poor quality housing negatively influences a child’s ability to focus at school, increases stress and causes poor health or attendance that leads to poor academic performance” (p. 376). In a study by Elwert, Harding, and Wodtke (2011),

sustained exposure to disadvantaged neighborhoods characterized by high poverty, unemployment, and welfare receipt, many female-headed households, and few well-educated adults—throughout the entire childhood life course has a devastating impact on the chances of graduating from high school (p. 713-714).

In the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Moving to Opportunity study, which spanned 10 years tracking children who moved to a low-

poverty neighborhood, found that children who moved to these neighborhoods prior to age 13 were “more likely to attend college and have substantially higher incomes as adults” (Chetty, Hendren, & Katz, 2016, p. 899). Also, the children who lived in the better-resourced, low-poverty neighborhoods were less likely to have become single parents themselves, which is an indication of attained socioeconomic status (Chetty, Hendren, & Katz, 2016). In contrast, a study by Bolton et al. (2014) on HUD’s Moving to Opportunity program determined the opportunities provided by the program itself held “no effect on educational outcomes of children” and that older youth in the program actually had difficulty with the transition thus causing negative impacts to their education (p. 858). This finding supports the study that hypermobility negatively impacts a child’s education due to the disruption or removal from the child developing connections to their peers or a sense of belonging within their school (Fowler, Metzger, & Swanstrom, 2018). Hypermobility is excessive moving where the purpose of the move is involuntary, such as an eviction or forced relocation due to rising housing costs (Fowler, Metzger, & Swanstrom, 2018).

Peer and Family Influence

Understanding that disruption or removal of a child from their school is more than changing a child’s routine as “research has shown that feelings of school attachment are critical for educational attainment, and that peer networks constitute a particularly salient aspect of school attachment” (Fowler, Metzger, & Swanstrom 2018, p. 780). Peer connections and a sense of belonging within the school system are

notably positive indications of educational attainment. As stated by Crosnoe and Muller (2014), who said “the composition of the peer group can shape academic progress, including course work, by passively modeling (or not) and actively encouraging (or discouraging) academic behaviors” (p. 604). Family influence can be measured by how involved or present a student’s parent(s) are within the student’s academics. “Impoverished families are less likely to be involved in schooling than wealthier families” (Hill & Taylor, 2004, p. 163).

Peer and Family Influence and Education

The influence peers have on educational attainment can be seen in “several early studies about social influence on educational aspirations found that significant others' and peers' choices and aspirations were positively related to a student's aspirations and choices” (Rosenqvist, 2018, p. 73). Rosenqvist (2018) discusses a paradoxical influence of peers, whereas students can either conform to ambitious educational decisions or become discouraged from successes of their peers. Crosnoe and Muller (2014) argue that higher socioeconomic status peers are a resource to lower socioeconomic status students, regardless of their successes, as they can indirectly transmit secondary socioeconomic status by using their parental socioeconomic status among their peers and by modeling or encouraging academic behavior shaped by their parent’s socioeconomic status. Parental educational involvement, regardless of their socioeconomic status, is strongly associated to student academic success (Benner, Boyle, & Sadler, 2016). When parents begin to

develop “relationships with school personnel, they learn important information about the school's expectations for behavior and homework; they also learn how to help with homework and how to augment children's learning at home” (Hill & Taylor, 2004, p. 162).

“Research suggests that parental involvement declines after elementary school”, however, post-elementary school parents have multi-faceted opportunities to continue involvement in their student’s education (Bhargava & Witherspoon, 2015, p. 1702). The three most prominent forms of parental involvement post-elementary school are home-based involvement, such as homework assistance or providing tools and support; school-based involvement, such as volunteering at school functions, involvement with parent-teacher conferences, or discussions with school personnel; and lastly academic socialization, which is more indirect and involves the parent having discussions around education and future academic goals. These forms of parental involvement are empirically linked to student academic performance and academic outcomes (Bhargava & Witherspoon, 2015). Both scholars and practitioners agree that one of the most important factors promoting student success is the active involvement of parents in a child’s education, whereas involvement is also a form of obtaining social capital (Tedin & Weiher, 2011).

Social Capital

While the term “social capital” is broad, it can be defined as “the value

derived from membership in social groups, social networks, or institutions” (Jensen & Jetten, 2015, p. 2).

Social capital is an aggregate concept that encompasses the association networks, norms, and trust that facilitate collective interactions for mutual economic and social benefits... The presence of social capital is indicated by a high degree of trust in general people and a rich network resource for collective action (Groot, Huang, & van den Brink, 2011, p. 1012).

“Through involvement in recreational and extracurricular activities, children are able to increase their social capital by interacting with agents of socialization outside of the home that allow them access to knowledge, tangible resources, and opportunities” (Hardaway & McLoyd, 2009, p. 250). Social capital is also a form of community, but not a community in a geographical concept, but rather through “shared aims, beliefs, aspirations, knowledge – a common understanding” (Plagens, 2011, p. 58). An indication of social capital in general terms are whether the individual had engaged in faith-based, sports, political, community, cultural, or hobby-related groups or whether the family has access to resources such as a computer or dictionary (Tedin & Weiher, 2011).

Social Capital and Education

From a youth-centered perspective, social capital is embedded in a sense of belonging and acceptance but is often met with conflict as youth who lack a certain degree of social capital also have an added responsibility of caring or providing for their families that makes building social capital more difficult (Butler & Muir, 2017). “Youth who come from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to need to work

more hours to pay for school supplies and activities, to help their parents with household expenses, or to save for college” (Bachman, Freedman-Doan, O'Malley, & Staff, 2013, p. 8).

School-based involvement is a segue for parents to build social capital that is rooted in education. When a student has a parent who holds a degree of higher education, they are naturally positioned toward degree attainment themselves as “children from high education background are from a very young age groomed to pursue higher education” (Mishra, 2020, p. 3). Parents, regardless of educational attainment, can increase education-related social capital by engaging in school-based involvement such as the parent-teacher conferences, communicating with school personnel, attending school board meetings, etc. (Tedin & Weiher, 2011). Parental involvement is causally linked to student educational success as a “parents’ own educational attainment, affects access to information that helps students assess present options and develop plans for the future” (Crosnoe & Muller, 2014, p. 602).

Educational Success

While the term “educational success” is broad, it can be defined as “academic achievement, attainment of learning objectives, acquisition of desired skills and competencies, satisfaction, persistence, and post-college performance” (Gibson, Rankin, & York, 2015, p. 5), or simply stated, educational success can be measured by both attainment and upward mobility. “Educational attainment affects a wide range of important life outcomes, including socioeconomic status, health, and quality

of life” (Stumm, 2017, p. 57). “Compared to individuals who did not grow up poor, adults who grew up in poor families earn less income, complete fewer years of school, and are over three times as likely to be poor as adults” (Hardaway & McLoyd, 2009, p. 242).

Importance of Educational Attainment

According to Musu-Gillette from the National Center on Education Statistics (2015, p. 1), “Obtaining higher education can be an important step towards better occupational and economic outcomes. Lower levels of educational attainment are associated with higher unemployment rates and lower earnings.” “There is a consensus that education brings a range of returns (monetary and nonmonetary) that benefit both the person investing in the education and the community in which they live” (Buck & Deutsch, 2014, p. 1140). There is also an emphasis on the importance of post-secondary educational attainment due to concerns that a high-school diploma is potentially insufficient to meet the demands and skillset expectations of the 21st century knowledge-based workforce (D’Silva, Gunderson, & Odo, 2012). In a study by Groot, Huang, and van den Brink (2011), “individuals with a higher level of education are more inclined to trust people in general and are more likely to become a member of voluntary groups or organizations. A college education appears to have a relatively larger marginal effect on social capital outcomes” (p. 1032). “Getting a postsecondary education in the United States comes with the promise of upward social mobility and attainment of the American dream, and it is increasingly

necessary for attaining middle-class jobs” (Houle, 2014, p. 67,) as well as, shaping “long-term trajectories” for upward mobility (Crosnoe & Muller, 2014, p. 602).

Conceptual Framework

Using a Systems Theory framework will allow for analysis of “informal systems (family, friends, neighborhoods); formal systems (church, clubs, associations, trade unions); and social systems (schools, employers, state structures)” (Capous-Desyllas & Morgaine, 2015, p. 99). The Systems Theory framework uses an ecological perspective to examine an individual’s lived experiences from a historical and contemporary person in environment lens (Schrivier, 2011; Capous-Desyllas & Morgaine, 2015). Lived experiences among family members may be similar, but the intersectional nature of a person-in-environment lens can uncover social structures and opportunities that impact individuals currently seeking post-secondary education. Therefore, this approach may be limited due to its macro approach and abstract application of concepts.

Research Themes

Considering the research question, *Which combination of educational opportunities (socioeconomic status, neighborhood and home, peer and family influence, and social capital) best predict educational success, literature leans toward social capital and peer and family influence as the greatest predictors of success?*, the literature points to socioeconomic status and neighborhood and home conditions as potential barriers to success. Many students found most success in their

educational attainment when they had access to social capital or peer and family influence. While much of the research addresses a theme of lower-socioeconomic status as an instant educational disadvantage, researchers have not reached a consensus as to which measurement or variations of socioeconomic status is the overall indication of disadvantaged educational opportunity. This thesis seeks to confirm or deny existing published findings.

Current Research

Race and the 1960's war on poverty were addressed within some of the literature. The historical contexts of that era, such as the Civil Rights Act, desegregation, the Fair Housing Act, etc., would be interesting to research and understand as the impact of those contexts shaped much of the public education system in the United States today. Some researchers addressed neighborhood and housing values as an indication of academic disadvantage, which raises the question as to why families may have resided in educationally undesirable neighborhoods to begin with.

Over the past ten years, the majority of research done on this topic has been done by sociologists, social workers, psychologists, educators, and economists both within the United States and internationally, with the premise that there is a recognizable gap in educational attainment and factors that contribute to the gap. What is known is there is a common understanding that educational attainment is connected to upward mobility and increased socioeconomic status (Houle, 2014;

Crosnoe & Muller, 2014; Buck & Deutsch, 2014; Groot, Huang, & van den Brink, 2011) and the gap in such educational attainment is due to both seen and unseen circumstances as “a large number of empirical studies have shown that income and educational attainment can be simultaneously influenced by a wide range of unobservable terms” (Groot, Huang, & van den Brink, 2011, p. 1013).

Research has shown that students from upper-socioeconomic status families have better opportunities to pursue post-secondary education as their families may hold social and financial capital to support and engage with their endeavors (Jensen & Jetten, 2013; Chetty, Hendren, & Katz, 2016; Bachman, Freedman-Doan, O'Malley, & Staff, 2013; Houle, 2014; Bolton et al., 2014; Birditt, Davis, Fingerman, Furstenberg, Kim, & Zarit, 2015). “In the United States, the gap in achievement between children from low-income families and their counterparts from high-income families is wide, begins well before kindergarten, and persists over the K–12 years and beyond” (Morrissey & Vinopal, 2018, p. 757). Because this gap is noted from early childhood education, research suggests that students from lower socioeconomic status families may lack a sense of academic belonging, self-efficacy, and decision-making skills, as well as experience psychological problems, hypermobility or education disruption, and lower test scores (Buck & Deutsch, 2014; Metzger, Fowler, & Swanstrom, 2018; Blair, Coe, Peddie, Peterson, & Schutten, 2013).

A consensus has not been reached by researchers as to what causes the education achievement gap in the United States and researchers have frequently

studied educational impacts of socioeconomic status, race, impacts of segregation, school or classroom conditions, home conditions, health, teacher quality, parental involvement, and student mobility (Barton, 2004). However, in nearly all study results, minority children and children from low-income families were disadvantaged (Barton, 2004). Research also shows that various combinations of “economic and social factors contribute to the social class achievement gap in college performance, including poverty, quality of high school, rigor of high school preparation, and parenting practices” (Blair, Canning, Giffen, Harackiewicz, Hyde, Rouse, & Tibbetts, 2014, p. 375). Researchers also found that combinations of parental involvement in and expectations for their child’s education, as well as pre-kindergarten participation has been connected to reduced socioeconomic gaps for K-12 education, but these factors do not eliminate the gap (Garcia & Weiss, 2017).

According to the U.S. Census American Community Survey (ACS) (2019), 29,280,621 adults aged 18 and over did not complete high school as a graduate or equivalent and 70,403,684 adults did. According to the ACS (2019), 49,351,958 adults aged 18 and over, obtained a bachelor’s degree or higher. The ACS estimates that 23.4% of the “poverty rate for the population 25 years and over for whom poverty status is determined by educational attainment level” was comprised of adults who had not complete high school (2019). The U.S. Department of Education’s National Center for Education Statistics (2020) states that of the 3.2 million students aged 16 to 24 who completed high school as a graduate or equivalent in 2018, 2.2

million (69%) had enrolled in college later that year. However, “the overall dropout rate for undergraduate college students is 40%, with approximately 30% of college freshman dropping out before their sophomore year... 40% of college dropouts have parents who didn’t finish college” (Miller, 2019, “General Statistics” section).

Historical Legislation and Policies

To date, there have been various policies and efforts toward reducing the gap in educational attainment. A few of the federal policies are the Higher Education Act (HEA), Federal Head Start Program, Affirmative Action, Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), Moving to Opportunity, Assembly Bill 1114 - Inter/Intradistrict Transfers, and Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

Higher Education Act

As summarized by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO), HEA is a federal law that aims to strengthen educational resources for colleges and universities and provide students with financial assistance by means of loans, scholarships, grants, and work-study opportunities (AACRAO, 2021). According to Cervantes, Creusere, McMillion, McQueen, Short, Steiner, and Webster (2005), HEA was President Lyndon Johnson’s direct response to a need for lower and middle-income families to gain opportunity for higher education, while providing assistance to smaller colleges, increasing resources in education institutions, and using university resources to tackle issues such as poverty and community development. The HEA was first signed into law in 1965, and had

amendments or revisions in 1968, 1972, 1976, 1980, 1986, 1992, 1998, and 2008 (AACRAO, 2021). While the provisions of HEA are expired as of 2013, they were extended until Congress prepared revisions (AACRAO, 2021).

Federal Head Start Program

Understanding the education gap begins in early childhood education, President Johnson also created the federal Head Start program in 1965 to provide children from poor families the opportunity for early learning to be prepared to enter school with their more advantaged peers (Morrissey & Vinopal, 2018). The Head Start program had notable positive outcomes in childhood academics and attendance, as well as the child's health, economic, and social outcomes (Morrissey & Vinopal, 2018).

Affirmative Action

Prompted by protests against segregation and civil rights, Affirmative Action began in the late 1960's as a race-conscious effort to expand entry into post-secondary education institutions for non-white students (Stulberg & Chen, 2014). Affirmative action aimed to "expand or enhance the pool of minority applicants" and permitted an "applicant's racial background to be considered in the decision to admit" (Stulberg & Chen, 2014, p. 38).

Elementary and Secondary Education Act

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was also signed into law under President Johnson in 1965 as part of his response to the War on Poverty.

ESEA was the first federal act to address equal opportunities for students (Sharp, 2016). ESEA had a long-standing history in the United States and was reauthorized under President Jimmy Carter in 1978, President Ronald Reagan in 1981, and President Bill Clinton in 1994. However, in 1981, President Reagan also signed the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act (ECIA), which created accountability requirements where public schools had to document and report student academic achievement through standardized testing (Sharp, 2016, p. 10), and reduced nearly \$1 billion in public education funding (Darling-Hammond & Marks, 1983, p. 8). In 1994, President Clinton signed the Improving Americas Schools Act (IASA) which summarily changed language in the ECIA to reallocate funding and correct shortcomings caused by ECIA (Riley, 1995). President George W. Bush then reauthorized and renamed ESEA to No Child Left Behind which included strict accountability for schools based on student standardized testing, whereas failure to meet imposed thresholds resulted in sanctions, mandatory improvement programs, and potential closure (Whitney & Candelaria, 2017, p. 1).

Moving to Opportunity

In the mid-1990's HUD selected random families living in high poverty neighborhoods to move into lower poverty neighborhoods as an experiment. The intent was to evaluate if low-poverty neighborhoods produced measurably positive outcomes for school-aged children (Chetty, Hendren, & Katz, 2016). The results found prior to age 13, youth who moved to low-poverty neighborhoods had a positive

outcome, while youth who moved after the age of 13 experienced more adverse outcomes due to uprooting from one academic institution to another (Chetty, Hendren, & Katz, 2016).

Assembly Bill 1114 – Inter/Intradistrict Transfers

Assembly Bill 1114, enacted in 1993 authorized parents more options to choose which schools their child attended through inter-district (moving across districts) and intra-district (moving within the district) permits (A.B. 1114, 103rd Cong., 1993). This bill provided parents an ability to choose their children’s schools based on convenience, curriculum offerings, or their child’s safety and best interest, as long as the school district met quotas on diversity, funding, etc. (A.B. 1114, 103rd Cong., 1993).

Every Student Succeeds Act / American Recovery and Investment Act

Finally, in 2009 President Barack Obama allocated nearly \$100 billion toward public education under the American Recovery and Investment Act (Sharp, 2016, p. 10). He then reauthorized ESEA/NCLB, renamed it to “Every Student Succeeds Act” (ESSA) in 2015, and implemented flexibility for schools to reduce the high-stakes accountability methods implemented under President Bush (Sharp, 2016, p. 10; U.S. Department of Education, 2021). Under President Obama, ESSA also included an allotment of federal funding to increase school safety and improve educational experiences provided by increased resources and technology (Every Student Succeeds

Act, 2015). One of the main goals of ESSA is to create fair educational opportunities that begin closing educational gaps (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015).

Policies have been in place for over 50 years, but there is still a disparaging gap in educational success – as recognized by the need to continuously reauthorize and revise terms of policies such as ESSA.

Impacts for the Social Work Profession

Disparities in achievement gaps is relevant to the social work profession as part of the profession's goal of social equity and advocacy for equal opportunities for individuals. As some research indicated, social capital and access to resources were a limitation for students achieving educational success (Chetty, Hendren, & Katz, 2016; Groot, Huang, & van den Brink, 2011), this creates an area of opportunity for the distribution of resources and connecting families to local community programs that facilitate educational success (Crosnoe & Muller, 2014; Tedin & Weiher, 2011). Because students come from various backgrounds, education holds the opportunity to work with diverse populations across varying cultures and economic strata. Education is studied as a pathway to ending the cycle of poverty (Blair, Canning, Giffen, Harackiewicz, Hyde, Rouse, & Tibbetts, 2014; Buck & Deutsch, 2014), which provides social workers the opportunity to work with individuals and their families to be self-determined and empowered. Because much of the current education policies are rewritten versions of a nearly 60-year-old bill (Cervantes, Creusere, McMillion, McQueen, Short, Steiner, & Webster, 2005; Sharp, 2016), this provides social

workers the opportunity to lobby on behalf of educational opportunity and equality. Although social workers have contributed to the current research, a majority of findings are from non-social work perspectives, therefore because education is a universally impacted topic, research done from a social work lens will enrich the knowledge base started by sociologists, educators, economists, and psychologists.

Motivations for the Study

Most of the current research begins from President Johnson's War on Poverty in the 1960's, but little research seems to address what happened to educational outcomes prior to ESEA and its successors, nor does it address the impacts of policies and practices prior to the formative education policies. Much of the research focuses directly on an aspect of socioeconomic status and student educational attainment without looking at congruent intersectional factors. Some of the research touches on aspects of social capital,

...but there has been limited development of a scale to assess it in terms of its dimensions and across different contexts or fields... At this time there is not even a universally accepted definition of social capital but there is recognition that it includes both positive and negative outcomes (Forsell, Polman, & Tower, 2017, p. 106-107),

nor has there been a defined measurement of socioeconomic status. This study intends to add two other ecological factors such as neighborhood and home as well as peer and family influence to begin correlating factors of socioeconomic status and social capital and educational attainment.

Further Research

Without a consensus on why there is a continuous expanding gap in educational achievement in the United States, there are a lot of disparities in available research. Although researchers can agree that some level of socioeconomic status is a factor that influences educational attainment, a prominent component missing from the overall research is a universally accepted tool to measure such variables as socioeconomic status, attainment, psychological or health related factors. While some research is available on the disparities between Black student and white student educational attainment, there is not much available research within the past decade that addresses historical or root issues such as segregation, redlining, and other housing policies and their impact on educational opportunity.

CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

Overview

The purpose of this quantitative study is to identify the impact of socioeconomic status, neighborhood and home, peer and family influence, and social capital on educational success as indicated by educational attainment - highest level of education attained (U.S. Census, 2016) and upward mobility - a child who achieves notably higher education than their parent(s) (Aiello, Garcia, Haan, Lee, To, & Ward, 2016), for all individuals compared to those who attended TUSD K-12 schools. This study will involve electronic surveys of students at California State University Stanislaus (CSU Stanislaus) in Turlock, California, including those who matriculated through the TUSD, Turlock private or charter schools, or were homeschooled in Turlock, to identify their perceived levels of support or barriers experienced through their K-12 education. This study is guided by the research question “Which combination of educational opportunities (socioeconomic status, neighborhood and home, peer and family influence, social capital) best predict educational success?” The underlying hypothesis is federal funding through Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is not enough to compensate for the impact of socioeconomic status, neighborhood and home, peer and family influence, or social

capital afforded some students over others, nor does the funding through ESSA compensate for the lack of funding each public school receives through property tax.

Research Design

The researcher will use a descriptive point in time research design focusing on current CSU Stanislaus students, asking students to measure their socioeconomic status, neighborhood and home, peer and family influence and social capital experienced during their K-12 education, as well as their perception on importance of these four variables related to pursuit of higher education. This researcher created an electronic survey (see Appendix A) with questions assessing these four variables during the individual's K-12 education. The researcher will disseminate the survey by posting a link to the survey on various private Facebook groups that are specifically for CSU Stanislaus students, as well as send the survey out electronically using the CSU Stanislaus list-serv of current student email addresses.

Sampling Plan

Because this researcher is focusing on current CSU Stanislaus students, the researcher will be using non-probability purposive sampling where certain criteria must be met for survey participation. The electronic survey will be disseminated among students of CSU Stanislaus with the caveat the individual must be currently attending at any level. The goal is to collect a subset of data from current CSU Stanislaus students who attended or completed their K-12 education through at least one category of the following school types: TUSD (public school), Turlock private

school, Turlock area charter school, or was homeschooled in Turlock. The researcher anticipates 1,000 participants, which is approximately 10% of the current CSU Stanislaus student population.

Instrumentation

In the article *How to Measure Social Capital* (Claridge, 2017), individual levels of social capital can be measured by the individual's structures (systemic networks, relationships, and resources), the individual's relationships (social interactions, support groups, social networks), and cognitive social capital (feelings of safety and trust, cultural ties, shared goals). "Social capital" is a broad, encompassing term that can refer to the "importance of positive human interactions based on relationships, and valuable information and influences a person may have" (Foresal, Tower, & Polman, 2017, p. 107), as well as, "a series of perceptions and actions on behalf of the individual, which leads to enhanced community engagement" (Kitchen, Simone, & Williams, 2012, p. 216). The tool for this study, which was created by this researcher, is an adaptation of the Social Capital Measurement Tool (SCMT) designed by Kitchen, Simone, and Williams in their article, *Measuring Social Capital in Hamilton, Ontario* (2012). The SCMT focuses on areas of individual perceptions of safety, relationships, levels of trust, accessibility to resources or assistance, impact of multiculturalism, community engagement, and socioeconomic status.

Using the themes of the SCMT (2012) and the Claridge (2017) article, this survey will consist of five simplified sections. The first section focuses on

demographic variables such as race, age, and current education level. Sections two through five are related to various aspects of social capital as defined by Foresal, Tower, and Polman (2017); Claridge (2017); and Kitchen, Simone, and Williams (2012). The remaining domains of this instrument are socioeconomic status, neighborhood and home, peer and family influence, and social capital. Section two, socioeconomic status, ascertains parental education level. Section three is centered on the neighborhood and home conditions, including perceived safety in the home or within the neighborhood. Section four pertains to peer and family influence to assess the individual's support network. This section also focuses on the strength of ties to community or relationships. The final section is concentrated on social capital as determined by access to food, utilities, extra-curricular activities, transportation, whether the individual was a parentified child (having the added responsibility of caring for siblings), etc. This section also offers an opportunity for the individual to rank themes from the four variables as most important to least important; and to assess their K-12 experience with these themes from most present to least present.

This final section also includes an open-ended question on barriers experienced during their time at CSU Stanislaus related to the four variables. Prior to disseminating this survey, the researcher pilot will test the instrument with three people to ensure it flows well and is a reliable tool. The first person is an outside individual who has no ties to the results of the research but has conducted research for their employer and can provide feedback on the construction of the survey. The other

two people are current CSU Stanislaus Master of Social Work students who have taken courses in research methods and can also provide feedback on the construction and flow of the survey from a student viewpoint.

The instrument has a total of 30 questions. Most of the survey questions use a Likert scale where 4 is strongly agree, 3 is agree, 2 is neutral, 1 is disagree, and 0 is strongly disagree. There are two questions (#29 and #30) where items can be ranked in order of importance from most important to least important and most present to least present. There are six multiple-choice questions (#3, #6-8, #17, and #25) where individuals can select all that apply, and one open-ended question (#28). The survey should take approximately 10-15 minutes for the individual to complete.

This researcher believes the survey holds reliability in the form of internal consistency, as well as, content and predictive validity because the questions are a reflection of the participant's personal history and a retrospective assessment of their experiences during their K-12 education. Because their personal accounts are reflective of previous occurrences, those accounts are not likely to change. Therefore, if the individual were to take the survey multiple times, their results would be expected to remain unchanged, thus providing test-retest reliability (Faulkner & Faulkner, 2019, p. 92). However, section five of the survey includes questions related to the individual's current perceptions or views, which may change as time passes, thus impacting the tool's test-retest reliability. This researcher predicts the measurement will hold criterion validity as there is a strong assumed correlation that

barriers in K-12 education can impact success in attaining higher education.

Predictive validity means the results of the tool would support the theoretical approach, in this case, the idea that the presence, or lack thereof, of socioeconomic status, neighborhood and home conditions, peer and family influences, and social capital impact educational attainment.

Data Collection

The researcher is the sole person collecting the data, which will be received in an electronic format. The survey was created in Qualtrics. The researcher received permission from CSU Stanislaus' Institutional Effectiveness and Analytics department to access the built-in Qualtrics list-serve of current student email addresses for dissemination upon receipt of approval from the University Institutional Review Board (UIRB). Upon UIRB approval, the researcher will also post a link to the survey to CSU Stanislaus student groups on Facebook, so people interested in taking the survey may do so discretely. This researcher will also request to have the survey link posted on the CSU Stanislaus Master of Social Work webpage and request the Master of Social Work Department email it out to current students as well. The time frame allotted to collect data is two weeks. The survey is anticipated to be sent out early December 2020, with a reminder email sent at the end of the first week and a "last-call" email sent near the end of the second week. At the end of the second week, the survey will be closed.

Data Analysis

Using a multiple regression, this researcher will assess predictors of socioeconomic status, neighborhood and home, peer and family influence, and social capital on educational success, as indicated by educational attainment and upward mobility. Survey question number 28 is open-ended and asks respondents to state barriers they are currently experiencing as a CSU Stanislaus student related to their socioeconomic status, neighborhood and home, peer and family influence, and social capital. Themes from these qualitative responses will be interpreted and categorized.

The data will be entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) where the data will be analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics and displayed in aggregate format. The researcher will provide a written explanation of the findings, compare results to existing literature, and accept or reject the null hypothesis.

Protection of Human Subjects

The researcher will follow proper procedures as detailed by the University Institutional Review Board (UIRB) to ensure safety and protection of human subjects is prioritized. The researcher will receive electronic mailing addresses, which may include identifiable information for the purpose of disseminating the survey tool to current CSU Stanislaus students. However, any identifiable information will not be maintained or used in this study and will be properly destroyed. Data collected through the survey tool will be maintained in a digital file on the researcher's

personal password-protected computer for three years, per UIRB guidelines. The data collected may also be used in further research upon UIRB approval for subsequent studies by this researcher.

Upon clicking the link to the survey, the first page displayed is a detailed informed consent form (see Appendix B) indicating the purpose of the study, the intended use of responses, and participant rights related to participation and opting out of participation. The participants will not be allowed to proceed with the survey unless they acknowledge having read the informed consent form and indicate they are 18 years of age or older by selecting the “next” button at the bottom of the electronic informed consent form. Once the participant consents to participate in the survey by selecting “next” they will be able to access the contents of the survey.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to identify the impact of socioeconomic status, neighborhood and home, peer and family influence, and social capital on educational success as indicated by educational attainment and upward mobility. This study was conducted on students who attend CSU Stanislaus, with a special interest in students who matriculated through TUSD K-12 schools. This study was guided by the research question: *Which combination of educational opportunities (socioeconomic status, neighborhood and home, peer and family influence, social capital) best predict educational success?* The researcher's underlying hypothesis was that federal funding through ESSA is not enough to compensate for the lack of funding each public school receives through property tax, nor does the funding through ESSA compensate for the impact of socioeconomic status, neighborhood and home, peer and family influence, or social capital afforded some students over others.

This chapter includes eight sections related to the study results. The first section overviews demographics, including participant age, race, and current education level. The second section looks at the participants' parent education level and factors related to socioeconomic status. The third section explores participants' neighborhood and home conditions, including perceived neighborhood safety, and residential barriers faced within family homes. The fourth section examines

participants' peer and family influences and community ties or relationships. The fifth section is concentrated on factors related to social capital and will look at participants' levels of access to food, utilities, extra-curricular activities, transportation, etc. The sixth section synthesizes themes related to the independent variables: socioeconomic status, neighborhood and home, peer and family influence, and social capital. Participants had the opportunity to rank the themes from most important to least important as well as indicate which of the six items were most present to least present during their K-12 education. The seventh section of this chapter discusses findings and implications related to the variables and areas for further research or analysis. The eighth section summarizes the study results.

Overview of Sample

This study was conducted with CSU Stanislaus students during the fall of 2020. Data was obtained through an electronic survey designed in Qualtrics, whereas a link to the survey was sent via email to 11,326 currently registered students regardless of academic program. The survey was sent a total of three times and resulted in 1,076 complete responses, or a 10.5% response rate.

Section One: Respondent Demographics

Participants were asked to indicate their current education level. Of the 1,076 respondents, 74.2% (n = 821) indicated they were in an undergraduate level, whereas 57.2% (n = 616) selected Undergraduate: Upper Division – Junior/Senior, and 17% (n = 183) selected Undergraduate: Lower Division – Freshman/Sophomore. Of the

1,076 respondents, 24.6% (n = 264) indicated a post-baccalaureate status; 20.4% (n = 219) selected master's, 3.6% (n = 39) indicated they were in the credential program, and .6% (n = 6) selected doctorate. Of the remaining 1,076 respondents, .3% (n = 3) selected Open University Extended Education, and .9% (n = 10) selected "other" without indicating a program. When asked whether they had attended TUSD K-12 schools, 89.5% (n = 963) responded "no", and 10.5% (n = 113) responded "yes".

Table 1 shows a cross-tabulation of respondents' current education level comparing respondents who attended TUSD K-12 schools and those who did not.

Table 1

Comparison of Respondent Education Level Based on TUSD Matriculation

	Not Former TUSD Student	Former TUSD Student
Credential Program	33	6
Doctorate	5	1
Master's	196	23
Open University Extended Education	3	0
Other	8	2
Undergraduate (Lower Division: Freshman/Sophomore)	156	27
Undergraduate (Upper Division: Junior/Senior)	562	54
Total	963	113

Respondents were also asked to select their age category. Of the 1,076 respondents, 57.3% (n = 617) selected ages 18-24; 27.5% (n = 296) selected 25-34; 10.8% (n = 116) selected 35-44; 3.1% (n = 33) selected 45-44; and 1.3% (n = 14) selected 55+. Participants selected the race/ethnicity with which they best identified: 47.8% (n = 514) selected Hispanic/Latino, 29.4% (n = 316) selected white, non-Hispanic, 8.2% (n = 88) selected Asian, 7.5% (n = 81) indicated multiple race/ethnicities, 2.2% (n = 24) selected African American/Black, 1.6% (n = 17) selected Middle Eastern, .7% (n = 8) selected Pacific Islander / Native Hawaiian, .4% (n = 4) selected American Indian/Alaska Native, .4% (n = 4) individuals wrote in Asian Indian, .3% (n = 3) individuals wrote in Portuguese, .1% (n = 1) individual wrote in their response as Indigenous, and 1.5% (n = 16) preferred not to say.

Section Two: Socioeconomic Status

How Respondents Pay for School

The majority of students (n = 485, 45.4%) indicated they receive grants (Cal Grant, Pell Grant, State University Grant, TEACH Grant, etc.) to pay for their education. According to the California Student Aid Commission (2021), Cal Grants are financial aid awards from the state that are primarily needs-based awards for low- and middle-class financial status students. Pell Grants are also needs-based awards for low- and middle-class financial status students, but are awarded federally (U.S. Department of Education: Federal Student Aid, 2021). The State University Grant is specifically awarded to California State University students and is also needs-based,

and the TEACH grant requires a four-year time-in-service teaching commitment (California State University Stanislaus, 2021). Understanding most grants are strictly needs-based is indicative of socio-economic status of both the student and their parent(s), as qualification for the grants is dependent on both family and student income. Of the 1,076 respondents, 22.5% (n = 241) stated they pay for school with subsidized and unsubsidized loans, 12.5% (n = 134) pay out-of-pocket without loans, grants, or scholarships, 6.5% (n = 70) receives financial aid assistance from family or parents, 3.9% (n = 42) receives academic or athletic scholarships, 6.2% (n = 66) uses a combination of loans, grants, out of pocket payments, etc. to pay for school, 1.5% (n = 16) receives GI-Bill or military benefits, 1.2% (n = 13) receives employer-based reimbursements or waivers, and .2% (n = 2) receive funding through the Department of Rehabilitation.

Parent Education Levels

An aspect of socio-economic status is highest education level attained. Respondents were asked to indicate their mother and father's highest level of education attained. All 1,076 respondents answered regarding both parent education levels. As revealed in Table 2, most respondents indicated their parents did not achieve an education beyond high school. Less than half of the mothers and fathers achieved at least some college or higher, 44.7% and 34.2%, respectively. Looking solely at respondents' current level of education, 264 respondents have obtained at

minimum a bachelor's degree. This is a higher number than mothers (n = 204) and fathers (n = 160), which indicates upward mobility among CSU Stanislaus students.

Table 2

Respondent's Parent Education Level (N = 2,152)

Education Level	Mother (n = 1,076)	Father (n = 1,076)
Bachelor's	13.2% (n=142)	9.9% (n=106)
Some College, Community College, or Trade School	25.5% (n=274)	19% (n=205)
Doctorate	.7% (n=8)	1.3% (n=14)
Elementary School or Less	13.5% (n=145)	13.8% (n=152)
High School / GED Certificate	30.5% (n=329)	34.7% (n=374)
Master's	4.6% (n=50)	3.6% (n=39)
Middle School	9.1% (n=98)	11.4% (n=123)
No Response	1.9% (n=20)	5.5% (n=59)
Other	1% (n=10)	.8% (n=8)
Totals	100% (n = 1,076)	100% (n = 1,076)

Parent in Home

Respondents were asked whether they had a parent or adult guardian in the home during the majority (9 or more years) of their childhood ages, 0-18. Of the 1,076 respondents, the majority 75.6% (n = 814) either somewhat or strongly agreed with the statement, 21.8% (n = 234) either somewhat disagreed or strongly disagreed

with the statement, and 2.6% (n = 28) neither agreed nor disagreed. This researcher ran a crosstabulation to compare these responses from TUSD matriculated students versus non-TUSD matriculated students. Of the 113 TUSD-matriculated students, 25.6% (n = 29) somewhat or strongly disagreed, and of the 963 non-TUSD matriculated students, 21.3% (n = 205) somewhat or strongly disagreed.

Section Three: Neighborhood and Home

Neighborhood Safety

Respondents were asked if they felt safe walking in their neighborhood growing up. Of the 1,076 respondents 28.7% (n = 309) selected “somewhat agree”, of this number, 28.3% (n = 32) were TUSD students; 27.9% (n = 300) selected “strongly agree”, 27.4% (n = 31) were TUSD students; 19.1% (n = 205) selected “somewhat disagree”, 19.5% (n = 22) were TUSD students; 12.5% (n = 135) selected “strongly disagree”, 9.7% (n = 11) were TUSD students; 11.7% (n = 126) selected “neither agree nor disagree”, 15% (n = 17) were TUSD students; and .1% (n = 1) did not answer. This data suggests that after combining the results from all 1,076 respondents who either somewhat or strongly disagreed, nearly 28.8% (n = 216) generally “felt unsafe” in their neighborhoods. Of the combined 216 respondents who felt unsafe in their neighborhoods, 29.2% (n=33) were TUSD students.

Living Arrangement

Of the 1,076 respondents, 98.8% (n = 1,063) live off-campus and 1.2% (n = 13) live on campus. Of the students living off-campus 1,062 responded indicating

they: 58.1% (n = 625) live with parents or relatives, 28% (n = 301) live with their spouse or significant other, 7.1% (n = 76) live with friends or roommates, 5.6% (n = 60) are living alone.

Residential Barriers

Respondents were provided a list of items related to housing, home environment, and family barriers, with an option to “select all that apply.” Of the 1,076 respondents, 870 responded selecting multiple entries. As seen in Table 3, many respondents had overlapping barriers, for example, nearly half of respondents’ families used public resources and nearly half of respondents were made responsible to care for their siblings.

Table 3*Barriers Experienced Within the Family Home (N = 870)*

	n	Percent %
My family Used Public Resources (CalFresh, Medi-Cal, Section 8, etc.)	432	13.7
I was Made Responsible to Care for My Siblings	418	13.3
My Family Immigrated to the United States	383	12.2
I Had to Learn English as My Second Language	371	11.7
I Had to Translate for my Parent/Guardian as They Did Not Speak English	369	11.7
I Witnessed Crime or Violence Outside of the Home	297	9.4
I Witnessed Crime or Violence Inside the Home	238	7.6
My Family has had Utility Services Disconnected (Electricity/Water, etc.)	185	5.9
My Family Spoke of Working as a Task More Important Than Education	132	4.2
I Had to Work to Help Support the Family Home	128	4.1
My Siblings Cared for Me More Than My Parent/Guardian	102	3.2
My Family Experienced One or More Eviction	96	3.0
Total	3,151	100

Childhood Moves

To measure possible instances of hypermobility, respondents were asked to indicate the number of times they moved during ages 0-18. Of the 1,076 respondents,

73.9% (n = 795) selected 0-4; 20.3% (n = 218) selected 5-9; 5.8% (n = 62) selected 10+; and .1% (n = 1) did not respond. Of the 795 who selected 0-4 moves, 10.8% (n = 86) were respondents who matriculated through TUSD K-12 schools. Of the 218 who selected 5-9 moves, 10.6% (n = 23) were TUSD matriculated students, and of the 62 who selected 10+, 6.5% (n = 4) were TUSD matriculated students. While nearly 75% of the total respondents had very few moves during their childhoods, just over 20% moved 5-9 times, which could indicate these respondents experienced a residential move approximately every 2-3.6 years in their childhood. For the 5.8% who selected 10+, this means a residential move was experienced approximately every 1.8 years. The frequency of residential moves in this category indicated at least 5.8% of respondents experienced an added barrier of hypermobility.

Section Four: Peer and Family Influence

Using a Likert scale of *strongly agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree, and strongly disagree*, respondents were presented four statements relating to their experiences during the majority (nine or more years) of their life, ages 0-18. The four abbreviated statements were: 1) If the respondent felt they could openly talk to their parent(s) or other adult family member (“Communication in Home”); 2) If their parent(s) or other adult family member assisted with homework (“Homework Help”); 3) If they felt their teachers, coaches, or school staff cared for their personal and academic well-being (“Supportive Teachers/Coaches”); and 4) If they felt they had a strong support network with

friends or peers (“Support Network”). As indicated in Table 4, over 50% of all 1,076 respondents agreed or strongly agreed with having communication in the home, homework help, and a support network. Over 70% of respondents indicated having supportive teachers/coaches.

Table 4

Respondent’s Peer and Family Influences (N = 1,076)

	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)	Total
Communication in Home	17.8	14.4	14.1	29.3	24.4	100
Homework Help	21.2	17.3	9.9	28.4	23.2	100
Supportive Teachers/Coaches	4.3	9.6	14.6	40.6	30.9	100
Support Network	5.7	14.2	16.7	34.8	28.6	100

Section Five: Social Capital

Using the same Likert scale, respondents were presented three more statements relating to their experiences during the majority (nine or more years) of their life, ages 0-18. The three abbreviated statements were: 1) The schools I attended provided the respondent with adequate tools (books, supplies, mentors, counselors, uniforms, ADA accommodations, etc.) to be successful (“School Supplies”); 2) I participated in any extra-curricular functions (sports, arts, agriculture, faith-based, etc.) within the school or community (“Extra-Curricular”); and 3) My parent(s) or

other adult family member supported (attending, funding, transporting, etc.) my extra-curricular functions (“Family Support”). As seen in Table 5, more than 60% of all 1,076 respondents selected “agree” or “strongly agree” to these statements, indicating they perceived a high level of these particular measures of social capital.

Table 5

Respondent’s Social Capital (N = 1,076)

	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)	Total
School Supplies	5.9	13.1	13.2	39.2	28.6	100
Extra-Curricular	13.4	9.6	7.2	25.7	44.1	100
Family Support	15.1	10.3	12.1	22.2	40.3	100

Respondents were also asked to “select all that apply” from a list of resources, basic needs, and infrastructure. All 1,076 respondents answered the question selecting multiple entries. As seen in Table 6, students had varying levels of resources. Almost all respondents had basic utilities such as running water and electricity, but not all respondents had their own bed to sleep in nor three meals a day.

Table 6*Respondent's Access to Resources (N = 1,076)*

	N
Running Water	1044
Electricity	1032
Heating / Air Conditioning	939
Access to Healthcare (Doctors, Hospitals, Mental Health, Dentist, etc.)	934
Parent / Guardian transportation	930
Adequate School Supplies (Uniforms, Equipment for School Activities, etc.)	874
Bed (Not Shared with Anyone Else)	835
Three Meals a Day (Available from or Provided at Home)	814
Internet	778
Sidewalks / Paved Roads	752
Personal Transportation (Bicycle, Walk, Etc.)	722
Computer / Laptop / Tablet	653
Cell Phone	636
Three Meals a Day (One or More Meal Provided at School)	555
Room (Not Shared with Anyone Else)	543
Well-Stocked Grocery Stores Within Walking Distance of Home	512
Public Transportation (Local Bus System)	403
Personal Transportation (Owned My Own Vehicle)	282

Table 6 Cont.

Private Transportation (Uber, Lyft, Friends, etc.)	281
Tutors	210

Section Six: Factors of Educational Success

Respondents were asked to think of their overall K-12 experiences and ranked themes from previously addressed areas, such as essential resources (food, money, shelter), other resources (internet, computer, transportation), support from family, connections to peers / community (including sports, arts, agriculture, functions), support from educators, coaches, school staff, and stability / safety (safe neighborhood, stable housing), where 1 is *most present*, 2 is *present*, 3 *somewhat present*, 4 *somewhat not present*, 5 *not present*, and 6 *least present*. This researcher combined “somewhat not present” into the “somewhat present” category during analysis. As shown in Table 7, respondents’ experiences in their overall K-12 education varied from their majority years. In Table 4, respondents largely indicated strong support from educators and coaches, whereas, in Table 7, the majority of respondents stated support was within the “not present” categories. This can be indicative of a number of variables such as school moves, varying supports within school districts or grade levels, aspects of support were within community functions, rather than educational functions.

Table 7

Respondent Ranking of Resource Themes Most Present to Least Present as Experienced in their K-12 Education (N = 1,076)

	Most Present (n)	Present (n)	Somewhat Present (n)	Not Present (n)	Least Present (n)
Access to Essential Resources (Food, Money, Shelter)	454	290	251	57	25
Access to Other Resources (Internet, Computer, Transportation)	45	213	508	154	157
Support from Family	338	179	387	101	72
Connection to Peers / Community (Including Sports, Arts, Agriculture, Etc. Functions)	55	78	320	302	322
Support from Educators, Coaches, School Staff	51	117	329	313	267
Stability / Safety (Safe Neighborhood, Stable Housing)	139	199	357	149	233

Using the same six categories, respondents were asked to rank what they felt were the most important to least important contributors to educational success on a scale of 1 to 6 – 1 is *most important*, 2 is *important*, 3 *somewhat important*, 4 *somewhat not important*, 5 *not important*, and 6 *least important*. This researcher combined “somewhat not important” into the “somewhat important” category during analysis. As seen in Table 8, respondents had slightly varying positions on what they

deemed as important compared to what they experienced during their K-12 education as indicated in Table 7.

Table 8

Respondent General Ranking of Resource Themes as Perceived from Most Important to Least Important (N = 1,076)

	Most Important (n)	Important (n)	Somewhat Important (n)	Not Important (n)	Least Important (n)
Access to Essential Resources (Food, Money, Shelter)	493	236	244	70	34
Access to Other Resources (Internet, Computer, Transportation)	118	257	513	106	83
Support from Family	243	154	436	144	100
Connection to Peers / Community (Including Sports, Arts, Agriculture, Etc. Functions)	19	32	252	305	469
Support from Educators, Coaches, School Staff	77	124	379	296	201
Stability / Safety (Safe Neighborhood, Stable Housing)	132	273	328	155	189

Barriers Experienced at CSU Stanislaus

The end of the survey was an open-ended question asking students, “*What, if any, barriers have you experienced while at CSU Stanislaus?*” With hopes of capturing raw responses, there was no word or character limits. While most respondents skipped the question, 372 respondents answered with varying sentences, phrases, and paragraphs. To quantify the data, this researcher categorized response themes, which are shown in Table 9. For example, the COVID-19 pandemic posed the largest barrier as 18.9% (n = 93) of the 372 respondents indicated difficulty or frustrations with the overall transition to remote learning as well as the sudden disconnect from campus and its resources. Respondents expressed experiencing barriers such as *personal finances and lack of basic needs* (struggling to make ends meet or situate financial aid, homelessness, lack of available food); *commuting and or transportation* (affording gas, having a reliable car, travel time); *mental health* (depression, anxiety, imposter syndrome, etc.); *cost of attendance* (tuition, parking, fees paid for services unrendered due to COVID, cost of books and supplies); and *technology issues* (lack of access to computer, reliable internet, problems with personal university account, difficulty using computer-based programs and CSU Stan website). Respondents noted difficulties maintaining a *work/school balance* (maintaining employment and grade, also maintaining employment while meeting academic program requirements such as internship/student teaching).

Other barriers indicated were related to issues with *faculty* (lack of communication, faculty demeanor); a *lack of diversity and inclusion* (treated differently for race, ethnicity, sex, political or religious views, lack of cultural competency, lack of diversity among faculty, and alienation of groups based on identity); *lack of academic support* (advising, guidance); *class availability* (classes unavailable or limited, difficulty getting into core classes); *issues with support services* (Disability Resource Services, Financial Aid Office); *administrative bureaucracy* (lack of transparency, student sense of being a secondary priority, etc.); and *feelings of discomfort or unsafety* (including campus refusal to denounce neo-nazi/white supremacy, experienced microaggressions and racism). Respondents also indicated an *overall lack of belonging* (disconnected from or difficulty engaging with peers, campus, clubs, organizations, etc.); *lack of navigation* (unaware of campus resources, lack of support for first-generation and transfer students, difficulty navigating campus buildings); and that there is *limited access to support or resources* (for graduate students, evening students, Stockton students). Themes seldom expressed among respondents are categorized as “*other*” (such as family obligations interfering with education, forced evacuation due to natural disaster, English as a second language, desks not accommodating for varying body types, disability, homesickness).

Table 9*Barriers Experienced While at CSU Stanislaus (N = 372)*

	n	%
COVID-19 Pandemic	93	19
Lack of Belonging	60	12
Cost of Attendance	46	10
Commuting and / or Transportation	26	5
Lack of Navigation	40	8
Personal Finances and Lack of Basic Needs	33	7
Work / School Balance	18	4
Administrative Bureaucracy	13	3
Faculty	26	5
Mental Health	13	3
Lack of Diversity/Inclusion	22	5
Other	16	3
Limited Access to Resources or Support	23	5
Class Availability	10	2
Technology Issues	17	3
Discomfort / Feeling Unsafe on Campus	6	1
Lack of Academic / Student Support	28	7
Total	490	100

Some respondents offered solutions with their barriers such as, “*staff, students, professors, and employees need culture and diversity training to help promote awareness and how to properly handle any situation based on race, sex, religion, etc.*” stated one response. Another response addressed a barrier experienced as a first-generation student with a recommended solution of emailing students a list of who to contact for particular scenarios, as well as a list of available campus resources and how to use them. Many respondents also took time to make a generalized statement of appreciation for the education or experiences they have received at CSU Stanislaus.

Section Seven: Findings and Implications

Looking at the six previous sections and the data, the big question still remains, *which combination of these factors best predict educational success?* As indicated in Table 10, across all 1,076 respondents, there is not a statistically significant correlation between the respondents' educational level and their parents' educational level, however, there seems to be anecdotal evidence of a stronger impact of the mother's highest level of education and a moderate impact of the father's educational level on the respondent's highest educational level. Therefore, there is not strong enough statistical evidence to attribute parental education attainment as an influence among all respondents.

Table 10

Correlation Between Highest Level of Respondent Education and Parent's Highest Level of Education for all Respondents

		Highest Level of Education	Mother Highest Level of Education	Father Highest Level of Education
Highest Level of Education	Pearson Correlation	1	.006	.023
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.834	.455
	N	1076	1074	1075
Mother Highest Level of Education	Pearson Correlation	.006	1	.36588
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.834		.000
	N	1074	1074	1074
Father Highest Level of Education	Pearson Correlation	.023	.365**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.455	.000	
	N	1075	1074	1075

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

This researcher ran the same correlation for parent education level targeting the 113 respondents who were TUSD students. As indicated in Table 11, the results also lack a statistically significant correlation between the TUSD students' current educational level and their parents' educational level.

Table 11

Correlation Between Highest Level of Respondent Education and Parent's Highest Level of Education for TUSD Students

		Highest Level of Education	Mother Highest Level of Education	Father Highest Level of Education
Highest Level of Education	Pearson Correlation	1	-.073	.065
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.443	.494
	N	113	113	113
Mother Highest Level of Education	Pearson Correlation	-.073	1	.330**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.443		.000
	N	113	113	113
Father Highest Level of Education	Pearson Correlation	.065	.330**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.494	.000	
	N	113	113	113

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

After determining parent education level was not correlated to educational success among all respondents or the sub-sect of TUSD students, this researcher used a Pearson's r Correlation analysis to examine correlations between respondents' highest level of education and factors of neighborhood and home, peer and family influence, and social capital. Variables used in the Pearson's r Correlation analysis were respondents' current education level and if the respondent had the following during the majority (nine or more years) of their childhood, ages 0-18: parent or

guardian in the home; neighborhood safe enough to walk in at night; ability to communicate openly with parent or guardian; someone at home to assist with homework; supportive teachers, coaches, or school staff; community of peers or support network; adequate school supplies; participation in extra-curricular activities; and whether their parent/guardian supported (by means of attend, transport, fund) the extra-curricular activities. While most responses held a strong relationship to respondent education level, Table 11 highlights the three factors that held the strongest correlation across all 1,076 respondents.

Table 12

Correlations Between Respondent Education Level, Peer-Family Influences, and Social Capital (N=1,076)

		Respondent Education Level	Supportive Teachers/ Coaches	Extra- Curricular Activities	Family Support
Respondent Education Level	Pearson	1	-.076*	-.063*	-.090**
	Correlation				
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.013	.039	.003
	N	1076	1075	1075	1076
Supportive Teachers / Coaches	Pearson	-.076*	1	.103*	.143**
	Correlation				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.013		.001	.000
	N	1075	1075	1074	1075
Extra- Curricular Activities	Pearson	-.063*	.103**	1	.311**
	Correlation				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.039	.001		.000
	N	1075	1074	1075	1075
Family Support	Pearson	-.090**	.143**	.311**	1
	Correlation				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.000	.000	
	N	1076	1075	1075	1076

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The three strongest factors that correlated with respondent educational success are: 1) Participation in extra-curricular activities at a .039 significance level; 2) Family support or engagement in the extra-curricular activities at a .003 significance level, and 3) supportive teachers, coaches, and school staff at a .013 significance level.

Section Eight: Summary

Although each respondent experienced their K-12 education with varying degrees of support, neighborhoods, homes, influences, social capital, and socioeconomic status, the strongest relationships and correlations were within the categories of peer and family influence and social capital. The data does not support statistical correlational evidence between socioeconomic status and educational success, as the majority of respondents are both upwardly mobile, exceeding the education levels of, in most cases, both parents, all while being in a low- or middle-socioeconomic status, as indicated by terms of the financial aid. Although neighborhoods and homes presented or produced barriers for respondents, no factors listed held empirical weight that correlated to respondent educational success. Students who matriculated through TUSD K-12 schools appear on-par in most responses with students who did not.

CHAPTER V

OVERVIEW

After analyzing results related to socioeconomic status, neighborhood and home, peer and family influence, and social capital, the data did not support socioeconomic status and neighborhood and home as strong correlates of educational success. As found in chapter 4, the data did not support a correlation between socioeconomic status and educational success, as respondents were both upwardly mobile and exceeded their parent's education levels, but still held a low- or middle-socioeconomic status as indicated by terms of their reported financial aid. Although neighborhoods and homes had presented or produced barriers for respondents, no factors held weight as correlates of educational success. Students who matriculated through TUSD K-12 schools appeared on-par in most responses with students who did not.

The data supported a strong relationship and correlation between educational attainment and factors of social capital and peer and family influence. Three of the strongest correlations to educational attainment were participation in extra-curricular activities (sports, theatre, religious activities, agriculture, etc.), having a parent or adult family member's support in those activities (attending, transporting, funding, etc.), and having supportive teachers, coaches, or school staff.

Limitations of Findings

California State University (CSU) Stanislaus is considered a “commuter” college, as it primarily serves Stanislaus County and the five neighboring counties of Tuolumne, Calaveras, Merced, Mariposa, and San Joaquin (California State University Stanislaus, 2021). It would have been beneficial to also gather information as to which county respondents resided, to evaluate whether they lived in or near Turlock as part of the research was geared toward students who matriculated through Turlock Unified School District (TUSD) K-12 schools. Although approximately 10% of the respondents indicated their history with TUSD, this researcher feels the sample size is too small to reach significant conclusions on TUSD students and post-secondary education as 10% of survey respondents is approximately 1% of the total student population at CSU Stanislaus.

The survey was sent to the entire student body of 11,239 students at CSU Stanislaus and received a 10.5% response. Also, this survey was structurally long, however, most “incomplete” and discarded responses exited the survey within section 1 – demographics. As indicated in chapter 3, there is not a published standard measurement for the variables in question, which creates a theoretical issue in determining a proper measurement for variables, such as social capital and peer and family influence. Some measures of peer and family influence can be easily integrated as a factor of social capital, such as supportive coaches or teachers, as not all sports or classes are conducted in education centers, therefore, supportive teachers

and coaches could also be measured as social capital with consideration of community-based activities or learning. With the consideration of community-based teachers, coaches, and staff, the strong correlation in that category could possibly integrate into social capital, rather than peer and family influence.

Connection to Literature

The finding related to parent support in extra-curricular activities is supported by Bhargava and Witherspoon (2015), Crosnoe and Muller (2014), and Tedin and Weiher (2011), who indicated a causal link between parental involvement and student academic success. Findings regarding respondent engagement in extra-curricular activities is also supported by the literature, whereas Hardaway and McLoyd (2009), Jensen and Jetten (2015), and Groot, Huang, and van den Brink (2011) indicated extra-curricular activities are a means of developing or creating social capital and can be a contributor of educational success. Studies by Fowler, Metzger, and Swanstrom (2018), and Crosnoe and Muller (2014) support the idea supportive teachers, coaches, or school staff contribute to educational success, as they indicate a sense of school belonging and a support network.

Studies by Mueller and Tighe (2007), and Elwert, Harding, and Wodtke (2011) causally linked neighborhoods and education outcomes, and research by Bolton et al. (2014) contradicted those findings by showing that neighborhoods did not have a lasting educational impact on students. This is similar to the findings in this study, whereas respondents acknowledged barriers within their neighborhoods

and homes, but no barriers indicated statistically significant impact over current education levels.

While these findings support the study on socioeconomic status and education by Hill and Taylor (2004), who stated parents of lower socioeconomic status have lesser attained education, the findings do not support the studies by Altschul (2012), Stumm (2017), and Hardaway and McLoyd (2009), who stated children who come from the homes of lower socioeconomic status and lesser educated parents do not attain higher levels of education. This contradiction is seen in the fact the data shows respondent education levels are, at a majority, higher than that of their parents regardless of socioeconomic status.

Implications of the Major Findings

The strongest correlating relationship found are the connections between education level, both participation in and parental support of extra-curricular activities, and supportive coaches, teachers, and school staff. Understanding these connections is important for direct social work practitioners because it provides the opportunity to understand and create potential goals for clients, as well as know which resources to gather for clients in need.

Practice

Much of the current published research was not done through the lens of the social work profession, which provides an opportunity for those within the profession to contribute to research by incorporating holistic social work theory and ideology,

such as trauma-informed practice, person-in-environment, Systems Theory, and a concentration on the social work Code of Ethics. Understanding supportive educational staff (coaches, teachers, etc.) and extra-curricular engagement are noted correlations to educational attainment provides an opportunity for social workers to connect with students and school staff to determine best practice to support educational success. It also provides ways for social workers to learn the types of extra-curricular activities students are involved in, as well as the degree of support they receive from their families within these activities. Understanding these components can begin to bring insight as to ensuring students of all backgrounds have access to extra-curricular activities, thus, increasing student social capital gains, which in turn may add to student educational attainment and begin reducing educational achievement gaps.

Policy

Current national policies focus on funding for educational facilities, which is necessary to enhance and create equal learning opportunities for students, however, the policies do not address the areas of peer and family influence or social capital as those are arguably developed at a community level of engagement. The Moving to Opportunity program had potential to enhance a student's social capital by exposing high-poverty children to low-poverty neighborhoods, where more opportunities may have been available (Chetty, Hendren, & Katz, 2016). This researcher feels while exposure to opportunities is important, bridging the divide by creating those

connections may be more important as seen in the barriers experienced by CSU Stanislaus students who indicated not knowing how to get involved on campus, or who to contact with specific campus needs. CSU Stanislaus students expressed a disconnect to the campus, faculty, and peers, which supports the idea exposure to opportunity is not the same as the creation of actual opportunities. These findings support the idea of implementing community or state-level policies whereas K-12 schools and state-colleges (community college or university) remove barriers to student and parent engagement by having clearly defined expectations, resources, and tools for increased participation.

Future Research and Opportunity

By supporting the importance of peer and family influence and social capital, the findings provide an opportunity for the social work profession to become allies for individuals seeking community through extra-curricular functions. Social workers can also work toward educating school staff on various methods of engagement with students and parents or guardians. Through thoughtful collaboration and allyship, social workers can facilitate strategies for bridging gaps in educational attainment by understanding the importance of support from educators, parents, and student involvement. For example, school social workers can host training events for parents and school staff related to the importance of parental involvement. This can include question-and-answer sessions for parents, connecting parents to other parents as a support network, informing parents of available resources and tools they can use to

engage themselves in their child's academics, etc. When parents are able to connect to their child's school and other parents, they can begin creating a social capital network in which their child can benefit (Crosnoe & Muller, 2014; and Tedin & Weiher, 2011). Within this network, students can access their peers as well as other community resources by being exposed to what their peers may be involved in and also the means to seek involvement as well.

According to Buck and Deutsch (2014) and D'Silva, Gunderson, and Odo, (2012), invested time in education positively impacts more than an individual as an individual's higher education level is often contributed back into their communities and workforce. Stumm (2017) believes attainment of higher education is also linked to increased health and quality of life, which can impact a myriad of personal and interpersonal relationships.

Access to supportive coaches, teachers, and school staff, as well as engagement in extra-curricular activities, creates a foundation for social workers to work toward evaluating policies that impact these areas, as well as implement programs or practice interventions to bridge gaps. The National Association of Social Workers' (NASW) Code of Ethics 5.02(a)-(c) indicate social workers are responsible for engaging in monitoring and evaluating policies, implementing programs and interventions, as well as contributing to the further research of areas relevant to social work. As indicated in NASW Code of Ethics 6.04(b), "Social workers should act to expand choice and opportunity for all people, with special regard for vulnerable,

disadvantaged, oppressed, and exploited people and groups” (NASW, 2017).

Considering the gap in educational attainment in the United States highly impacts communities of lower socioeconomic status and the social, economic, and personal benefits linked to higher educational attainment, education and its policies have continuously been an ongoing social work issue.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS, NEIGHBORHOOD AND HOME, PEER AND
FAMILY INFLUENCE, AND SOCIAL CAPITAL SURVEY (QUALTRICS)

Socioeconomic Status, Neighborhood and Home, Peer and Family Influence, and Social Capital Survey Tool

Survey Flow

- **Standard: Informed Consent (1 Question)**
- **Block: Section 1 - Demographics (8 Questions)**
- **Standard: Section 2 - Socioeconomic Barriers (5 Questions)**
- **Standard: Section 3 - Neighborhood / Home (6 Questions)**
- **Standard: Section 4 - Peer/Family Influence (7 Questions)**
- **Standard: Section 5 - Social Capital (7 Questions)**

Start of Block: Informed Consent

Q1 California State University, Stanislaus Online Consent to Participate in Research

California State University, Stanislaus
Denae J. Davis, MSW Student
ddavis9@csustan.edu

SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS, NEIGHBORHOOD AND HOME, PEER AND FAMILY INFLUENCE, SOCIAL CAPITAL AS PREDICTORS OF EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS

Purpose of the Research

The Principal Investigator, Denae J. Davis, is a student at California State University, Stanislaus conducting research for a master's degree thesis in social work. The purpose of this research is to complete a quantitative assessment associating socioeconomic status, neighborhood and home, peer and family influence, and social capital to educational success.

Procedures

Your participation will require approximately 10 minutes and is completed online at your computer.

Potential Risks or Discomforts

While there is no immediate risk to participating in this survey, some questions may provoke a sense of discomfort or undesirable memories as this survey asks about socioeconomic status, neighborhood and home, peer and family influence, and social capital during K-12 years. If at any point questions in this survey lead to feelings of discomfort or distress, please contact CSU Stanislaus Psychological Counseling Services at (209)667-3381 or Counseling_Center@csustan.edu.

Potential Benefits of the Research

The greatest benefit to participating in this research is adding to the knowledge base of localized studies in the realm of educational success and attainment. There is currently not a wealth of research readily available that discusses the experiences of CSU Stanislaus students regarding their K-12 education. Participating in this survey will be an opportunity to anonymously contribute to new research.

Confidentiality

All surveys are anonymous with no identifying information provided or obtained. All data received will be maintained in a password protected file on a locked computer. The principal investigator will have access to the data, as will the supervising MSW chairperson and committee, as necessary.

The researcher may keep your research data to use for future research purposes and may share your research data with other investigators without asking for your consent again, but it will not contain information that could directly identify you.

Costs

There is no cost to you beyond the time and effort required to complete the procedure(s) listed above.

Compensation

There will be no compensation for participating in this research.
There is no anticipated commercial profit related to this research.

Participation and Withdrawal

Your participation is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or stop participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits.

Questions

If you have any questions about this research, you may contact me, **Denae J. Davis**, at **(209) 667-3091** or my faculty sponsor, **Dr. Sevaughn Banks** at **(209) 667-3541**.

If you have any questions regarding your rights and participation as a research subject, please contact the IRB Administrator by phone (209) 667-3493 or email IRBadmin@csustan.edu.

Consent

Clicking the “Next” button below indicates that you are 18 years of age or older and indicates your consent to participate in this survey. Please feel free to print a copy of this consent page to keep for your records.

- Next (1)
- Cancel (2)

Skip To: End of Survey If California State University, Stanislaus Online Consent to Participate in Research California St... = Cancel

End of Block: Informed Consent

Start of Block: Section 1 - Demographics

Q2 Do you currently attend California State University, Stanislaus (CSU Stanislaus)?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Skip To: End of Survey If Do you currently attend California State University, Stanislaus (CSU Stanislaus)? = No

Q3 Please select your age range:

- 18-24 (1)
- 25-34 (2)
- 35-44 (3)
- 45-54 (4)
- 55+ (5)
-

Q4 What is your race/ethnicity? (Please select all that apply.)

- African American / Black (8)
- American Indian / Alaska Native (1)
- Asian (7)
- Hispanic / Latino (9)
- Middle Eastern (10)
- Pacific Islander / Native Hawaiian (11)
- White, non-Hispanic (12)
- Prefer not to say (13)
- Other (14) _____
-

Q5 What is your current education status?

- Undergraduate (Lower Division: Freshman/Sophomore) (1)
- Undergraduate (Upper Division: Junior/Senior) (2)
- Master's (3)
- Doctorate (4)
- Other (5) _____

Q6 Did you attend any of the following: a Turlock public school (Turlock Unified School District), a Turlock private school, a Turlock charter school, or homeschooled while living in Turlock?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Skip To: End of Block If Did you attend any of the following: a Turlock public school (Turlock Unified School District), a... = No

Q7 Which elementary school(s) did you attend? (Select all that apply)

- Julien Elementary School (1)
 - Walnut Elementary Education Center (2)
 - Medeiros Elementary School (3)
 - Brown Elementary School (4)
 - Cunningham Elementary School (5)
 - Earl Elementary School (6)
 - Osborn Two-Way Immersion Academy (7)
 - Wakefield Elementary School (8)
 - Turlock Christian School (9)
 - Homeschool (Charter / Independent) (10)
 - Other (11) _____
-

Q8 Which middle school(s) did you attend? (Select all that apply)

- Dutcher Middle School (1)
- Turlock Junior High School (2)
- Turlock Christian School (3)
- eAcademy (4)
- Homeschool (Charter / Independent - not through eAcademy) (5)
- Stanislaus Military Academy / John B. Allard School (6)
- Other (7) _____

Q9 Which high school did you graduate from? (If you attended more than one high school, please select all that apply)

- Turlock High School (1)
- Pitman High School (2)
- Roselawn Continuation High School (3)
- Turlock Christian School (4)
- eAcademy (5)
- Homeschool (Charter / Independent - not through eAcademy) (6)
- Stanislaus Military Academy (7)
- Other (8) _____

End of Block: Section 1 - Demographics

Start of Block: Section 2 - Socioeconomic Barriers

Q10 What is your mother's highest level of education?

- Elementary School (1)
- Middle School (2)
- High School (3)
- Community College or Trade School (4)
- Bachelor's (5)
- Master's (6)
- Doctorate (7)
- Other (8) _____
- Unknown (9)

Q11 What is your father's highest level of education?

- Elementary School (1)
- Middle School (2)
- High School (3)
- Community College or Trade School (4)
- Bachelor's (5)
- Master's (6)
- Doctorate (7)
- Other (8) _____
- Unknown (9)

Q12 I receive the following financial aid to pay for my education.

- Cal Grant / Pell Grant (1)
- GI-Bill / Military benefits from self or family (2)
- Parent(s) or family pays (3)
- Scholarship (4)
- Student Loans (subsidized/unsubsidized) (5)
- I pay out of pocket (no loans, grants, etc.) (6)
- Other (7) _____

Q13 The phrase, “growing up,” in the following scenarios refers to your life as a minor aged 0-18. Think of the majority (9 or more) years when answering the following.

Q14 Growing up, I had more than one parent or adult in the home a majority of the time.

- Strongly Agree (1)
- Somewhat Agree (2)
- Neither Agree, Nor Disagree (3)
- Somewhat Disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

End of Block: Section 2 - Socioeconomic Barriers

Start of Block: Section 3 - Neighborhood / Home

Q15 Are you currently living on or off campus?

- On (1)
- Off (2)

Skip To: Q17 If Are you currently living on or off campus? = On

Q16 Which of the following best describes your current living arrangement?

- With Friends/Roommates (1)
- With Parents/Relatives (2)
- With Spouse/Significant Other (3)
- Currently Living Alone (4)

Q17 How many times did you move residences during your childhood?

- 0-4 (1)
- 5-9 (2)
- 10+ (3)

Q18 Thinking about the neighborhoods I grew up in, I felt safe walking alone at night.

- Strongly Agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

Q19 The phrase, “growing up” in the following scenarios refers to your life as a minor aged 0-18. Think of the majority (9 or more) years when answering the following.

Q20 Growing up... (Please select all that apply):

- I was made responsible to care for my siblings (1)
 - I had to learn English as my second language (2)
 - I had to translate for my parent/guardian as they did not speak English (3)
 - I had to work to help support the family home (4)
 - My family experienced one or more eviction (5)
-

- My family has had utility services cut off (power disconnected, water shut off, etc.) (6)
- My family frequently spoke of finding work as a task more important than education (7)
- I witnessed crime or violence inside the home (8)
- I witnessed crime or violence outside of the home (9)
- My family immigrated to the United States (10)
- My family used public resources (CalFresh, Medi-Cal, Section 8, etc.) (11)
- My siblings cared for me more than my parent/guardian (12)

End of Block: Section 3 - Neighborhood / Home

Start of Block: Section 4 - Peer/Family Influence

Q21 Growing up I felt I could openly talk to my parent(s) or other adult family member.

- Strongly Agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

Q22 Growing up, my parent(s) or other adult family member assisted me with homework.

- Strongly Agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

Q23 Growing up, I felt my teachers, coaches, or school staff cared for my personal and academic well-being.

- Strongly Agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

Q24 Growing up I felt I had a strong support network with friends or peers.

- Strongly Agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

Q25 Growing up, the school(s) I attended provided me with tools (books, supplies, mentors, counselors, uniforms, ADA accommodations, etc.) to be successful.

- Strongly Agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

Q26 Growing up, I participated in extra-curricular functions (sports, arts, agriculture, faith-based, etc.) within the school or community.

- Strongly Agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)

- Strongly disagree (5)

Q27 Growing up, my parent(s) or other adult family member supported (attending, funding, transporting, etc.) my extra-curricular functions.

- Strongly Agree (1)
- Somewhat agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

End of Block: Section 4 - Peer/Family Influence

Start of Block: Section 5 - Social Capital

Q28 The phrase, “growing up” in the following scenario refers to your life as a minor aged 0-18. Think of the majority (9 or more) years when answering.

Q29 Growing up, I had access to, or owned, the following (select all that apply):

- Access to healthcare (doctors, hospitals, mental health dentist, etc.) (1)
- Adequate School Supplies (to include required uniforms, equipment for school activities) (2)
- Tutors (3)
- Bed (not shared with anyone else) (4)
- Room (not shared with anyone else) (5)
- Cell phone (6)
- Computer / Laptop / Tablet (7)
- Internet (8)
- TV (9)
- Heating / Air Conditioning (10)
- Electricity (11)

- Running Water (12)
 - Private transportation (Uber, Lyft, friends, etc.) (13)
 - Public transportation (local bus system) (14)
 - Parent / Guardian transportation (15)
 - Personal transportation (bicycle, walk, etc.) (16)
 - Personal transportation (owned my own vehicle) (17)
 - Sidewalks / Paved Roads (18)
 - Well-stocked grocery stores within walking distance of home (19)
 - Three meals a day (available from or provided at home) (20)
 - Three meals a day (one or more meal provided at school) (21)
-

Q30 I feel I have adequate access to CSU Stanislaus resources (Food Pantry, Student Health Center, Disability Resources Services, Psychological Counseling, Career Center, etc.)

- Strongly Agree (1)
 - Somewhat agree (2)
 - Neither agree nor disagree (3)
 - Somewhat disagree (4)
 - Strongly disagree (5)
-

Q31 I have a strong sense of belonging at CSU Stanislaus

- Strongly Agree (1)
 - Somewhat agree (2)
 - Neither agree nor disagree (3)
 - Somewhat disagree (4)
 - Strongly disagree (5)
-

Q32 What barriers, if any, have you experienced while attending CSU Stanislaus?

Q33 When thinking about education in general, please rank the following in order from most important (1) to least important (6).

- _____ Access to essential resources (food, money, shelter) (1)
 _____ Access to other resources (internet, computer, transportation) (2)
 _____ Support from family (3)
 _____ Connection to peers / community (including sports, arts, agriculture, etc. functions) (4)
 _____ Support from educators, coaches, school staff (5)
 _____ Stability / Safety (safe neighborhood, stable housing) (6)

Q34 Now thinking about your educational experience in K-12, please rank the following in order from most present (1) to least present (6)

- _____ Access to essential resources (food, money, shelter) (1)
 _____ Access to other resources (internet, computer, transportation) (2)
 _____ Support from family (3)
 _____ Connection to peers / community (including sports, arts, agriculture, etc. functions) (4)
 _____ Support from educators, coaches, school staff (5)
 _____ Stability / Safety (safe neighborhood, stable housing) (6)

End of Block: Section 5 - Social Capital

End of Survey

APPENDIX B
ELECTRONIC INFORMED CONSENT FORM

**California State University, Stanislaus
Online Consent to Participate in Research**

California State University, Stanislaus
Denae J. Davis, MSW Student
ddavis9@csustan.edu

**SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS, NEIGHBORHOOD AND HOME, PEER AND
FAMILY INFLUENCE, SOCIAL CAPITAL AS PREDICTORS OF
EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS**

Purpose of the Research

The Principal Investigator, Denae J. Davis, is a student at California State University, Stanislaus conducting research for a master's degree thesis in social work.

The purpose of this research is to complete a quantitative assessment associating socioeconomic status, neighborhood and home, peer and family influence, and social capital to educational success.

Procedures

Your participation will require approximately 10 minutes and is completed online at your computer.

Potential Risks or Discomforts

While there is no immediate risk to participating in this survey, some questions may provoke a sense of discomfort or undesirable memories as this survey asks about socioeconomic status, neighborhood and home, peer and family influence, and social capital during K-12 years. If at any point questions in this survey lead to feelings of discomfort or distress, please contact CSU Stanislaus Psychological Counseling Services at (209)667-3381 or Counseling_Center@csustan.edu.

Potential Benefits of the Research

The greatest benefit to participating in this research is adding to the knowledge base of localized studies in the realm of educational success and attainment. There is currently not a wealth of research readily available that discusses the experiences of CSU Stanislaus students regarding their K-12 education. Participating in this survey will be an opportunity to anonymously contribute to new research.

Confidentiality

All surveys are anonymous with no identifying information provided or obtained. All data received will be maintained in a password protected file on a locked computer. The principal investigator will have access to the data, as will the supervising MSW chairperson and committee, as necessary.

The researcher may keep your research data to use for future research purposes and may share your research data with other investigators without asking for your consent again, but it will not contain information that could directly identify you.

Costs

There is no cost to you beyond the time and effort required to complete the procedure(s) listed above.

Compensation

There will be no compensation for participating in this research.

There is no anticipated commercial profit related to this research.

Participation and Withdrawal

Your participation is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or stop participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits.

Questions

If you have any questions about this research, you may contact me, **Denae J. Davis**, at (209) 667-3091 or my faculty sponsor, **Dr. Sevaughn Banks** at (209) 667-3541.

If you have any questions regarding your rights and participation as a research subject, please contact the IRB Administrator by phone (209) 667-3493 or email IRBadmin@csustan.edu.

Consent

Clicking the “Next” button below indicates that you are 18 years of age or older and indicates your consent to participate in this survey. Please feel free to print a copy of this consent page to keep for your records.