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Recognizing Capital: A Study of Cultural Wealth, Grit, and Student Success

Jessica Lauritsen
Minnesota State University, Mankato

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By

Jessica Lauritsen

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Jessica Lauritsen

This dissertation has been approved by the following
members of the examining committee:

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Dr. Jason Kaufman, Advisor

_____

Dr. Buffy Smith, Committee Member

_____

Dr. Victoria Svoboda, Committee Member

RECOGNIZING CAPITAL:
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JESSICA LAURITSEN

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
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ABSTRACT

The widening gap between the demographics of faculty and students in higher education is exemplified by the racial, ethnic, and economic disparities in student achievement outcomes. Expecting students to adapt to an unwritten set of rules to successfully navigate higher education is not the solution. Understanding the strengths of students is essential to validating their ability to be successful in college. This study will measure two-year college student recognition of their individual aspirational capital, navigational capital, and grit connected to their perceived academic success, as well as their perceptions of faculty understanding of and recognition of their skills and experiences.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Background of the Problem

Across the country, the majority of two-year college faculty are white and middle class while the student population they teach is becoming increasingly more racially and ethnically diverse and typically represents a lower income class (Espinosa et al, 2019). The American Council on Education's (2019) status report on race and ethnicity in higher education showed that the undergraduate student of color student population increased from 29.6 percent in 1996 to 45.2 percent in 2016, while the report shows that in 2018 more than 73 percent of full-time faculty were white. This growing divide between educators and students creates challenges. Faculty have a desire to provide support for student success. However, individual backgrounds and experiences frame our thinking on how best to do so (Lathe, 2017). Our families, our experiences growing up, the community in which we live, and the people with whom we spend time all influence our understanding of others. As faculty, it is difficult to determine what students need to be successful when only considering individual experiences and understanding of college student success.

As a result of the widening gap in race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status between students and educators, many faculty hold misperceptions of the students they teach and, consciously or unconsciously, perceive the need for students to adapt to fit into the culture of higher education to be successful (Lathe, 2017). For individuals who did not grow up low income, like the majority of college faculty, it may seem like growing

up in that social class is a barrier for students to overcome. However, it is important to

see how the unwritten rules of navigating higher education may be the real barrier for

students (Lathe, 2017). Unwritten rules include understanding the language used in

higher education and the expected cultural norms for how to engage with faculty, how to

be a learner, and how to read a syllabus (Berrett, 2015). Higher education leaders believe

that the rules of college, including filling out financial aid forms and understanding which

courses to register for each semester, are clear. But for many students, the process of

maneuvering through higher education systems is complicated and frustrating. The

seemingly simple things can be insurmountable barriers for students (Berrett, 2015).

The mindset of college faculty, staff, and administrators about students is

typically framed from a deficit model, meaning that they see the skills students are

lacking when they enter college. Yosso (2005) explained that faculty often see the

hardships students bring with them to college, particularly those coming from

communities of color. This position places the blame for failing to be academically

successful on students and their families, reducing the responsibility of faculty and staff

in ensuring student persistence. This deficit-minded thinking leads to a gap in belief in

students. For example, Favela et al. (2020) found that 67% of students who had dropped

out of college believed they were academically prepared to be successful while only 17%

of the faculty and staff at the institutions believed the students were academically

prepared to be successful (Favela et al., 2020). This belief gap between how students

view their abilities versus how faculty and staff view their abilities speaks to the

underlying mindsets about our students. Students feel and often internalize this gap,

whether they can verbalize it or not, and often they do not stay in college. Close to 40% of students enrolling in a two-year college and 20% in a four-year, do not graduate (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020).

Reframing the way faculty view their commitment to students, includes consciously demonstrating belief in students (McNair et al., 2016). Demonstrating a genuine belief in students calls for higher education to institutionalize language that is caring and trusting toward students' capacity to learn in many ways, including through curricular and co-curricular opportunities (McNair et al., 2016). It means helping students feel like faculty believe they can succeed in their studies. Showing belief in students includes recognizing the strengths, or assets, that students bring to college and altering the language of how students are talked about on campus, including reframing the expectation that students are college-ready and instead shifting the ownership to ensuring institutions are student-ready (McNair et al., 2016).

An asset-based view of students includes recognizing the self-worth and resources available to students to help them be successful (Wismath & Newberry, 2019). It means seeing the strengths in students and helping them use their strengths to reach their goals. A deficit-minded perspective puts the burden of success solely on the students. Whereas, recognizing the assets that students bring into the classroom emphasizes that student outcomes are constructed by patterns of racial disparities and are reinforced by our institutions (Yosso, 2005).

The challenge with reframing from a focus on student deficits to assets is the fact that while the student population continues to diversify, the faculty do not reflect the

same diversity (Espinosa et al., 2019). Additionally, higher education was started for wealthy, white, men and was designed with that student population in mind (Neklason, 2019). The structure, policies, and procedures have changed little as the demographics of the student population have changed significantly over time as most people working in higher education believe that the system works as it is and students should adapt to fit the system (Yosso, 2015). The curriculum, policies, procedures, and expectations (written and unwritten) are grounded through the history of higher education, led primarily by white leaders who maintain the practices that create barriers for students, particularly students of color (Garcia, 2019). Smith (2013) describes the unwritten set of rules as the hidden curriculum and comprises ideals and standards expected of students in college. The hidden curriculum is framed with a white lens, creating a barrier for minoritized students to overcome to be successful (Smith, 2013). White people are mostly unaware that they live in a world with systems, policies, and procedures set up to benefit them (DiAngelo, 2016). Because of this lack of awareness, many white leaders continue to advocate for policies and practices that negatively affect people of color and have a difficult time seeing their impact.

Within colleges across the country, there continue to be disparities in persistence, completion, and job placement rates among students of color compared to white students (Dowd & Bensimon, 2015). With declining enrollments, institutions simply cannot afford for students not to succeed. To improve student success, colleges and universities must understand the disparities at their institutions and make changes to improve outcomes for all students. While changing the system of higher education to be centered on students is

certainly not easy, it is necessary to genuinely make an impact on outcomes for students (McNair, 2016).

A model exists that approaches student success with an asset-based frame. The community cultural wealth model developed by Yosso (2005) was intended to help faculty see the assets that students of color bring into the classroom with them. The model identified six forms of capital identified: (a) navigational, (b) aspirational, (c) linguistic, (d) social, (e) familial, and (f) resistance (Yosso, 2005). This model can help demonstrate belief in students by focusing on how faculty can learn from the cultural knowledge, skills, and experiences of people of color (Yosso, 2005).

Cultural wealth refers to the resources that students of color establish through the influence of their upbringing, communities where they live, and how they interact with others on campus (Samuelson & Litzler, 2015). Samuelson and Litzler (2015) report that many students of color specifically indicate that navigational and aspirational capital helped them to persist in college. Yosso (2015) described navigational capital as the competence and experience a student possesses while navigating the education environment. Relatedly, aspirational capital encompasses the ambition, desires, and goals a person holds for themselves (Yosso, 2015). Although there are four additional forms of capital in Yosso's (2015) model, this research will focus on aspirational and navigational capital.

Another asset-based concept related to student success is grit. The concept of grit was first introduced by Duckworth et al. (2007) and is defined as passion and perseverance for long-term goals. The research around grit suggests that the higher levels

of grit a person possesses, the more achievement the person will have. Thus, grit is a non-cognitive predictor of student success (Duckworth et al., 2007). Higher education has operated on the basis that assessments are the standard by which to gauge student ability to learn, while research shows that grit is more important in predicting success (Almeida et al, 2019). Faculty should foster the exploration of and potential of student assets in students to help them successfully progress through college. It is not innate to college faculty to focus on helping students develop assets like grit. However, as research shows, this is a key method to achieving student success.

Shifting the perception of college students from deficit to asset-based approach is challenging, as the forms of capital identified in the cultural wealth model are often unnoticed (Yosso, 2015). If cultural wealth is not acknowledged or recognized, students likely are unable to identify the assets they possess and/or make the connection between their skills and experiences and their potential in college. Student perception of faculty acknowledging their individual cultural wealth and grit is important. Yosso (2015) notes that the various types of capital build on one another and each plays an important role in helping students thrive in an educational environment. Each form of capital in the community cultural wealth model is developed through student experiences in developing the others. For instance, aspirational capital is shaped for a person by further development of social and familial capital (Yosso, 2015). Increasing student persistence and completion rates in college requires understanding the student experience including an understanding of how and if students recognize their individual aspirational capital, navigational capital, and grit. Further, it is important to connect students' understanding

of these assets in themselves to their academic success in college. Another critical component to student success in college is to understand students' experiences in the classroom, including their perceptions of faculty understanding of and recognition of their skills and experiences as strengths rather than as barriers (White, 2016).

Problem Statement

The gap between the demographics of faculty and students in higher education is exemplified by the racial, ethnic, and economic disparities in student achievement outcomes. Expecting students to adapt to an unwritten set of rules to successfully navigate higher education is not the solution. Understanding the strengths of students is essential. This study will measure two-year college student recognition of their individual aspirational capital, navigational capital, and grit connected to their perceived academic success, as well as their perceptions of faculty understanding of and recognition of their skills and experiences.

Hypotheses

Higher education was not created with a diverse student population in mind (Neklason, 2019). Learning to move through college requires navigational capital skills (Yosso, 2015). Navigational capital refers to seeing personal abilities despite the constraints of an institution, as well as recognizing the social and community connections that help students navigate (Yosso, 2015).

Hypothesis 1: It is hypothesized that measured navigational capital will correlate with perceived academic success.

Research shows that goals are a key factor in student persistence (Duckworth et al., 2007). Aspirational capital refers to the goals students have for themselves, even in the face of obstacles (Yosso, 2015). This form of capital develops hope in students for the future that may be different than those of their parents (Yosso, 2015).

Hypothesis 2: It is hypothesized that measured aspirational capital will correlate with perceived academic success.

Students with higher levels of grit tend to reach their long-term goals at higher rates (Duckworth et al., 2007). While research shows that grit is important in predicting student success, higher education continues to measure success based on assessments (Almeida et al, 2019).

Hypothesis 3: It is hypothesized that grit will correlate with perceived academic success.

Significance of the Research

Within colleges across the country, there are disparities in persistence, completion, and job placement rates among students of color compared to white students. Significant issues of racism regularly remind us that a lot of work is required to change the outcomes for communities of color. On college campuses, the climates are not the same for students of color as they are for white students (Museus & Saelua, 2018). There continue to be disparities in academic success, including retention (Dowd & Bensimon, 2015).

Data show that the equity gap in student success outcomes continues to exist between white students and students of color. An asset-framed approach to student

success is a refreshing option for leaders to implement instead of perpetuating the current

notion that students should adapt to fit the cultural standards of higher education.

Learning how students view their individual cultural wealth, grit, and perceived academic

success across demographic categories will provide a needed assessment. Additionally,

understanding student perceptions of their classroom environment will add to the

research.

Definition of Key Terms

Aspirational Capital. The ambition, desires, and goals a person holds for themselves

(Yosso, 2015).

Cultural Wealth Model. An asset-based model including six forms of capital that

students possess that may be used to see the best in students (Yosso, 2015).

Familial Capital. The network of family and community a student has from their life

before college (Yosso, 2015).

Grit. Passion and perseverance to work toward long-term goals and dreams (Duckworth

et al., 2007).

Linguistic Capital. Knowledge and skills manifested through communication and

language that a student carries to college (Yosso, 2015).

Navigational Capital. Competence and experience navigating the education environment

(Yosso, 2015).

Resistance Capital. Skills to engage in solving social justice problems (Yosso, 2015).

Social Capital. Access to peers to help students navigate college (Yosso, 2015).

CHAPTER II

Literature Review

Decades of research demonstrate the pervasive disparities of student success, persistence, and retention in higher education. Such disparities are especially notable among African American and low-income students. Yet, these students come from communities of rich cultural legacies. While there is no one singular approach to improving student persistence and completion rates, the community cultural wealth model explores six forms of capital that communities of color acquire which may be useful in supporting students of color in college (Yosso, 2015). However, less is known about the potential role of cultural wealth as an antidote to educational disparities.

When considering institutional characteristics that lead to student success, studies show that student support practices, organizational structure, and campus climate contribute. Significant research exists around student attributes related to persistence including the asset-based concept of grit (Duckworth et al., 2017).

History of Disparities in Higher Education

Thein (2019) suggested that faculty and staff are seeking to transform the college-going experience from one that serves the elite to one that is universal. However, higher education leaders often overlook or avoid important historical data and facts about the history of their institutions. Thelin (2019) wrote about the critical need to expand access and how community colleges play an important role in serving students excluded from higher education in the past due to gender, race, and ethnicity (Thelin, 2019).

Extensive literature has been developed about whom higher education in the United States of America was intended to serve at the inception of higher education. For example, recent research by Stewart (2020) suggested that the development of Harvard University and the eight other original universities in the United States was designed to serve wealthy, male, white, slavers, and slave owners. The creation of colleges required the forced removal of Native Americans from the land and the forced slavery of African Americans to build the buildings. The study reveals that this intentional design of inclusion for some and exclusion for others is the origin of the disparities we see around race and class in the system of higher education in the United States today. This may also be the reason that attempts to increase diversity in higher education continue to fail. The literature highlighted the need for policymakers and leaders in higher education to radically redefine who college is for (Stewart, 2020).

Substantial literature about the history of elitism in higher education exists. For instance, a recent article by Necklason (2019) suggested that the initial purpose of higher education was to preserve privilege and that the policies put into practice were purposefully designed to protect wealthy white students. In the early days of Harvard's existence, the graduates were not ranked according to grades, they were ranked according to their family's status in society placing class at the top of the privilege hierarchy. The research indicated that policies continue to be put into place to protect Legacy (namely, white and wealthy) students' access to elite institutions (Neklason, 2019).

Demographics of Faculty, Staff, and Administrators

Numerous researchers have investigated the demographics of college and university faculty and staff as compared to the changing racial and ethnic makeup of the United States overall. Espinosa et al. (2019) concluded that while white students comprise half of the student population in higher education, the faculty is 73.2% white. Additionally, three-quarters of the faculty in two-year colleges are white (see Figure 1). The study also noted the majority of faculty at all ranks are white. The authors also reported that professional staff and administrator positions were also majority white with the Vice President of Student Affairs position being held by the most people of color at 26%. The research demonstrated that the position of President has the largest majority of white people in the position (Espinosa et al., 2019).

Figure 1. *Full-Time Faculty, By Race and Ethnicity: Fall 2016*
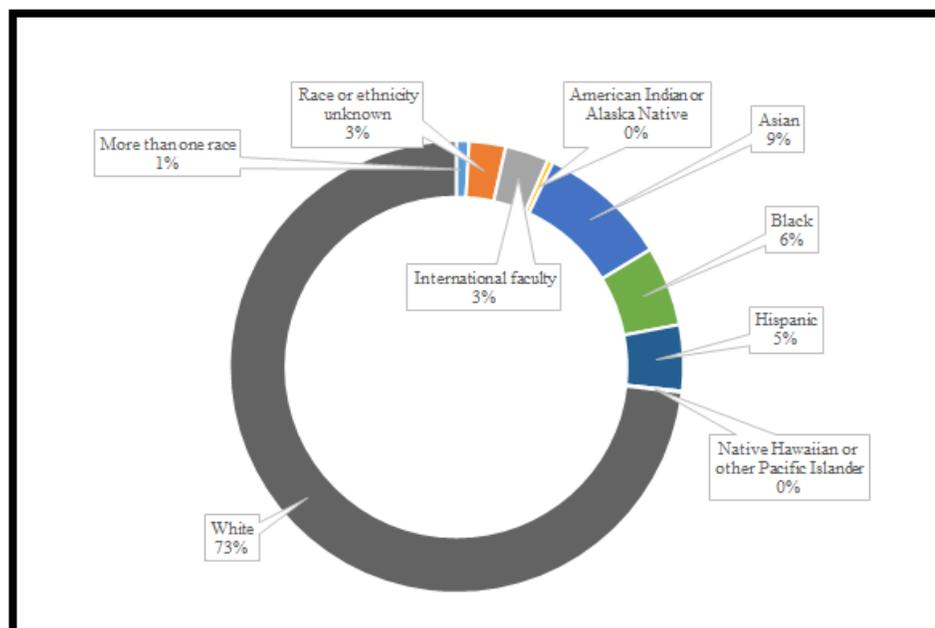
Note. Adapted from Espinosa et al (2019), *Race and ethnicity in higher education: A status report*.

Changing Demographics of Students

The American Council on Education's (2019) status report on race and ethnicity in higher education showed that the undergraduate student population increased from 29.6 percent in 1996 to 45.2 percent in 2016 among students of color, while the report shows that in 2018 more than 73 percent of full-time faculty were white. The largest group of students enrolled at the lowest percentage in higher education were African Americans. The study further revealed that the largest number of students enrolled in higher education were enrolled in two-year colleges and specifically for American Indian

or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, Black and Hispanic students (Espinosa et al., 2019).

Among those students enrolled in two-year colleges, close to 40% of students do not complete their educational goals (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020). The National Center for Education Statistics report (2020) presented that overall college enrollment increased for Black, white, and Hispanic students, with the Hispanic student enrollment more than doubling (see Figure 2). Among full-time, full-year undergraduate students, the percentages of Black, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Hispanic students receiving financial aid grants were higher than white and Asian students.

Figure 2. *Ages 25 and Older Educational Attainment by Race and Ethnicity: 1997 and 2017*

		Less than High School	High School Graduate	Some College, No Degree	Associate Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	Professional Degree	Doctoral Degree
1997	All racial and ethnic groups	17.90%	33.80%	17.20%	7.30%	16%	5.40%	1.40%	1%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	25.80%	35.80%	18.10%	8.10%	7.80%	3.70%	0.20%	0.50%
	Asian	14.80%	23.10%	12.80%	6.70%	27.50%	9.60%	3.20%	2.40%
	Black	24.70%	36.10%	19.10%	6.70%	9.50%	3%	0.50%	0.30%
	Hispanic	45.30%	25.90%	13.30%	5.20%	7.40%	1.80%	0.60%	0.50%
	Islander	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	White	13.70%	34.80%	17.60%	7.60%	17.50%	5.90%	1.60%	1.10%
	More than one race	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2017	All racial and ethnic groups	10.40%	28.80%	16.30%	10.30%	21.30%	9.50%	1.50%	1.90%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	14.70%	35.20%	17.60%	11.90%	13.40%	5.10%	1.40%	0.60%
	Asian	9.10%	19.90%	9.30%	6.40%	30.70%	17.90%	2.10%	4.70%
	Black	11.90%	33%	20.40%	10.30%	15.30%	7.10%	0.70%	1.10%
	Hispanic	29.50%	31%	14.40%	8%	12.20%	3.90%	0.50%	0.70%
	Islander	10.70%	35.10%	19.20%	9.90%	18.50%	5.30%	0.80%	0.60%
	White	5.90%	28.30%	16.60%	11.20%	23.70%	10.50%	1.80%	2.00%
	More than one race	6.60%	27.90%	22.40%	10.40%	20.90%	8.50%	1.60%	1.60%

Note. Adapted from Espinosa et al. (2019), *Race and Ethnicity in Higher Education: A Status Report*.

Race and Class Disparities

The American Council on Education's (2019) status report revealed that persistence rates were lower at two-year institutions across the country. The report further showed that Black students had the lowest completion rates and the highest dropout rates across all types of higher education (Espinosa et al., 2019).

A considerable body of literature on race and class disparities in higher education. For instance, Dowd and Bensimon (2015) reported that within colleges across the country, disparities in persistence, completion, and job placement rates among students of color compared to white students continue. The authors called for practitioners to use the Equity Scorecard (2007) tool to end racial disparities among college students. The researchers reported that deliberately focusing on systemic change to policies and procedures may increase the success of students of color in higher education (Dowd & Bensimone, 2015).

Ross (2015) described colleges and university campuses as racially hostile spaces for African American students, including in institutions that promote equity and inclusion. Across institutions, the author found that diversity offices are underfunded and understaffed, resulting in a lack of accountability for incidents of racial injustice and bias (Ross, 2015).

A study by the Education Trust (2020) noted that the most commonly used substitute for race in policies is income. The authors reported that this substitution does not work in efforts to attain racial equity because Black and white students from the same income level have exceedingly different experiences affecting their access to and success

in education as well as determinants of their social mobility (Jones & Nichols, 2020). Park (2018) called upon higher education leaders to include anti-racist practices and to question their own assumptions about minoritized students. When considering class-based affirmative action, assumptions about Black Americans are bungled (Park, 2018).

Lathe (2017) wrote about the lack of clarity around what it means to be a "low-income student" in higher education. Lathe asserted that class-based differences are largely ignored and low-income students continue to be underserved in the education system. Many faculty hold misperceptions of students they teach and, consciously or unconsciously, perceive the need for students to adapt to fit into the culture of higher education to succeed. It is critical to see the unwritten rules of navigating higher education may be the real barrier for students (Lathe, 2017).

Berrett (2015) reported that seemingly simple things can be insurmountable barriers for students. This includes the unwritten rules of higher education. For instance, understanding the language used in higher education and the expected cultural norms for how to engage with faculty, how to be a learner, and how to read a syllabus can all pose a challenge for students who are first-generation college students (Berrett, 2015). Berrett (2015) argued that higher education leaders believe that the rules of college, including filling out financial aid forms and understanding which courses to register for each semester, are clear but for many students, the entire process of maneuvering through higher education systems is complicated and frustrating (Berrett, 2015).

Yosso (2015) called out how the structure, policies, and procedures have changed little as the demographics of the student population have changed significantly over time

as most people working in higher education believe that the system works as it is and students should adapt to fit the system. The structure, policies, and procedures are grounded through the history of higher education, led primarily by white leaders who maintain the practices that create barriers for students, particularly students of color (Garcia, 2019). Garcia (2019) suggested that whiteness of higher education has been normalized throughout history. Initial efforts to include people of color were meant to strip them of their racial identities to fit the white-framed expectations in higher education and society overall (Garcia, 2019). DiAngelo (2016) argued that white people are mostly unaware that they live in a world with systems, policies, and procedures set up to benefit them and as a result continue to perpetuate systemic racism by developing new and implementing existing policies and procedures with a white frame of reference.

Considering the history of disparities in higher education, it is important to understand the literature around institutional attributes associated with student success.

Institutional Characteristics Correlated to Student Success

Previous studies have shown that the various characteristics of institutions including such features as size, mission, and the diversity of students have an uncertain effect on student success (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Kuh et al, 2006; Titus, 2004). Kuh et al. (2006) reported that institutional attributes have no direct effect on student success. However, selectivity and persistence are directly related. Selecting well-prepared students results in higher graduation rates. Inversely, open-access institutions, such as public two-year colleges have lower persistence and completion rates. Titus (2004) agrees that student persistence is influenced by selectivity, however, the author also

reports that institution size is correlated. Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) also reported that institution size has an indirect impact on student success because of multiple variables such as faculty to student ratios, peer connections, and opportunities for campus engagement.

Organizational Characteristics

Several authors report that organizational mission is related to student success. Kuh et al. (2006) noted that this may be because those institutions with a strong alignment between mission and educational practices lead to more effective progress. Examples reported by Kezar and Kinzie (2006), as well as Kuh et al. (2005), explained that institutions that intentionally describe their commitment to student success is demonstrated in their retention and graduation rates. Making the clear connection between mission and student success results.

Hertado et al. (2003) suggested that diversity among the student body of an institution improves relationships among students partially because it increases the opportunities for students to interact with others from diverse backgrounds. Students who report greater participation with diversity demonstrate increased personal growth, active and collaborative learning, and greater gratification with their college experience (Kuh et al., 2006). However, for African American students attending institutions where they were in the minority, degree completion is slower than where they were in the majority (Kuh et al., 2006). A more systematic and theoretical analysis is required for understanding the impact of the diversity of the faculty, staff, and administration and student success outcomes.

Student Support Practices

Substantial literature exists regarding teaching and learning practices considered to have a high impact on student success in college. These practices are widely known as high-impact practices across the sectors in higher education. Studies of high-impact practices are well documented and include first-year experience programs, common core curriculum, learning communities, writing-intensive courses, collaborative projects, undergraduate research, diversity/global learning, digital portfolios, service learning, internships, and capstone projects (Kuh, 2008). The Center for Community College Student Engagement (2014) reported additional high-impact practices specific for two-year colleges. These include new student orientation, accelerated developmental education, student success courses, academic goal setting and planning, tutoring, and supplemental instruction. A study by the Pell Institute (2004) showed a positive relationship between graduation rates and high-impact practices such as new student orientation, learning communities, early alert programs, bridge programs, and tutoring.

Wismath and Newberry (2019) studied first-year experience programs and the practice of mapping assets available to students to help them succeed in college. Their research found that the program and asset-mapping changed factors of the number of student engagement opportunities with the college, a strong peer network, student understanding of the resources for success and growth at the university, and the advancement of their writing and critical thinking skills. Students also reported an enhanced connection with the institution as a result of this high-impact practice (Wismath & Newberry, 2019).

The Center for Community College Student Engagement (2014) analyzed the evolving pathways designs in college. Pathways are "clearly structured, educationally coherent program pathways that lead to students; end goals, and in rethinking instruction and student support services in ways that facilitate students' learning and success as they progress along these paths" (Bailey et al., 2015, p. 3). The research revealed a positive correlation between pathways and three student outcomes: completion of at least one developmental education course with a grade of C or better, completion of one gatekeeper course with a grade of C or better, and persistence (fall-to-spring and fall-to-fall). The first study by the organization (Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2012) on this topic highlighted practices that are grouped into three main principles: (a) planning for success, (b) initiating success, and (c) sustaining success. The second report noted that while these high-impact practices do benefit students, how impactful they are depended on the quality of the implementation, the number of students they reach, and the number of practices that students encounter (Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2013).

Research by Bailey et al. (2015) stressed the importance of the need to broadly overhaul community colleges by institutionalizing the guided learning pathways model which includes reforming developmental education, teaching and learning, and student services. Their research highlighted a road map for community colleges to do this work, which will benefit students (Bailey et al., 2015).

Literature critiquing the connection between the effects of high-impact practices and social inequalities is lacking. Longmire-Avital (n.d.) reported that students from

underrepresented populations had lower participation rates in high-impact practices. The author called for a review of critical race theory diverse learning environments, and the community cultural wealth model to address engagement disparities (Longmire-Avital, n.d.).

Campus Climate

Over time, an extensive literature has developed on campus climate. Reason (2013) explains that although it has been defined differently in the literature, characteristic themes have emerged. The study concluded that climate includes attitudes, behaviors, policies, and procedures. Most importantly, perhaps, is the common understanding that "climate" is multifaceted, includes people's attitudes and behaviors, and is more malleable than culture. Further, climate interacts with organizational policies and practices. The author additionally described the literature around the dimensions of climate including noticeable behavior, campus community members' perception of the organization, and people's feelings about the institution as the multiple factors that define campus climate (Reason, 2013).

Hart and Fellabaum (2008) conducted research on campus climate assessments and found those who conduct assessments are typically internal to the organization, agreement on the best methods to assess campus climate is lacking, partly because there is a lack of agreement on the definition. Chang et al. (2013) studied the dynamics of diversity as the foundation of student's interactions on campus. The authors' work leans into the campus climate framework including five elements embodied in campus climate (see Figure 3). The framework illustrates key external and internal factors that produce

campus climates. External factors include politics and laws as well as historical and social factors. The authors described political factors as those including legislation, federal financial aid policies, and litigation defining access to education. Social and historical factors include happenings in the world that influence people's view of diversity. The internal factors of campus climate include five dimensions. The dimensions consist of compositional diversity, the historical legacy of inclusion/exclusion, psychological, organizational/structural, and behavioral.

The compositional diversity dimension includes the number of students, faculty, and staff from diverse backgrounds on campus. The authors noted that this is the dimension that administrators most often consider when working to improve campus climate. Included in the dimension of historical inclusion/exclusion is the institution's history of inclusion and exclusion of student populations. Chang et al. (2013) pointed out that for some institutions, the history of including diverse student populations is much shorter than the history of including those populations. This historical tradition shapes policies and procedures still in operation in higher education today and is embedded in the climate. The psychological dimension of campus climate refers to the beliefs and attitudes about diversity. This includes the institution's response to discrimination as well as perceptions of diverse members of the campus community. The organizational/structural dimension includes diverse representation in the curriculum or lack thereof, which is an internal factor of campus climate. Also included in this dimension are budget allocations and resources for programs and services to support diverse students on campus. The organizational/structural dimension of campus climate

further includes the deeply ingrained ways in which everyday decisions favor dominant

groups, leaving out non-dominant groups. Finally, the behavioral dimension of campus

climate includes the amount and quality of interactions between diverse groups. The

authors explained that internal factors connect with external factors to create the campus

climate felt differently by individuals based on how a person experiences diversity

(Chang et al., 2013).

Figure 3. Campus Climate Framework
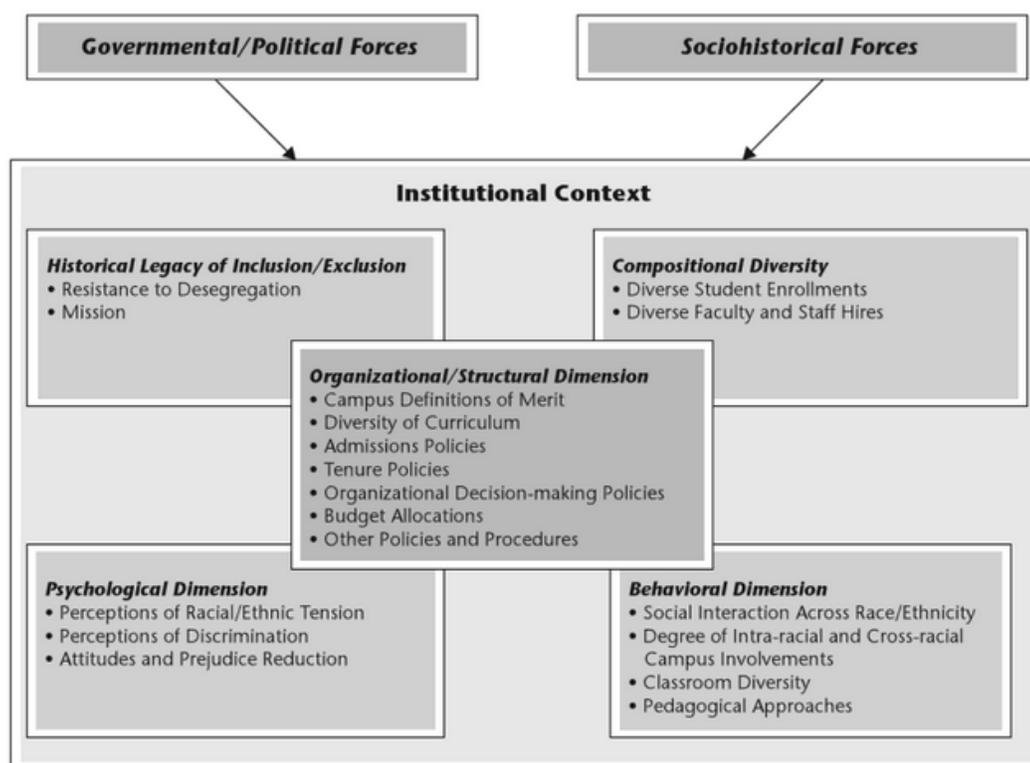
Note. This figure demonstrates the campus climate framework. Reprinted from Chang et

al. (2013, p. 54), *Student services: A handbook for the profession* (5th Ed, p. 54).

To apply the campus climate framework, the authors recommended that to ensure

institutions are meeting the needs of all students, it is important to take varied approaches

to practices. They further noted that there is not one single approach to serving all students that will work and the foundation of equitable practices requires using myriad approaches to serving students. The authors also noted the importance of considering the needs of all students when developing approaches to serving students. Additionally, the researchers noted that the process of achieving a positive campus climate is as important as the expected outcomes. Lastly, the authors noted that work to improve diverse student outcomes is hard work and is continuous (Chang et al., 2013). Research by Museus (2014) covered many years and types of research around campus climate and its effect on student success. Overall, campuses that provide a culturally engaging experience result in students reporting a more optimistic experience and higher student success outcomes (Museus, 2014).

Student Characteristics of Persistence

After reviewing institutional characteristics of student success, examining student attributes of persistence is necessary. When researching theories of retention, the work of Tinto (1993) is often cited for the development of the departure theory about why students are not retained in college. There have been numerous studies to examine this theory, which states that to persist, students need the support of formal and informal academic and social systems. Studies have shown that only five of the thirteen hypotheses of the theory were supported (Kuh et al., 2006).

Theories

One study tested Tinto's theory to determine if students' interactions had an impact on their commitment to the institution and one such study indicated that students'

commitment to and perceptions of their institution are important (Savage et al., 2019).

Additionally, Berger and Braxton (1998) sought to revise Tinto's theory by addressing

the missing definition of social integration. In a revision to the theory, the researchers

sought to include organizational attributes such as student involvement in decision

making, relation to peers, and interactions with faculty, tested against student race and

ethnicity. They found that all three factors had a statistically significant connection to

student entry characteristics (Berger & Braxton, 1998).

A theory developed by Bean (1980) implied that student withdrawals from

college are comparable to employees leaving their jobs. Like Tinto, the author noted that

student retention was determined by a complex set of factors. Unlike Tinto, Bean's

theory focused on the significance of student's backgrounds on retention (Bean, 1980).

Bean and Metzner (1985) concluded that the early student development theories on

retention did not account for non-traditional students. They defined non-traditional

students as those who were older than 25 years old, commuted to school, or were enrolled

part-time. In 1987, Seidman theorized that institutions could improve retention if they

focused on the need for early identification of challenges and interventions for students

(Seidman, 2012).

Student Engagement

A significant amount of evidence exists about higher education institutions

providing opportunities for students to learn about and grow in developing social and

emotional skills to help students be academically successful and therefore, less likely to

drop out of college (Farruggia et al., 2018).

The Higher Learning Commission (HLC, 2019) defined co-curricular as "Learning activities, programs, and experiences that reinforce the institution's mission and values and complement the formal curriculum" (Higher Learning Commission, 2019, p. 221). HLC requires institutions to demonstrate evidence of assessing student learning through co-curricular activities for accreditation. Several studies suggest that co-curricular learning is positively correlated to student retention. Rice (2019) suggested that by offering co-curricular learning opportunities, students can develop essential skills needed for their careers. Another study found that student involvement in co-curricular events is statistically significant to student success outcomes (Lundquist, 2020). Students engaged in these opportunities develop self-confidence, relationships with peers, and critical thinking skills. Hu (2010) reported that students who report being more socially engaged on campus showed an increased likelihood of persisting and that higher levels of academic engagement had the opposite effect. Further research on this finding is needed. There is limited research on the reasons why the majority of students do not engage in co-curricular experiences in college. Kuh et al. (2006) reported that the numbers of college students who reported spending no time on co-curricular activities were over 40% at four-year institutions and 84% at two-year institutions.

The literature review showed the positive effects of faculty to student interactions on academic momentum. For example, Trolian et al. (2016) tested the importance of these interactions on student motivation and learned that types of encounters between faculty and students showed a positive correlation to motivation. The quality and frequency of interactions with faculty, as well as the opportunities for research with

faculty, personal conversations, and connecting outside of class with faculty, showed the most value (Trolian et al., 2016). Literature showed that student access to peers and faculty supports can predict academic success (Almeida, 2019). Almeida (2019) recommended a focus on relationships to increase student success. Similarly, Schudde (2019) found that interactions between faculty and students specifically around academic matters improved student outcomes at community colleges. The researcher noted the need for additional studies to be conducted about the best practices for faculty-student interactions (Schudde, 2019).

Schudde (2019) also found that interactions with peers in the community college setting is correlated to improved student outcomes. As has been previously reported in the literature, the researcher reported that student engagement on campus through co-curricular opportunities such as student organizations and community-building events has a beneficial effect on student success results (Schudde, 2019). A study of first-semester community college students and the importance of peer interactions revealed that these students reported fewer opportunities for these types of interactions (Butler-Paisley, 2019). The researcher sought to understand how to create these opportunities within the community college classroom environment. The study indicated that when social interactions were encouraged in the classroom, faculty, and students benefited by boosting learning, positive classroom environment, student growth, creating a supportive sense of community, reassuring environment, and overall student success (Butler-Paisley, 2019). Additional research is needed to understand effective practices for creating peer-to-peer connections in college.

Student Self-efficacy

The literature showed that many authors have researched factors of self-efficacy as key indicators of student success in college. Motivation as a predictor for student success and retention was found through a comprehensive review of the *College Student Inventory (CSI)* data (Slanger et al., 2015). The CSI uses multiple non-cognitive signals to identify incoming college student risk factors for succeeding in college. Research has provided evidence for the importance of motivation equally as important to student academic success as prior academic achievement, which much of prior research suggests is significant (Credé & Kencel, 2008).

In addition to motivation, previous studies have emphasized that a student's belief in their academic abilities impacted their academic performance, while a student's sense of belonging impacted their retention (Han et al., 2017). Han et al. (2017) suggested the importance of providing students with both. One study investigated student self-regulated learning (SRL), a process by which a student plans, monitors and reflects on a goal, and academic achievement related to grit and found that perseverance, an aspect of grit, was a gauge for SRL (Wolters & Hussain, 2015).

Many studies have focused on grit and its relationship to students' academic achievement. Most early studies, as well as current work, focus on the connection between the presence of grit in the sample group and the ability to reach long-term goals. For example, one of the earliest studies found that the presence of grit in attaining success was more impactful than the presence of intelligence and responsibility factors

(Duckworth et al., 2007). The method used in developing the grit scale, however, did not include an assessment of race/ethnicity or socioeconomic class (Duckworth et al., 2007).

There are several studies in the literature on the connection between grit and other factors including self-control. Duckworth and Gross (2014) showed a distinct relationship between the two, however, it is not exact. The study explained the difference between the two elements as self-control being the ability to progress toward goals despite distractions of more interesting options, while grit is giving significant effort to reach a goal without giving up on that specific goal (Duckworth & Gross, 2014). A study by Crede et al. (2017) showed a strong connection between grit and conscientiousness but a lack of strength in the relationship between grit and retention and academic performance. The study also revealed that programs designed to develop grit in people may have a limited impact on academic success (Crede et al., 2017).

Kim (2016) suggested that the research around grit fails to consider is the larger social systems affecting access and opportunities for underrepresented populations. The author argued that grit thinking may perpetuate inequality and should perhaps be described as a dependent variable of parent education and income levels (Kim, 2016). Resseger (2015) also questioned the importance of teaching personal grit versus addressing social inequalities. The author wrote about the need for a focus on improving the economic and educational disparities to improve student success results (Resseger, 2015).

Several questions regarding whether or not grit can be taught remain to be addressed. One researcher wrote that while grit is real and scientific, how to teach it, and

if it can be taught, is only just beginning to be the focus of research (Willingham, 2016). Additional studies to understand more completely the key tenets of developing grit are required. Knowing if grit is a learned or innate behavior will benefit higher education leaders as they design programs and services to support student success. If grit can be learned, efforts to help students cultivate it will be important.

The research around institutional characteristics related to student success as well as the student characteristics of persistence demonstrates the internal and external forces that can impact college student completion. Given this, a review of new ways of thinking about how students are served is imperative.

Community Cultural Wealth

Research on higher education retention and completion is overwhelmingly focused on student failure. The literature is riddled with the words "barriers" and "at-risk." This rhetoric diverts the focus away from deep-rooted racial disparities ingrained in higher education (Dowd & Bensimone, 2015). White (2016) noted that among the literature is a focus on three deficits: (a) minority, (b) low-income, and (c) first-generation likely as a result of higher education's focus on closing achievement gaps for these students. The author argued that a focus on these students as lacking suggests that higher education leaders do not think the students can be successful and as long as this type of view of students exists, efforts to improve outcomes will not be accomplished (White, 2016).

An asset-based view of students includes recognizing the self-worth and resources available to students to help them be successful (Wismath & Newberry, 2019). It means

seeing the strengths in students and helping them use their strengths to reach their goals. A deficit-minded perspective puts the burden of success solely on the students. Whereas, recognizing the assets that students bring into the classroom emphasizes that student outcomes are constructed by patterns of racial disparities and are reinforced by our institutions (Yosso, 2005).

O'Shea (2016) addressed previous research that indicated first-generation college students lack essential capital to be successful in college. The author challenged the practice of helping students build necessary capital while in college. She argued that this view of students lacking assets is problematic (O'Shea, 2016). This deficit-minded thinking leads to a gap in belief in students. For example, Favela et al. (2020) found that 67% of students who had dropped out of college believed they were academically prepared to be successful while only 17% of the faculty and staff at the institutions believed the students were academically prepared to be successful (Favela et al., 2020). Yosso (2005) explained that we often see the hardships our students bring with them to college, particularly those coming from communities of color. This position places the blame for failing to be academically successful on our students and their families, reducing the responsibility of faculty and staff in ensuring student persistence.

Reframing the way faculty view their commitment to students, includes consciously demonstrating belief in students (McNair et al., 2016). Demonstrating a genuine belief in students calls for higher education to institutionalize language that is caring and trusting toward students' capacity to learn in many ways, including through curricular and co-curricular opportunities (McNair et al., 2016). It means helping students

feel like faculty believe they can succeed in their institutions. Showing belief in students includes recognizing the strengths, or assets, that students bring to college and altering the language of how students are talked about on campus, including reframing the expectation that students are college-ready and instead shifting the ownership to ensuring institutions are student-ready (McNair et al., 2016). Faculty perception of students in the college classroom has an important impact on students. Faculty recognizing students' identities, visible and invisible, and the barriers and assets they create may help students feel valued (Lathe, 2017).

Early studies by Bordieu (1977) sought to explain that individuals experiencing social inequities can access resources, experiences, and skills to by engaging with members of upper and middle-class society. The researcher later implied that a student's decision to attend college is based on their cultural capital, habitus, and social capital (Bordieu, 1986, 1987). The problem with this thinking is that there is no value placed on low-income members of society's rich culture. The community cultural wealth model addresses the research on social inequities by challenging traditional views of cultural capital (Yosso, 2015). The author aligned cultural capital with critical race theory to develop the model which is intended to help faculty see the assets that students of color bring into the classroom with them. The development of the model through a critical race theory lens transfers previous research about communities of color as poverty-stricken and instead concentrates on learning from the cultural knowledge, skills, and experiences of marginalized groups (Yosso, 2005). The model includes six forms of capital: (a) navigational, (b) aspirational, (c) linguistic, (d) social, (e) familial, and (f) resistance

(Yosso, 2005). Yosso (2015) notes that the various types of capital build on one another and each plays an important role in helping students thrive in an educational environment.

Yosso (2015) described navigational capital as the competence and experience a student possesses while navigating the education environment. Aspirational capital is the ambition, desires, and goals a person holds for themselves (Yosso, 2015). Previous studies have emphasized that these forms of capital play a significant role in student success. Samuelson and Litzler (2015) reported that many students of color indicate that navigational and aspirational capital helped them to persist in college. Perez (2017) studied Latino male college students and shared that while many of the subjects entered college without clear goals in mind, they accessed cultural capital to determine and reach their goals. The aspiration for a "better life" was evident among participants, along with the motivation to be a good college student. The research showed that students' cultural wealth had a greater effect on student success outcomes than the college environment (Perez, 2017). Another study showed that aspirational capital was evident in participants but on its own was not a strong enough capital to help them through their academic education alone (Espino, 2014).

Summary

Although there are many studies about cultural capital, the research on the community cultural wealth model, including a deep dive into aspirational and navigational capital remains limited. The research has shown that the history of disparities in higher education impacts the racial, ethnic, and socio-economic inequities

today (Thelin, 2019). Student demographics are rapidly changing in higher education, yet

the demographics of faculty, staff, and administrators in institutions fail to match this

change (Espinosa et al., 2019). Student characteristics of persistence are well researched

including student engagement opportunities as well as self-efficacy. The research is

comprehensive around the institutional factors that correlate to student success, including

the five dimensions that create campus climate (Chang et al., 2013). However, the focus

on students' failures instead of assets poses a challenge to closing students' success gaps

and improving campus climates. Using the community cultural wealth model to

recognize the strengths and experiences students bring with them to college is essential in

building a supportive environment for success (Yosso, 2015). Essentially, higher

education leaders and policymakers are called upon to profoundly redefine whom college

is intended to serve to ensure equitable outcomes for students (Stewart, 2020).

CHAPTER III

Method

This study explored two-year college student recognition of their individual aspirational capital, navigational capital, and grit connected to their perceived academic success, as well as their experiences in the classroom. In order to do so, three hypotheses were tested.

First, it was hypothesized that measured navigational capital would correlate with perceived academic success. As Yosso (2015) explained, navigational capital refers to seeing personal abilities despite the constraints of an institution, as well as recognizing the social and community connections that help students navigate. Successfully moving through higher education requires navigational capital. It was predicted that students who view their navigational capital as strong would also report higher academic success.

Second, it was hypothesized that measured aspirational capital would correlate with perceived academic success. As Yosso (2015) noted, aspirational capital refers to the goals students have for themselves, even in the face of obstacles. Research shows that goals are a key factor in student persistence (Duckworth et al., 2007). It was predicted that students who report high perceived academic success would also report strong aspirational capital.

Third, it was hypothesized that grit will correlate to perceived academic success. Duckworth et al (2007) define grit as passion and perseverance for long-term goals. The research around grit suggests that the higher levels of grit a person possesses, the more achievement the person will have. Thus, grit is a non-cognitive predictor of student

success (Duckworth et al., 2007). It was predicted that students who demonstrate higher levels of grit would report higher perceived academic success.

Subjects

Subjects for this study were recruited from the population of currently enrolled students in a two-year technical college of the Minnesota State (MinnState) system. MinnState is a network of public colleges and universities in the state of Minnesota and the third-largest higher education system in the United States comprising seven universities and 30 community and/or technical colleges. The system has campuses in both metropolitan and rural areas ranging from small to large student populations and the system annually educates more than 230,000 students (MinnState, n.d.). MinnState also enrolls a racially diverse student population with 26.9% students of color (MinnState, 2020). Of these students, over 74,000 are enrolled in two-year colleges (MinnState, 2021) and the technical college where subjects were recruited from enrolls over 7,000 students (Hennepin Tech, 2019). The technical college enrolls a racially diverse student population with 46% students of color and 62% are from underrepresented backgrounds (Hennepin Tech, 2021). Subjects were invited to participate in a survey via their college email addresses. A random sampling of students was selected to participate in this study. Per Qualtrics (n.d.), to gain a statistically significant sample with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error, the sample size goal is 365 students.

Measures

There is a paucity of adequate instruments for measuring cultural wealth available. Most existing tools were designed without regard to cultural capital and fail to

note pervasive differences in access and opportunities for people of color and low income populations, or the effect of using tools designed within a white context on diverse populations. The following instruments were selected because they are the closest approximation of validated tools available to test the hypotheses of this research.

Cultural Wealth Coping Scale for Latina/os

Navigational and aspirational capital were measured with the *Cultural Wealth Coping Scale for Latina/os (CWCSL)* (Kanagui-Munoz, 2014). The *CWCSL* tests for students' desired cultural wealth frameworks and coping skills. Designed by Kanagui-Munoz (2014) for a dissertation, the *CWCSL* was validated against the *Psychological Acculturation Scale* (Tropp et al, 1999), *Satisfaction with Life Scale* (Diener et al, 1985), *Multidimensional Scale of Social Support* (Zimet et al, 1988), *Problem Solving Inventory and Problem Focused Style of Coping* (Heppner et al, 1985), *Collectivistic Coping Scale* (Yeh et al, 2006), and the *Brief Symptoms Inventory-18* (Derogatis, 2001).

The instrument includes 25 Likert-type items from seven theoretically significant factors: (a) Collective Capital, (b) Distress Management Strategies, (c) Spirituality Capital, (d) Linguistic Capital, (e) Cognitive Resilience Capital, (g) Peer Capital, and (f) Cultural Legacy Capital. Kanagui-Munoz (2014) found the seven-factor *Cultural Wealth Coping Scale for Latina/os* statistically reliable with 262 Latina/o students in two studies (Collective Capital alpha = .75, Distress Management Strategies alpa = .68, Spirituality Capital alpha = .84, Linguistic Capital alpha = .74, Cognitive Resilience Capital alpha = .69, Peer Capital alpha = .81, and Cultural Legacy Capital alpha = .81).

Kanagui-Munoz (2014) noted that instruments of forms of capital are mostly standardized with white, middle class subjects. The *CWCSL* was designed by a bilingual team, with emphasis placed on language, to develop a culturally-relevant tool (Kanagui-Munoz, 2014). Although the *CWCSL* was designed to assess relevant Latina/o cultural values, it is one of the few non-white-framed instruments available to measure cultural wealth. Using a tool that is standardized with a Latina/o population more closely aligns to the community cultural wealth model engrained in cultural relevance and enhanced this study.

Grit Scale

The *Grit Scale* measures the ability to maintain endurance in the pursuit of achieving long-term goals (Duckworth & Quinn, 2009). It was used to measure grit, defined as passion and perseverance for long-term goals, in this study (Duckworth et al, 2007). The measure consists of 12 questions and includes a five-point Likert-type scale response to each question with a range from 1 (not at all gritty) to 5 (extremely gritty). This tool provided data on students' ability to persevere through challenges and maintain interest in a goal. Internal consistency for the *Grit Scale* was .85 across 1,500 subjects (Duckworth et al., 2007).

Critics of the *Grit Scale* note that the research neglects to consider racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic disparities. The development of the tool did not include an assessment of race/ethnicity or socioeconomic class of the subjects (Duckworth et al., 2007). Critics further argue that the tool to measure grit is based on the hidden standards perpetuating white cultural standards. Kim (2016) argued that grit thinking may

propagate inequality and should perhaps be described as a dependent variable of parent education and income-levels. Nonetheless, as with measuring cultural wealth, there are few available quantitative tools that test grit.

Student Perception of Faculty

Participants were also asked an open-ended question: "In general, how aware have your instructors have been aware of your cultural wealth?" after being provided with the following description of cultural wealth: "Cultural wealth is the skills and experiences students possess and bring with them into the college environment. This includes students' ability to navigate the education system, hopes and dreams, communication and language skills, the network of family and community support, access to peer supports, and skills to engage in solving social justice problems (Yosso, 2015)."

Demographics

Demographic questions were asked including gender, race/ethnicity, age, number of semesters of college completed, low-income status, GPA, and emphasis/program of study.

Design

This study included a two-step process for recruiting subjects. First, subjects were recruited via their college email account inviting them to participate in the study. The email contained an invitation to participate in the study, a description of the study, and a link to the survey administered online using Qualtrics (www.qualtrics.com) as a survey platform (see Appendix A). Subjects who clicked on the link to the study were directed to

an informed consent form before proceeding further. Once informed consent was complete, subjects were presented via Qualtrics with a series of self-reported demographic items including age, gender, race, ethnicity, income status, grade point average (GPA), and program. Subjects were then presented with the 37 items of the assembled measures with 5-point Likert scale response for each question, and the open-ended question regarding student perception of faculty awareness of cultural wealth. It was anticipated that it would take the typical subject approximately 20 minutes to complete.

Subjects were incentivized to participate in the survey by being informed in all emails related to the study that participants had the opportunity to enter their email address into a survey on a separate link to be entered into a drawing for a chance to win a $100 Visa gift card.

A reminder email was sent to all students one week after the initial email, including a link to the study, requesting them to participate. In addition, a reminder email was sent out to all students who started the survey but did not finish two days before the completion deadline encouraging them to finish the survey.

Data Analysis

Data analysis utilized JASP (jasp-stats.org) to test the hypotheses via an intercorrelation matrix that explored the potential relationships between navigational capital, aspirational capital, and grit to perceived academic success. Responses to the open-ended question regarding students' perceptions of faculty recognition of their

cultural wealth was also be evaluated by identifying prominent themes through a

frequency analysis.

CHAPTER IV
Results

This study explored two-year college student recognition of their individual aspirational capital, navigational capital, and grit connected to their perceived academic success, as well as their experiences in the classroom. The study sought to test three hypotheses. First, it was hypothesized that measured navigational capital would correlate with perceived academic success. Second, it was hypothesized that measured aspirational capital would correlate with perceived academic success. Third, it was hypothesized that grit would correlate to perceived academic success.

Demographic Data

From the possible 4,040 students (Hennepin Technical College, 2021) at a two-year college in the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MinnState) system, 192 participants (5% response rate) completed the survey instrument. The typical subject was 31 years old (SD = 10.65, range: 17 - 65 years) and 54% identified as female, 45% as male, and less than 1% non-binary and other. The majority of participants reported being low-income (70%) based on a self-reported answer to the question "do you consider yourself to be low-income?". Most subjects were enrolled at the institution in their second or third semester (24%), fourth or fifth semester (21%), and sixth or more semesters (20%). Among participants, 46% identified as White, 27% identified as Black or African American, and 13% identified as Asian. Of the participants, the average self-reported GPA was 3.19 (SD = 0.72, range: 1- 4.0), suggesting that the typical subject academically performed somewhat better than the student body at large.

Navigational Capital

In the seven-factor model of the *Cultural Wealth Coping Scale for Latina/os (CWCSL),* collective capital is gauged through five items, while peer capital is determined through three items (Kanagui-Munoz, 2014). As both factors are related to accessing information, people, and resources, and or the purpose of the current study, these items were used to comprise a measure of navigational capital. Navigational capital refers to seeing personal abilities despite the constraints of an institution, as well as recognizing the social and community connections that help students navigate (Yosso, 2015). Unfortunately, it was discovered after data collection that item 25 from the *CWCSL* was inadvertently left out of the survey. Thus, navigational capital was determined by taking the average of 4, 5, 13, 14, 15, 20, 21, and 22 (see Table 1) and the analysis was conducted without the information from the missing item. In response to the navigational capital items, participants demonstrated that the use of navigational capital assets in coping strategies was slightly helpful (M = 2.68, SD = .86). The *CWCSL* asks participants to think about a situation that has been most stressful in the past 6 months. The tool suggests subjects consider a financial, academic, family, relationship, employment, physical or mental health difficulty when responding to the scale items. Using a Likert-type rating scale of 1 – 5 with 1 being not helpful at all and 5 being extremely helpful for the difficult situation participants are thinking about as they answer the questions on the tool. Answering a 2 on the items represents that the coping strategy was slightly helpful in the situation (Kanagui-Munoz, 2014).

It was hypothesized that measured navigational capital would correlate with perceived academic success. Self-reported GPA did not correlate to navigational capital ($r = .03$, $p = .72$), failing to confirm the first hypothesis.

Table 1

Responses for Navigational Capital

CWCS Item (without item 25)	Mean	SD
Item 4: Asked a few people what resources they used to solve their problems.	2.96	1.12
Item 5: Took initiative and organized people from my culture to overcome our problems.	2.21	1.28
Item 13: Read Biblical or spiritual readings to remain strong and optimistic.	2.66	1.62
Item 14: Used another language, dialect, or informal words to speak with people that could help me.	1.84	1.22
Item 20: Sought emotional support from friends.	3.10	1.25
Item 21: Talked to friends to receive advice and gain new perspectives regarding my problem.	3.21	1.25
Item 22: Joined efforts with friends to resolve my problem.	2.79	1.32

Upon review of each of the three items related to peer capital from the *CWCSL* (Kanagui-Munoz, 2014), no individual item showed a meaningful correlation to self-reported GPA (see Table 2).

Table 2

Correlations among Peer Capital and GPA

Variable		GPA	Item 20	Item 21	Item 22
GPA:	Pearson's r	____			
	p-value	____			
Item 20:	Pearson's r	0.050	____		
	p-value	0.494	____		
Item 21:	Pearson's r	0.094	0.781	____	
	p-value	0.195	<.001	____	
Item 22:	Pearson's r	-0.016	0.704	0.704	____
	p-value	0.824	<.001	<.001	____

Similarly, analysis of the collective capital items and the correlation to self-reported GPA showed no correlation (see Table 3).

Table 3

Correlations among Collective Capital and GPA

Variable		GPA	Item 4	Item 5	Item 13	Item 14
GPA:	Pearson's r	____				
	p-value	____				
Item 4:	Pearson's r	0.029	____			
	p-value	0.686	____			
Item 5:	Pearson's r	-0.063	0.442	____		
	p-value	0.385	<.001	____		
Item 13:	Pearson's r	0.068	0.134	0.300	____	
	p-value	0.350	0.063	<.001	____	
Item 14:	Pearson's r	-0.050	0.261	0.384	0.392	____
	p-value	0.495	<.001	<.001	<.001	____

Supplemental analysis of gender showed no significance ($t[188] = .45$, $p = .33$). Analysis of income status (low-income or not) revealed no significance ($t[188] = .12$, $p = .55$). No significance was identified through analysis of race ($t[188] = 4.2$, $p = 1.0$). Furthermore, analysis of the number of semesters attending the college did not show significance ($t[188] = -1.3$, $p = .10$). There was no significance between gender and navigational capital ($t[188] = -.45$, $p = .33$). Finally, no significance was revealed through analysis of age ($t[188] = .18$, $p = .57$).

Aspirational Capital

Aspirational capital refers to the goals students have for themselves, even in the face of obstacles (Yosso, 2015). This form of capital develops hope in students for the future that may be different than those of their parents (Yosso, 2015). In the *CWCSL*, aspirational capital is measured through Kanagui-Munoz's (2014) Cognitive Resilience

Capital items 17, 18, 19, and 20 (Kanagui-Munoz, 2014). In response to the aspirational

capital items, participants demonstrated that the use of aspirational capital assets in

coping strategies was moderately helpful (M = 3.47, SD = .90). The *CWCSL* tests for

students' desired cultural wealth frameworks and coping skills. Scoring for the *CWCSL*

includes answering questions about a difficult situation within the past 6 months for the

participants. A mean of 3.47 response to the aspirational capital items on the tool reveals

that the average for participants indicated that the use of this form of capital in managing

a problem was moderately helpful.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics for Aspirational Capital

CWCS Item	Mean	SD
Item 17: Kept my hopes and dreams alive during difficult times.	3.67	1.15
Item 18: Continued to seek possible solutions in spite of difficulties.	3.70	1.06
Item 19: Thought about how I solved similar situations in the past.	3.40	1.17
Item 20: Sought emotional support from friends.	2.66	1.62

It was hypothesized that measured aspirational capital would correlate to

perceived academic success. A correlation between aspirational capital and self-reported

GPA was not identified ($r = .04$, $p = .55$), failing to affirm this hypothesis. None of the

four individual items measuring aspirational capital from the *CWCSL* (Kanagui-Munoz,

2014) correlated to self-reported GPA (see Table 5).

Table 5

Correlations among Aspirational Capital and GPA

Variable		Item 17	Item 18	Item 19	Item 20	GPA
Item 17:	Pearson's r	____				
	p-value	____				
Item 18:	Pearson's r	0.780	____			
	p-value	<.001	____			
Item 19:	Pearson's r	0.635	0.650	____		
	p-value	<.001	<.001	____		
Item 20:	Pearson's r	0.279	0.229	0.328	____	
	p-value	<.001	0.001	<.001	____	
GPA:	Pearson's r	0.002	-0.016	0.094	0.050	____
	p-value	0.977	0.829	0.196	0.494	____

Supplemental analysis of demographic variables revealed that participants who have attended the institution for more than one semester had higher aspirational capital scores than participants who were in their first semester (t[189] -1.8, p = .04). Analysis of aspirational capital and the age demographic variable showed no significance (t[189] = .23, p = .5). No significance was identified through analysis of race (t[188] = 2.3, p = .35). Similarly, there was no significance detected through the analysis of income status (low income or not) revealed no significance (t[188] = .56, p = .29). Analysis of gender also showed no significance (t[188] = .36, p = .64).

Grit

The research on grit suggests that the higher levels of grit a person possesses, the more achievement the person will have (Duckworth et al., 2007). The *Grit Scale* was used to measure grit, which is defined as passion and perseverance for long-term goals (Duckworth & Quinn, 2009). Students with higher levels of grit tend to reach their long-

term goals at higher rates (Duckworth et al., 2007). In response to the *Grit Scale* items, participants demonstrated that they were somewhat gritty as described in the instrument scoring (M = 3.50, SD = .44).

According to the authors, gritty individuals are those who score closer to 5 on the grit scale (Duckworth et al., 2007). Gritty indicates that the individual demonstrates more grit based on their responses to the *Grit Scale* with options ranging from a maximum of 5 (extremely gritty) to the lowest of 1 (not gritty at all) (Duckworth et al., 2007).

Table 6

Responses to Grit Scale

Grit Scale Item	Mean	SD
Item 1: I have overcome setbacks to conquer an important challenge.	3.82	1.00
Item 2: New ideas and projects sometimes distract me from previous ones.	3.42	1.00
Item 3: My interests change from year to year.	3.05	1.14
Item 4: Setbacks don't discourage me.	2.67	1.00
Item 5: I have been obsessed with a certain idea or project for a short time but later lost interest.	3.08	1.11
Item 6: I am a hard worker.	4.50	.70
Item 7: I often set a goal but later choose to pursue a different one.	3.14	1.04
Item 8: I have difficulty maintaining my focus on projects that take more than a few months to complete.	3.13	1.19
Item 9: I finish whatever I begin.	3.80	.93
Item 10: I have achieved a goal that took years of work.	4.01	.90
Item 11: I become interested in new pursuits every few months.	2.98	1.00
Item 12: I am diligent.	4.03	.86

It was hypothesized that grit would correlate to perceived academic success. A small association between grit and self-reported GPA was identified, potentially confirming this hypothesis ($r = .14$, $p = .05$). When reviewing the 12 grit scale items (Duckworth & Quinn, 2009) individually and their correlation to self-reported GPA, items 10 and 12 showed a small correlation ($r = .17$, $p = .02$; $r = .25$, $p = <.001$) demonstrating that the small correlation between GPA and the *Grit Scale* was mediated by these two items. Item 10 asked participants to rate how much this statement is like them, "I have achieved a goal that took years of work", while item 12 asked subjects to rate how much this statement is like them, "I am diligent" (Duckworth & Quinn, 2009).

Supplemental analysis of demographic variables revealed that participants who are 23 years old or older scored higher on the *Grit Scale* than participants who identified as 18 – 22 years old ($t(189) = -1.65$, $p = .05$). Supplemental analysis also detected students who have been enrolled at the institution for more than one semester had higher grit scores than students who were in their first semester ($t(189) = -2.7$, $p = .004$). Analysis of race revealed no significance ($t(188) = 1.6$, $p = .95$). Similarly, analysis of income status (low-income or not) showed no significance ($t(188) = .11$, $p = .46$). Additionally, analysis of gender detected no significance ($t(188) = 1.1$, $p = .88$).

Student Perception of Faculty

Subjects were also presented with the description of cultural wealth: "Cultural wealth is the skills and experiences students possess and bring with them into the college environment. This includes students' ability to navigate the education system, hopes and dreams, communication and language skills, the network of family and community

support, access to peer supports, and skills to engage in solving social justice problems (Yosso, 2015)." They were then asked to respond to an open-ended question: "In general, how do you think your instructors have been aware of your cultural wealth?". A total of 155 participants responded to the question. A word cloud (wordclouds.com) was used to demonstrate the responses to this question (see figure 4). The more a specific word was used in the participant response text data, the larger and bolder the word appears in the word cloud.

Figure 4

Student Responses to Open-Ended Question

The response set was coded using a simple method. The simple coding method involved making three passes through the written responses to the open-ended question with the goal of seeking frequencies of common response themes. On a fourth pass through the participant responses, each was labeled as one of four major themes - *aware,*

not aware, did not understand, or *awareness by some instructors.* The largest participant

response was students who think their faculty are aware of their cultural wealth (33%),

the next highest response was participants who thought their faculty were not aware of

their cultural wealth (23%), next was the group of participant responses whose answer

demonstrated that they did not understand the question (17%), and lastly was the group of

students that indicated that there is awareness of cultural wealth by some instructors

(6%).

CHAPTER V

Discussion

The mindset of college faculty, staff, and administrators about students is typically framed from a deficit model, meaning that they see the skills students are lacking when they enter college instead of the strengths they bring. The strengths of each student are developed from the rich cultural communities in which they are raised and may not look the same for everyone or fit the traditional expectations for operating in college. The majority of faculty and staff in higher education are white, and the student population is increasingly more racially diverse. The gap between the demographics of faculty and students in higher education is illuminated by the racial, ethnic, and economic disparities in student achievement outcomes.

The community cultural wealth model (Yosso, 2005) approaches student success with an asset-based frame. This model focuses on what can be learned from the cultural knowledge, skills, and experiences of people of color by recognizing six forms of capital: (a) navigational, (b) aspirational, (c) linguistic, (d) social, (e) familial, and (f) resistance (Yosso, 2005). Another asset-based concept related to student success is grit, which is defined as passion and perseverance for long-term goals (Duckworth et al., 2007). The higher the level of grit a person possesses, the more likely the person will achieve their goals.

The forms of capital identified in the cultural wealth model are not acknowledged or recognized (Yosso, 2015). As a result, students do not typically know how to identify their individual assets, nor can they understand how their assets can help them in college.

This study measured two-year college student recognition of their individual aspirational capital, navigational capital, and grit connected to their perceived academic success, as well as their perceptions of faculty understanding of and recognition of their skills and experiences.

Summary of Findings

In this study, self-reported GPA was slightly correlated to grit score, while aspirational and navigational capital scores showed no significant relationship. Overall, the correlation between self-reported GPA was congruent with predictions. While the aspirational and navigational capital lack of correlation to self-reported GPA did not coincide with predictions. The most significant finding in this study is that the length of time a student is in college revealed higher aspirational capital and grit scores, indicating that hopes and dreams (aspirational capital) and passion and perseverance (grit) are connected to persistence in college.

The typical subject of this study was 31 years of age, which is slightly older than the average years of age of two-year college students (U.S. News & World Report, 2022) and slightly older than the average age of students at the college where the study was conducted (Hennepin Technical College, 2022). The majority of participants reported being low-income, higher than the overall underrepresented student population at the institution where the study was conducted (Hennepin Technical College, 2022). Most subjects were enrolled at the institution in their second or third semester, fourth or fifth semester, and sixth or more semesters. Among participants, slightly fewer identify as students of color as compared to the student of color population at the college where the

research was carried out. Of the participants, the average self-reported GPA was 3.19, suggesting that the typical subject academically performed somewhat better than the student body at large.

Implications

The current study sought to test three hypotheses. First, it was hypothesized that measured navigational capital would correlate with perceived academic success. Navigational capital refers to seeing personal abilities despite the constraints of an institution, as well as recognizing the social and community connections that help students navigate (Yosso, 2015). Contrary to expectations, this was not supported by the data, failing to confirm this hypothesis.

Upon review of each of the individual items, none of them showed a meaningful correlation to self-reported GPA. However, participants responded with higher scores to the items "asking a few people what resources they used to solve their problems", "sought emotional support from friends", "talked to friends to receive advice and gain new perspectives regarding my problem", and "joined efforts with friends to resolve my problem" (see Table 1, p. 43). Although there are no statistically significant differences across these items, it is worth noting that participants responded with a higher score to items related to peer connections. The fact that the highest scores are in the three range of a five-point scale, prompts one to question if the social element to navigational capital is perceived as relatively unavailable. The item that was inadvertently left out of this study asked, "remembered that I am not alone in my struggle and that other people from my culture have also gone through difficult things".

The second hypothesis was that aspirational capital would correlate with self-reported GPA. Inconsistent with assumptions, aspirational capital was not correlated with perceived academic success, failing to confirm this hypothesis. Aspirational capital refers to hopes and dreams for the future that may be different from those of their parents (Yosso, 2015). In the *CWCSL*, aspirational capital is measured through cognitive resilience capital items (Kanagui-Munoz, 2014). In response to the aspirational capital items, participants responded that the use of aspirational capital assets in coping strategies was moderately helpful, revealing that the average for participants indicated that the use of this form of capital in managing a problem was moderately helpful. None of the four individual items measuring aspirational capital from the *CWCSL* (Kanagui-Munoz, 2014) correlated to self-reported GPA. Although there are no statistically significant differences across these items, it is worth noting that participants responded with a higher score to the items "kept my hopes and dreams alive during difficult times" and "continued to seek possible solutions in spite of difficulties". The fact that the highest scores are in the three range of a five-point scale, prompts the question of whether aspirational capital is seen as useful to participants in coping with a challenge (see Table 4, p. 45).

Supplemental analysis of demographic variables revealed that participants who attended the institution for more than one semester had higher aspirational capital scores than participants who were in their first semester. This potentially indicates that students who persist in college use aspirational capital coping strategies as a resource. This result may also be impacted by the fact that the majority of participants have been in college for

more than one semester, as analysis of additional demographic variables showed no significance.

The third hypothesis was that grit would correlate with perceived academic success. This was supported by the data through a small association between grit and self-reported GPA, potentially confirming this hypothesis. Being a gritter individual means more success in achieving one's goals (Duckworth et al., 2007), and in college, success is measured in part by GPA so one would not find this result surprising. When reviewing individual items on the *Grit Scale* and their correlation to self-reported GPA, items 10 and 12 showed a small correlation demonstrating that the relationship between GPA and grit was mediated by these two items. Item 10 asked participants to rate how much this statement is like them, "I have achieved a goal that took years of work", while item 12 asked subjects to rate how much this statement is like them, "I am diligent" (Duckworth & Quinn, 2009). One might surmise that being diligent is a way to achieve a goal that took years of work so perhaps it is not surprising that these two statements aligned to self-reported GPA.

Supplemental analysis of demographic variables revealed that participants who were 23 years old or older scored higher on the *Grit Scale*. This suggests that grit may be developed as a person ages. The supplemental analysis also detected that students who have been enrolled at the institution for more than one semester had higher grit scores than students who were in their first semester, indicating that students who persist in college may be using grit as a tool. Kim (2016) argued that grit thinking should perhaps be described as a dependent variable of parent education and income levels. Although the

data from this study does not support this argument, the present study requested

participants to self-report whether or not they consider themselves to be low-income. It

was not asked that they identify whether they were answering based on their individual

income or the income of their parents. Similarly, participants were not asked to relate the

income or education levels of their parents.

In addition to testing the three hypotheses, participants were asked to respond to

an open-ended question: "In general, how do you think your instructors have been aware

of your cultural wealth?" after being provided with the following description of cultural

wealth: "Cultural wealth is the skills and experiences students possess and bring with

them into the college environment. This includes students' ability to navigate the

education system, hopes and dreams, communication and language skills, the network of

family and community support, access to peer supports, and skills to engage in solving

social justice problems (Yosso, 2015)." A word cloud was used to visually demonstrate

the responses to this question. The words utilized most frequently used were "Aware",

"Culture", "Not". Through light coding of the participant responses, it was revealed that

the majority of participants responded that their instructors were aware of their cultural

wealth. The second highest response to this question was that their instructors were not

aware of their cultural wealth. Third, participants whose answer demonstrated that they

did not understand the question. Lastly, was a group of students that indicated that there

is awareness of cultural wealth by some instructors. Many participant responses coded as

either *did not understand* described their instructors as helpful to them but did not

indicate that they were aware of the student's cultural wealth. This prompts one to

presume that cultural wealth is not an easy concept to understand. Perhaps asking an open-ended question about this was not the best way to capture participant understanding of their instructor awareness.

Strengths and Weaknesses

Two strengths materialized from this study: (a) the innovative application of validated tools and (b) the unique focus on assets as a solution to the study of higher education retention. First, this study was one of the first to utilize Kanagui-Munoz's *Cultural Wealth Coping Scale for Latinas* (2014) to the examination of a diverse group of college students' navigational and aspirational capital. Finding a tool that is not built through a white construct to conduct this research was challenging. Applying a tool built for a Latina population to a multicultural participant study helped to expand the use of this validated tool.

Second, the study added new information about asset-based solutions, in this case, grit and cultural wealth, to the study of higher education retention. Much of the research related to asset-based student development is focused on student self-efficacy and student engagement. The current study focus on student aspirational capital and navigational capital adds a fresh perspective to the research on improving student success.

In addition to strengths, the study manifested five weaknesses. First, there are significantly few instruments to sufficiently measure cultural wealth available. Most existing tools were designed within a white context and fail to note pervasive differences in access and opportunities for people of color and low-income populations, or the effect of using these tools within diverse populations. The instruments used for the current

study were chosen because they are the most sufficient validated tools available to test

the hypotheses of this research. Navigational and aspirational capital was measured with

the *Cultural Wealth Coping Scale for Latina/os (CWCSL)* (Kanagui-Munoz, 2014). The

CWCSL tests for students' desired cultural wealth frameworks and coping skills.

Kanagui-Munoz (2014) noted that instruments of forms of capital are mostly

standardized with white, middle-class subjects. Although the *CWCSL* was designed to

assess relevant Latina/o cultural values, it is one of the few non-white-framed instruments

available to measure cultural wealth. The *Grit Scale* measures the ability to maintain

endurance in the pursuit of achieving long-term goals, it was used to measure grit

(Duckworth & Quinn, 2009). This tool provided data on students' ability to persevere

through challenges and maintain interest in a goal. Critics of the *Grit Scale* note that the

research neglects to consider racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic disparities, and is based

on the hidden standards perpetuating white cultural standards. Nonetheless, as with

measuring cultural wealth, few available quantitative tools test grit. This leaves one to

consider whether a quantitative analysis of cultural wealth is the best type of study for

this topic. Student responses to the open-ended question regarding their instructor's

recognition of their cultural wealth demonstrated that it is difficult to understand the

concept through a simple definition. Perhaps a qualitative study would have provided

more time and depth to understand participant cultural wealth.

The second weakness is that participants were asked to self-report their GPA and

low-income status. This may have resulted in inaccurate data and/or varying perceptions

of what it means to be low-income, as no definition was provided to participants. Third,

GPA was used as a measurement for student success as it is one of the only quantifiable ways to measure student outcomes. However, this may not be an accurate reflection of student success overall. It may better serve students to measure student success in multiple ways including progress toward academic goal completion. Fourth, the sample size was suboptimal despite multiple attempts to encourage students to participate, and offer an incentive. Lastly, the study was only conducted at a unique stand-alone two-year technical college in an urban location, with a diverse student body, and an older adult student population. Given these five limitations, using the findings of this study to generally reflect all two-year college students, and the recognition of cultural wealth and grit, should be done with caution.

Finally, it should be noted that it is not known the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on this study. While it is unknown, it is worth mentioning that participant responses to the survey for may have been impacted by the pandemic, specifically around peer connections.

Recommendations for Further Research

In consideration of the results of this study, and the strengths and weaknesses, five recommendations for future research can be made. First, it is recommended that this study be repeated with participants attending multiple colleges. The institution type, location, and demographics may change the results and would add to the learning.

Second, it is recommended that further studies on navigational capital and aspirational capital be conducted individually, and as the sole focus. The research around two forms of capital, as well as the other four forms of capital as defined by the

Community Cultural Wealth Model (Yosso, 2015), remains relatively limited. Focusing on each separately for its own study would allow for more depth into each.

Third, once participants complete the *CWCSL* and the *Grit Scale*, provide them with their scores and a short description of the score meaning and ask them to offer a written response to their scores. It is also recommended that participants be asked to reflect on how they use their cultural wealth and grit in college. This could provide context that the current study did not include.

Fourth, cultural wealth is not an easy concept to understand and it was clear in the participants' responses that many did not understand the question. It is recommended that participants be given examples of how instructors demonstrate recognition of cultural wealth and ask participants to respond to whether or not they have experienced these types of interactions with their instructors. It might also prove interesting to compare the student responses based on the coding of the open-ended question to the participant scores on the *CWCSL* (Kanagui-Munoz, 2014) and *Grit Scale* (Duckworth & Quinn, 2009). It is also recommended that the topic of cultural wealth may be better understood and tested through a qualitative study. For example, a phenomenological method would allow participants to share stories about their life experiences and may allow the researcher to understand the development, utilization, and recognition of their cultural wealth.

Lastly, because the results of this study show that grit was slightly correlated to student success, it should be considered as a potential intervention that can be used for

retention efforts. In addition, policy and funding implications related to this finding

should be considered.

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Appendix A:

Recognizing Capital: A Study of Cultural Wealth, Grit, and Student Success

I-Informed Consent

Introduction

You are invited to participate in a research study regarding your educational aspirations and experiences in college. Your participation in this study will help us to better understand the hopes and dreams of community college students about being successful in your studies. This research is being carried out by Professor Jason Kaufman, Ph.D., Ed.D., and Jessica Lauritsen, M.A. (Minnesota State University, Mankato).

PROCEDURE

If you agree to participate as a subject in this research, you will be asked to complete an online survey that will ask you about your educational hopes, dreams, and motivations. The survey will include two measures: the Cultural Wealth Coping Scale for Latina/os (Kanagui-Munoz, 2014) and the Grit Scale (Duckworth & Quinn, 2009). You can expect that this will require about 20 minutes of your time to complete.

POTENTIAL RISKS OF PARTICIPATION

The risks of participating in this study are no more than in daily life. Nonetheless, it is always possible that you might experience some discomfort from reflecting on your own educational ambitions and experiences.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION

There are no direct benefits for participating. You may benefit through the increased understanding of your hopes, dreams, and motivations.

VOLUNTARY NATURE OF THE STUDY

Participation is voluntary. All surveys will be anonymous, and the researcher will not be able to see who participates. You have the option to not choose to participate in this research. You may stop taking the survey at any time by closing your web browser. Participation or nonparticipation will not impact your relationship with Minnesota State University, Mankato, and refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits.

STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

Your survey responses will not have any identifying information and will be stored for three years. They will only be available to Dr. Kaufman and Ms. Jessica Lauritsen. However, whenever one works with online technology there is always the risk of compromising privacy, confidentiality, and/or anonymity. If you would like more information about the specific privacy and anonymity risks posed by online surveys, please contact the Minnesota State University, Mankato IT Solutions Center (507-389-6654) and ask to speak to the Information Security Manager.

CONTACTS AND QUESTIONS

This research is being directed by Jason Kaufman, Ph.D., Ed.D. (Minnesota State University, Mankato). If you have any questions about this research study, please contact Dr. Jason Kaufman at 952-818-8877 or jason.kaufman@mnsu.edu, or Jessica Lauritsen at jessica.lauritsen@mnsu.edu. If you have questions about participants' rights and for research-related injuries, please contact the Administrator of the Institutional Research Board, at (507) 389-1242.

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

By clicking on the "Next" button, I am indicating my informed consent to participate in

this study. Also, the submission of this survey attests that I am at least 18 years of age or

older. All questions that may have arisen have been answered by this document or the

investigators listed above.

Please print a copy of this page for your future reference.

MSU IRBNet ID# Date of MSU IRB approval:

Appendix B

Cultural Wealth Coping Scale for Latina/os

We all face difficulties in our lives and make attempts to overcome them. To answer the following questions, select one situation from the list below that has been the most stressful to you in the past 6 months:

- o Financial Difficulties
- o Academic Difficulties
- o Family Difficulties
- o Relationship Difficulties
- o Employment Difficulties
- o Physical or Mental Health Difficulties

Please keep this problem in mind as you answer the next set of questions. For all of the following questions, think about the stressful situation you checked above. Rate how helpful the following statements were in managing this stressful situation using the following:

1=Not helpful at all in my situation

2=Slightly helpful in my situation

3=Moderately helpful in my situation

4=Very helpful in my situation

5=Extremely helpful in my situation

1. Asked family members if they could help me solve my problem.

2. Looked for information in public places (e.g. supermarket, churches).

3. Received material resources from family.

4. Asked a few people what resources they used to solve their problems.

5. Took initiative and organized people from my culture to overcome our problems.

6. Made efforts to not think about my problem.

7. Acted like everything was okay.

8. Endured my sadness and pain in silence.

9. Avoided places or people that reminded me of my problem.

10. Distracted myself with games (e.g., cards, computer games) to not think about the problem.

11. Prayed to God, Saints or family members who are no longer living for help.

12. Decided to leave things in the hands of God or destiny.

13. Read Biblical or spiritual readings to remain strong and optimistic.

14. Used another language, dialect, or informal words to speak with people that could help me.

15. Used words and phrases in another language to better express myself.

16. Used communication media (e.g., television, Internet, radio) in another language.

17. Kept my hopes and dreams alive during difficult times.

18. Continued to seek possible solutions in spite of difficulties.

19. Thought about how I solved similar situations in the past.

20. Sought emotional support from friends.

21. Talked to friends to receive advice and gain new perspectives regarding my problem.

22. Joined efforts with friends to resolve my problem.

23. Remembered all the things I or people from my culture have overcome successfully in the past (e.g., racism, oppression).

24. Reminded myself of all the sacrifices people have made to overcome obstacles (e.g., oppression, racism) so that I could succeed.

25. Remembered that I am not alone in my struggle and that other people from my culture have also gone through difficult things.

Appendix C

Grit Scale

Directions for taking the Grit Scale: Here are a number of statements that may or may not apply to you. For the most accurate score, when responding, think of how you compare to most people—not just the people you know well, but most people in the world. There are no right or wrong answers, so just answer honestly! Answer choices for each are Very Much Like Me, Mostly Like Me, Somewhat Like Me, Not Much Like Me, and Not Like Me At All.

1. I have overcome setbacks to conquer an important challenge.

2. New ideas and projects sometimes distract me from previous ones.

3. My interests change from year to year.

4. Setbacks don't discourage me.

5. I have been obsessed with a certain idea or project for a short time but later lost interest.

6. I am a hard worker.

7. I often set a goal but later choose to pursue a different one.

8. I have difficulty maintaining my focus on projects that take more than a few months to complete.

9. I finish whatever I begin.

10. I have achieved a goal that took years of work.

11. I become interested in new pursuits every few months.

12. I am diligent.

Appendix D

Student Perception of Faculty

Cultural wealth refers to the skills and experiences students possess and bring with them into the college environment. This includes students' ability to navigate the education system, their hopes and dreams, their communication and language skills, their network of family and community support, their access to peer supports, and their skills to engage in solving social justice problems (Yosso, 2015).

In general, how do you think your instructors have been aware of your cultural wealth?

Appendix E

Demographic Questionnaire

1. **Please select your gender:**

    a. Male

    b. Female

    c. Non-binary

    d. Other

2. **Which best describes your race/ethnicity?**

    a. American Indian/Alaska Native

    b. Asian

    c. Black or African American

    d. Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander

    e. White

    f. Hispanic/Latinx

    g. Multiracial/Multiethnic

3. **Your age**

    a. Use the slide bar to approximate your age

4. **Number of semesters of college completed**

    a. 0 - 1

    b. 2 - 3

    c. 4 - 5

    d. 6 or more

5. Do you consider yourself to be low-income?

    a. Yes

    b. No

6. Emphasis/Program of Study

    a. Enter in short text box

7. Estimate of current cumulative GPA to date

    1. Use slide bar to approximate your grade point average.

8. If you would like to be entered into a drawing for a chance to receive a $20 Visa gift card for your participation in this research, please enter your email address here:

    a. Enter in short text box