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The Impacts of Social Capital and Grit on Student Success in Higher Education

jillian Davidson

THE IMPACTS OF SOCIAL CAPITAL AND GRIT ON STUDENT SUCCESS IN HIGHER
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Jillian Davidson

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Abstract

This study will examine social capital, grit, and student success individually and how these components impact student success in higher education. A correlation test was run to determine a connection between social capital and grit. An ANOVA was assessed to determine the impacts social capital and grit have on student success in higher education based on a survey distributed to undergraduate students at a four-year university. Measuring social capital, grit, and student success in higher education and determining the impacts on student success will encourage educators to provide opportunities for cognitive and non-cognitive prospects for students in higher education.

Keywords: social capital, grit, student success, higher education, impact

Table of Contents

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Student success is an important component in higher education. Assessing and understanding how to increase student success can provide opportunities to implement strategies that help students succeed cognitively and non-cognitively in the college setting. The purpose of this study is to measure social capital, grit, and student success. Furthermore, the study will connect social capital and grit and determine how these components impact student success in higher education.

Social Capital and Grit

Social capital and grit are factors that can impact student success in higher education. According to Gelderblom (2018), there is a common agreement among researchers about advantages that social capital provides, such as social connections, which can impact community engagement (Gelderblom, 2018). Aslam, Shahzad, Syed, and Ramish (2013) suggests that understanding social capital development is vital to help students succeed academically and professionally (Aslam et al., 2013). Salaran (2004), advocates that social capital is a tactical resource implanted in social relationships that can be applied to reducing pressures from conditions, such as finances. Generally, data from the research determines that social capital can impact students in higher education financially, academically, and socially. Constructing social capital entails not only launching more social ties, but also developing motivation and providing resources (Salaran, 2004). Fuller (2014), notes that consistent participation produces greater degrees of trust between individuals and communities and this has positive educational results. Attaining higher levels of success among students may entail the attempt to measure social capital and taking steps to improve social capital in schools. However, measuring social capital can be difficult because it is intangible and less precise (Fuller, 2014).

Social capital. There have been trends in literature that suggest social capital to have an impact on college students in higher education. Plagens (2010) suggests that studies have found social capital to be statistically significant in studies. Relationships have been found, indicating that social capital could be an essential predictor of test scores and dropout rates (Plagens, 2010). This data can determine that social capital can have a significant impact on student success based on test scores and dropout rates. Overall, it is determined that social capital does impact student success, based on family support, emotional support, financial support, and community involvement, and even more so, if the engagement is with the college or university. Most of the research determines a significant result of students possessing more social capital are more likely to achieve student success in college.

Grit. Grit is a more recent topic that has become popular in education and among researchers. Angela Duckworth has made remarkable strides on the research of grit and determining how it affects student success. Stokas (2015) suggests that because of Angela Duckworth's research on grit, the topic has gained the attention of educational leaders and researchers (Stokas, 2015). In connection, current research in psychology familiarizes the concept of grit as a characteristic evident in successful students (Duckworth, 2016). Furthermore, Tough (2013), suggests that determination and persistence can aid in helping students overcome adversity. Some general explanations of this context support the awareness that the obligation of academic attainment should be on the individual student. Clark, Lanners, Blecha, Lanners, and Eskitch (2019) suggest that grit is the aptitude to overcome hindrances when situations are negative or unideal. When failure is met, grit is the persistence and individual drive that permits us to overcome adversity. In higher education, as educators, grit is a quality we desire our

students to attain and sustain, but they cannot attain it without confidence and belief in themselves (Clark, Lanners, Blecha, Lanners, & Eskitch, 2019).

Chang (2014) suggests that individuals who maintain grit are diligent, thorough, sustain focus, and are not affected by hindrances. Individuals who maintain lower levels of grit may be distracted by other components and may have the tendency to set goals, but lose interest and are unable to concentrate on long-term responsibilities (Chang, 2014). Furthermore, Bazelais, Lemay, and Doleck1 (2016) argue that real grit is being able to get through failure, to recognize defeat, and try something new (Bazelais, Lemay, & Doleck1, 2016). Arya (2018) emphasized that individuals with high levels of grit are considered to be strong willed and have a positive well-being. Tiittanen and Daukantaite (2014) emphasize that being gritty is affected by how much an individual observes their reality as meaningful and avidly follows their aspirations, which has found to be suggestively related to high psychological well-being (Tiittanen & Daukantaite, 2014).

Social capital and grit connection. There may be a connection to social capital and grit and how they impact student success. Students who have access to better resources feel less susceptible to losing those resources and benefit more from the resources available to them, than individuals that lack access to resources. Sustaining one's well-being can lead to improved external performance educationally for these students (Arya, 2018). Fowler, Getzel, and Lombardi (2018) emphasize that self-determination, self-advocacy for skills, and social capital components, such as campus engagement and support systems offered by higher learning institutions are predictors of ensuring student success in higher education. Johnson and Stage (2018), reveal that grades, parents' education accomplishments, family encouragement, and academic and social integration are factors of degree achievement.

Additionally, Everitt (2015) defines and discusses student success as offering interconnections between student sense making within values in K–12 education and higher learning institutions. Goncalves and Trunk (2014) suggest that retention and student success rates of higher education students at colleges and universities have been positively correlated with the level of student engagement in their academic setting (Goncalves & Trunk, 2014). Likewise, offered outcomes suggest that financial support from family is related to less time spent working. Family emotional support was related to the amount of time students spent studying and to the degree of their engagement with faculty. Furthermore, family emotional support was strongly connected to students' psychological well-being and a sense of belonging. When students feel more emotionally supported by their family, they show superior psychological well-being and are more likely to feel like they fit in at their institution. Family emotional support is an important predictor of student success involving grades, credit accumulation, and persistence. Outcomes specify that family emotional support is advantageous because it encourages psychological well-being and better student engagement. Overall, low-income families have a restricted number of financial resources to offer their children, which may reduce the status of financial support (Roska & Kinsley, 2017).

Dofat (2015) concludes that grit, determination, and persistence are defined and measured differently depending on the higher learning institution. The students are not the only ones responsible for student success, but also school counselors, admission counselors, and colleges to find the equilibrium, interconnect expectations, and know when the institutions or opportunities are the right fit for the student, specifically when looking at GPA and test scores (Dofat, 2015).

Social capital and grit impact. Social capital and grit are components that can have an impact on student success in higher education. Furthermore, there may be a relationship between social capital and grit and how they impact student success. determining the significance of these components can provide insight and innovative solutions to increase student success in higher education.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine social capital, grit, and student success individually, followed by connecting social capital and grit and how they may impact student success in higher education. An in-depth literature review is assessed to determine the meaning for each component and a survey will be distributed to undergraduate students at a four-year University to determine if there is a relationship between social capital and grit and how they affect student success in higher education. A correlation test and ANOVA was assessed to determine a connection between social capital and grit and the significance of social capital and grit with student success in higher education.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The following research question(s) were examined in this study:

RQ1: Do college students with higher levels of social capital demonstrate increased grit?

> Null: College students with higher levels of social capital do not demonstrate increased grit.

RQ2: Does a higher level of social capital positively impact student success in college students?

> Null: Higher levels of social capital does not positively impact student success in college students.

RQ3: Does a higher level of grit positively impact student success in college students.

Null: Higher levels of grit do not positively impact student success in college students.

Design Overview

This quantitative study utilized a survey to determine if there is a relationship between social capital and grit and how they impact student success in higher education. The researcher distributed a survey to undergraduate students at a four-year university through population sampling. Collaboration with the registrar's office at the university was conducted to distribute surveys electronically. For adequate results, the population needed to be at least 50 students. However, due to limitations that will be discussed later in the study, the researcher acquired 30 participants. A Likert scale was used for the survey and some of the questions based on Angela Duckworth's work from 2019 was used when measuring grit. Various demographics were utilized at the beginning of the survey. Social capital questions were implemented based on emotional, mental, social, and financial wellness.

Significance of the Study

This study aimed to define social capital, grit, and student success; determine if there was a relationship between social capital and grit; and determine potential impacts social capital and grit may have on student success in higher education. The results of this study provided additional knowledge on the impacts social capital and grit have on student's success in higher education. According to Aslam, Shahzad, Syed, and Ramish (2013), understanding social capital development is vital to help students succeed academically and professionally (Aslam, Shahzad, Syed, & Ramish, 2013). Further knowledge of this topic can provide educators and higher learning institutions with an understanding of students that come from diverse backgrounds and how they excel in higher education. Generating a better understanding of this topic may prompt leaders of colleges and universities to implement innovative strategies that provide all students with opportunities to grow social capital, enhance grit levels, and ultimately improve student success. A suggestion for furthering this study is to create a study that provides strategies and step-by-step processes for increasing student success by promoting social capital and grit in higher education for students that come from diverse backgrounds. Additionally, specific components of this subject could be focused on in future studies, such as first-generation students and more emphasis on the financial element. Lastly, a qualitative study could provide more insight into this subject.

Limitations of the Study

There were certain limitations that may have impacted this study. Future research pertaining to this study should focus on tactics to decrease internal validity threats by changing the method of survey distribution and acquiring more participants. Additionally, focusing on more specific areas of social capital and grit components, such as financial hardships and first-generation students could provide more insight into how this impacts student success in higher education and what we can do for students to attain and maintain student success through various levels of support and encouragement.

Definition of Terms

The following are terms that are used regularly throughout this document.

Grit: The ability to overcome adverse circumstances and work towards goals and aspirations.

Social capital: Connections that provide support and advantages for college students.

Student success: Interconnections between student sense making within values in K–12 education and higher learning institutions.

Summary

Social capital and grit can have an impact on student success in higher education. A literature review was conducted to determine if social capital and grit have an impact on student success and if there was a relationship between social capital and grit. The literature will determine if there are trends in the data suggesting significance among social capital and grit in regards to student success in higher education. This study utilized a quantitative design with a

survey distributed through mass communication to collect data from undergraduate students at a four-year university. A data analysis determined if there was statistical significance based on a correlation test for research question one and ANOVA for research question two and three.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Studies on social capital are prevalent in education. Grit is a recent topic that has become popular in education and is becoming more explored in research. Social capital and grit connections are examined to determine the influence both components have on student success in higher education. When looking at the research, trends in the data may indicate a connection between social capital and grit that can impact student success in higher education. However, the impacts they have on student success depends on various factors. The purpose of this study is to measure social capital, grit, and student success. Furthermore, this study will connect social capital and grit and how these components impact student success in higher education.

Social Capital

According to Gelderblom (2018), there is a common agreement among researchers about advantages that social capital provides, such as social connections, which can impact community engagement (Gelderblom, 2018). Souto-Otero (2016), determines that social capital can also have an impact on the participation in youth organizations and workforce skills (Souto-Otero, 2016). According to Aslam et al. (2013), the social capital theory suggests that relationships support individuals in advancing their careers. Understanding social capital development is vital to help student's success academically and professionally (Aslam et al., 2013). Salaran (2004), advocates that social capital is a tactical resource implanted in social relationships that can be applied to reducing pressures from conditions, such as finances (Salaran, 2004). Generally, data from the research determines that social capital can impact students in higher education financially, academically, and socially.

Some researchers specify different categories of social capital to better understand the impact it has on student success. Laser and Leibowitz (2009) identify three kinds of social capital recognized in higher education, which are bridging, bonding, and linking. Particularly, bonding capital includes systems of close friends and family in relationships of continuous mutuality providing strong emotional and functional support, while encouraging group unity (Laser & Leibowitz, 2009). Tovar (2015), emphasizes the significant and positive impact of supportive family and friends, and of transition-to-college support provided by institutions on student outcomes, GPA, and intent to persist when analyzing social capital and student success (Tovar, 2015). Deutschlander (2017) conveys that student from socioeconomically privileged families may advance more from overall parental engagement, such as meaningful discussions and respectful involvement with their enrollment choices (Deutschlander, 2017). However, Roksa and Deutschlander (2018) determine that students across diverse socioeconomic backgrounds advanced similarly from their families' social and cultural capitals in regards to the application process for higher education. These outcomes specify that the benefits of family support may differ by the kind of support provided and results observed (Roksa & Deutschlander, 2018).

Family support is a major factor contributing to the level of social capital. Familial support can have a significant impact on students in higher education. A strong family foundation can provide support that encourages students to be resilient and succeed in achieving their goals. Emotional and financial support are also included in family support, which can be key indicators of student success in higher education. Long (2011) discourses social capital, which recognizes the significant role of families in developing social capital. Educational and social standpoint concentrating on cultivating outcomes for students through family relationships

and support can be a strong interpreter of student success in higher education (Long, 2011). Duckworth (2014) also mentions that solid ties within families permit emotional support to progress through investments of time.

Butler and Muir (2017) determine that family relationships can be anchors to students' educational outcomes. The authors emphasize that it is recognized that education pathways can be drawn from resources available, socioeconomic status, and overall familial support. The article reflects on how students make decisions about their education in relation to multifaceted family networks. These networks and essential family members highlight how the contemporary economy influences individuals' relationships. Wyn, Sarah, and Harris (2011) express that family support plays a vital role in student success within today's ambiguous economic foundation (Wyn et al., 2011). Kelly (2006) mentions that some students have been found to openly negate family members, which displays efforts to construct themselves as self-sufficient (Kelly, 2006). However, greater discussion of their education pathways presented them to be attached in a variety of relationships with explicit family members and rooted in multifaceted networks of social capital. Additionally, data has shown that students who demonstrate negative family relationships are least likely to be involved in education. Even though this article found evidence of social capital being significant for student success, it is important to note that the

Not only can social capital significantly impact student success in higher education, but can also impact success in career endeavors, post-graduation. Understanding social capital development is vital to help students succeed academically and professionally. Aslam et al. (2013) developed a quantitative study and ran a multiple linear regression analysis to determine the relationship between social capital, knowledge sharing, and academic performance. Understanding how students learn to share knowledge in their social networks and the inspiration

behind this knowledge sharing, can help higher education leaders' authorities to recognize steps that can enable the development of knowledge sharing, which can result in improvement in the quality of the learning process. The analysis discovered that organizational dimension does not influence knowledge sharing. The authors note that these outcomes are different from Wasko and Faraj (2005), as well as Tsai and Ghoshal (1998) who found a significant relationship between structural dimension and resource/knowledge sharing (Aslam et al., 2013).

Tsai and Ghoshal (1998) displayed that social interaction ties are significantly connected to trust and trustworthiness, which is linked to resource exchange and grouping. Cognitive dimension of social capital was found to have a substantial relationship with knowledge sharing. This is in line with the findings of Wasko and Faraj (2005). Finally, the study leads to the conclusion that not all the extents of social capital are significantly connected to knowledge sharing by the students. Institutional leaders need to offer opportunities for knowledge sharing, such as improved team work (Aslam et al., 2013).

Salaran (2004) conducted a study on social capital by distributing a survey to academic staff in five universities to gather data concerning the regularity of communications and research efficiency. The findings specified that there is a significant and positive correlation between social interactions and research productivity. A regression analysis test confirmed that social interactions as an independent variable predict research productivity of academics. There is abundant social capital in academic establishments that should be applied in the benefits of individuals and organizational purposes. Social interactions and networking are a significant dimension of social capital. The findings of this study specified that social interactions and the consistency of interactions have a positive relationship with productivity. This finding is consistent with data in the literature. For instance, Putnam's (1993) study found a strong

connection between social capital and performance in communities. Comparable findings were also found in the literature (Salaran, 2004).

A study by Reagans and Zuckerman (2001) found the importance of networks in enhancing productivity. They discovered that individuals with solid social interactions are more productive in research activities. The results of regression analysis concluded more complexity. Occurrence of interactions plays a vital role in predicting productivity of academics and research activities. Given the score on regularity of interaction, efficiency and research activities can be foreseen. The more time expended in communications, the more creative an academic is (Salaran, 2004).

In addition, the atmosphere in academic institutions should be intended to permit academic staff to have more social interactions. Constructing social capital entails not only launching more social ties, but also developing motivation and providing resources. Moreover, policy makers should pay attention to the social capital accessible in academic institutions and utilize such capital in the interest of financial and social expansion (Salaran, 2004). Social capital can be essential to student success because it provides financial support, resources, and social relations that inhibit students from engaging in the community, build strong social connections, and have access to a multitude of opportunities based on community involvement and networking.

Social relations in higher education can play a major role in networking and community engagement. Developing strong social relations can promote opportunities and access to resources. According to Plagens (2010), social capital may develop from social relations and to offer resources to those involved. One environment where the resources generated have been revealed to contribute to positive results is education. Some researchers have discovered that

familial support and community involvement may be associated with higher student test scores (Plagans, 2010). Fuller (2014), notes that consistent participation produces greater degrees of trust between individuals and communities and this has positive educational results. Attaining higher levels of success among students may entail the attempt to measure social capital and taking steps to improve social capital in schools. However, measuring social capital can be difficult because it is intangible and less precise (Fuller, 2014).

Nonetheless, studies have found social capital to be statistically significant in studies. Relationships have been found, indicating that social capital could be an essential predictor of test scores and dropout rates (Plagens, 2010). This data can determine that social capital can have a significant impact on student success based on test scores and dropout rates.

In addition to social capital, an interesting concept of social capital also entails one's own capital. Fuller's study conducted in 2014 on social capital indicates that trust is an important component of social capital. Interestingly, the study suggests that young individuals may not depend on their families for social capital, but may be able to produce their own capital. With theory and policy discourse intended to determine persevering inequalities in the educational achievement and objectives of students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, the role and significance of numerous capitals is constantly framed as substantial (Fuller, 2014).

Theory and policy highlight the significance of families of young individuals, as the endower of their capital, and the connection of these capitals in educational results. Amplified community engagement can be a result of trusting and mutual relationships. Consistent participation produces greater degrees of trust between individuals and communities and this has positive educational results. The research in this study concluded that students seem to be accruing social capital and seeking it, as a foundation of benefit. The data seems to advocate that

trust is a prerequisite of the attainment of social capital. Institutional trust appears to be imperative because it enables a student's readiness to accept the validity of the educational system in terms of fostering a willingness to become energetically involved in school functions (Fuller 2014).

While the role of instructors is not completely clear, the data does appear to advocate social capital and trust are essential. Trust seems to enable willingness for community engagement and this engagement appears to encourage social capital. Students that have high educational aspirations could be eminent from other students because of their willingness to join and be involved in school activities. Academic explanations that might account for high educational aspirers' contribution and involvement in school may perhaps attribute this to collecting levels of social capital. According to data in the study, social capital in education is essential because it reinforces positive perspectives of education and encourages a sense of autonomy. The research does not provide evidence of social capital from familial support and suggests that accumulating social capital does not result in only support from family. This finding was consistent with Morrow's finding in 1999. Students who seem to trust in school and faculty articulated the most eagerness to participate within it. Trust in the educational framework seems to relate to a student's capability to believe in the ideologies of meritocracy (Fuller 2014).

The data determines that students can generate their own social capital, which shows consistency with both Putnam's (2000) and Coleman's (1987) findings of social capital in education. Even though many studies suggest social capital having a substantial impact on student success, this study concludes that lack of social capital is not necessarily damaging to students' educational values and ambitions (Fuller, 2014). Having personal capital can be impactful to students that come from low socioeconomic backgrounds and/or familiar

backgrounds that are not emotionally supportive. While many colleges and universities have campus organizations and community involvement connected with academics, how do higher learning institutions create strategic methods to build capital within students?

While there were some conflicting analyses from the research, most studies determined that social capital can positively impact on students in higher education based on familial support both emotionally and financially, and social relations among community engagement. Familial support can have a significant impact on females' students and their student success. Duckworth and Cochrane (2012) claim that cultural and social norms within higher education put particular groups at a disadvantage (Duckworth & Cochrane, 2012). Brooks (2015) points out that family support for men may differ because feelings of guilt and selfishness are less induced, compared to female students with family responsibilities (Brooks, 2015). Ultimately, social capital for women in higher education can provide numerous support strategies and advantages for their student success. Especially women that are nontraditional students and have additional responsibilities, such as marriage and children. Many of the women in the study even mentioned that they could not have made it through college successfully without the support of their family (Webber, 2017). This study promotes a prime example of how important social capital is for student success in higher education. Even though this study focuses solely on women and nontraditional students in higher education, the importance of social capital should not be limited to the students.

Furthermore, Putsazi (n.d) determines that student development is linked to the family's social status and cultural capital. The majority of studies on higher education that use the perception of social capital set out from Coleman's succinct descriptions published in 1988 and 1990 (Arcidiacono & Nicholson, 2005). After collecting and analyzing data, the researcher found

that homogeneous relationship networks and looser ones are able to bring advantage to individuals in diverse ways. The researcher answers the questions, as long as diverse relationship networks provide different benefits, the question is which type of capital is the most essential in higher education? Provided that higher education is a competitive field, it seems that a loose and heterogeneous network is more valuable (Puszati, n.d).

Research indicates that social capital can significantly impact student success in higher education. While some researchers have diverse perspectives on exactly how social capital influences students in higher education, most researchers define the topic in similar ways. Overall, it is determined that social capital does impact student success, based on family support, emotional support, financial support, and community involvement, and even more so, if the engagement is with the college or university. Most of the research determines a significant result of students possessing more social capital are more likely to achieve student success in college.

Grit

Grit is a more recent topic that has become popular in education and among researchers. Angela Duckworth has made remarkable strides on the research of grit and determining how it affects student success. Stokas (2015) suggests that because of Angela Duckworth's research on grit, the topic has gained the attention of educational leaders and researchers (Stokas, 2015). Duckworth (2016) emphasizes that America celebrates rough individuality as a societal value alleged to be related to success. This long-lasting concept suggests that Americans earn what they work to overcome in adversity and that individual determination is the main factor for future results. In connection, current research in psychology familiarizes the concept of grit as a characteristic evident in successful students. (Duckworth, 2016). Researchers and institutional

leaders can benefit from acquiring knowledge of grit and how it can impact student success in higher education. Understanding this concept and diverse backgrounds that students come from can encourage innovative strategies to provide opportunities and inspiration to students that may lack grit.

Furthermore, Tough (2013), suggests that determination and persistence can aid in helping students overcome adversity. Some general explanations of this context support the awareness that the obligation of academic attainment should be on the individual student (Tough, 2013). Clark, Lanners, Blecha, Lanners, and Eskitch, (2019) suggest that grit is the aptitude to overcome hindrances when situations are negative or unideal. When failure is met, grit is the persistence and individual drive that permits someone to overcome adversity. In higher education, as educators, grit is a quality we desire our students to attain and sustain, but they cannot attain it without confidence and belief in themselves (Clark, Lanners, Blecha, Lanners, & Eskitch, 2019). Chang (2014) suggests that individuals who maintain grit are diligent, thorough, sustain focus, and are not affected by hindrances. Individuals who maintain lower levels of grit may be distracted by other components and may have the tendency to set goals, but lose interest and are unable to concentrate on long-term responsibilities. Bazelais, Lemay, and Doleck1 (2016) argue that real grit is being able to get through failure, to recognize defeat, and try something new (Bazelais, Lemay, & Doleck1, 2016).

Recently, grit has become a more popular topic of research to understand resilience in students and how they overcome adversity in higher education. Arya (2018) explains that people may come from different backgrounds in life and have certain levels of ability to reach their goals and objectives. The author describes individuals with high levels of resilience as "gritty" (p. 171). This type of person perseveres through adversity and works through challenges that

could hinder their pathway to their goals and aspirations. Individuals with high levels of grit are considered to be strong willed and have a positive well-being (Arya, 2018). With many challenges in higher education, it is beneficial for students to have higher levels of grit to work towards their goals and aspirations, even when adversity is present.

Coherence and grit have been recognized as essential variables that contribute to well-being. Grit can be a predictor of well-being. This study used a short girt scale from Angela Duckworth's work, a sense of coherence scale from Antonovsky (1987), and scales of psychological well-being from Ryff (1995). The study assessed 250 medical and engineering students. The results concluded that there is a positive correlation between grit and well-being (Arya, 2018).

Tiittanen and Daukantaite (2014) emphasize that being gritty is affected by how much an individual observes their reality as meaningful and avidly follows their aspirations, which has found to be suggestively related to high psychological well-being (Tiittanen & Daukantaite, 2014). There are many tasks that entail persistence and willpower for long-term goals (as cited by Datu & Yuen, 2016). Students from professional and technical courses with persistence for their goals appeared to be self-aware, content and steady with balance in life that diminished the tendency for them to drop out (as cited by Salles et al., 2014). When these students conquer challenges and attain success, they believe that they earned it and feel strong achievement (Arya, 2018).

Additionally, being valued by their friends and family enhances their self-worth and well-being. Sense of coherence is a feature of self-knowledge that also helps gritty individuals work towards their goals Having a gritty personality stimulates an individual to be more involved and can give a strong path to work cohesively. Individuals with high levels of grit were more able to

avoid negative circumstances. The study also found that students who have access to better resources feel less susceptible to losing those resources and benefit more from the resources available to them, than individuals that lack access to resources. Sustaining one's well-being can lead to improved external performance educationally for these students (Arya, 2018).

Furthermore, characteristics of being authentic in their work improves persistence to attaining their goals, giving growth to better well-being. The organismic valuing theory (Rogers, 1961-1964) states that following long-term goals with persistence and passion is a growth progression for an individual's developed well-being and heightened potential. This also connects with the ability to reject any external burdens. Chaos theory conferring to Antonovsky (1993) is about human life being unavoidably encumbered with variations, qualms and hardships. Gritty individuals are not only positive about their future, but also have a steady and clear connection to self and have a sense of trust to acquire the resources and use those resources to benefit their pathway to success (Arya, 2018).

Being gritty also means always being aware about what is personally meaningful and worth working for. These individuals are more likely to be inspired by engagement and experiences in their community. Grit creates willingness to learn and engage one's skills to follow the maximum potential one is capable of. Grit can be clarified by observing the connection between grit and well-being as profoundly affected by the degree to which an individual distinguishes their reality to be meaningful and coherent (Arya, 2018).

Discussion has arisen about how to detect, but there is a lack of discussion concerning how grit came to be valued as a noncognitive character. Grit has had numerous notional revolutions in American culture. Grit is revealed to correlate with high levels of achievement and the ability to overcome adversity. Duckworth has revealed that high-achieving individuals are

not always the most talented, but are able to overcome adversity and endure their interest, regardless of distress (Stokas, 2015).

Stokas (2015) discusses Duckworth and a team of researchers united with the Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP) charter schools to grow a character report and pathway for evaluating and developing grit. This increasing interest in how grit can be refined through education, predominantly in schools that have low-income communities, has served as the substance for this examination. The author notes that failure could result in a lack of grit. Grit possesses a history of evolving from circumstances, where anguish is vindicated due to social support systems lacking. Seeking to develop grit in students at a young age can benefit their success rates long term. Institutional leaders and educators need to recognize that inherited wealth and privilege can play a vital role in the success of a student because they can provide enhanced educational environments and support systems. To provide adequate educational opportunities for students from all different backgrounds, it is essential to recognize the impact of grit. Education systems need to develop support systems and nourishing environments to guarantee their students' success (Stokas, 2015).

According to Hodge, Wright, and Bennett (2017) grit is projected to be a significant characteristic essential for students to succeed educationally. Evidence proposes that grit has a positive relationship with academic results. However, some debate that grit offers little when considering a predictive value for understanding academic results. There are conflicting suggestions about the existence of gender differences in grit. To find correlations with the importance of grit, a cross sectional study was conducted to measure engagement and academic productivity of 394 Australian college students. The data determined that there was no difference in grit levels between genders. The data also determined that first-generation students had an

increased level of grit. Overall, the data determined a positive relationship between grit, engagement and academic productivity. The data also suggested that an individual with stronger grit is more likely to have higher engagement, which can help lead to superior academic productivity (Hodge, Wright, & Bennett, 2017).

These findings highlight the significance of grit as a necessary student characteristic. Angela Duckworth defines grit as the ability to effortfully persevere among adversity (as cited by Duckworth 2007). Grit attempts to develop the ideas of resilience, conscientiousness, self-discipline and persistence altogether. These components have been argued to be the prime elements of student success (as cited by Bashant 2014). Conscientiousness contains the ideas of reliability and being thorough and has been revealed to have a solid positive relationship with academic outcomes (as cited by Barrick 1991). Self-control is the aptitude to control attention, emotions, and behavior when temptations are present (as cited by Duckworth, 2014). Persistence is a person's capability to endure effort with a difficult task (as cited by Lufi 1987). Research has found conflicting ideologies about the concept of grit. While some researchers determine grit to have an important link to student success, other researchers have suggested that grit is not a sufficient predictor of student success. In Angela Duckworth's work, a small positive relationship was found between grit and test scores for high-achieving undergraduate students. Additionally, spelling bee finalists were found to have higher levels of grit (as cited by Duckworth 2007) (Hodge et al., 2017).

Furthermore, students with advanced levels of grit in an introductory programming course were found to achieve higher grades. In another study, a small positive relationship was found between grit and grade point average (GPA) among doctoral students, even though it was only extant for females and the effect size was quite small (as cited by Cross, 2014). The

persistence influence of grit was found to have a small relationship with college GPA as well (as cited by Bowman 2015). In contrast, another study found that grit is not a significant contributor to academic results, but they were measured for past academic performance, which could have been a factor of student grit (as cited by Bazelais, 2016). Additionally, another study found that grit displayed no relationship with GPA among first year college students (as cited by Stewart 2015). These concepts have harvested a high level of interest in education and more research is obligatory to determine whether they have value in education. Some research advocates gender differences in grit (Christensen 2014; Rojas 2012). Christensen (2014) found that female upper secondary school students were higher in the reliability of interest component of grit than males (Christensen, 2014).

Rojas (2012) also found that girls from grade level four to grade level eight had higher grit than boys. Other research has found relationships between grit and grades that are gender specific (Cross 2014; Stewart 2015). Batres (2011) found a significant correlation between grit and grades for female doctoral students but not for males, and Stewart (2015) found a correlation between grit and grades for male first year college students, but not for females. Still other research has found no gender differences (Batres 2011; Gorman 2015; Washington 2016). Males and females did not fluctuate in either element of grit, but students who were first generation students had higher levels of the grit influence. Effort, but not interest, had a minor, but significant impact on the prediction of productivity. Interest and effort significantly predicted engagement. The complete model testing recommends that both grit and engagement play a part in amplifying productivity. A mediation analysis specified that the relationship between grit and productivity was also somewhat facilitated by engagement. Collectively, these findings propose that grit has a direct effect on productivity and engagement. Overall, the data advises that the

concept of grit plays a role in better understanding student success in higher education (Hodge, Wright, & Bennett, 2017).

Stoffel (2018), evaluates a Stress Resiliency Profile (SRP), which is an assessment intended to detect mental habits that can create or increase stress. This assessment can be used to improve impact and intervention for grit. The study found that there was no significant improvement in SRP scores after training. Intervention could progress student awareness of responsibilities as an obligation with room for option and intercession. This study was conducted on 60 medical students. Cumberworth countered this commentary arguing that by the time students reach medical school. The data demonstrated that by the time students reach medical school, they have already experienced many challenges and adversity. These students seemed to show higher levels of resilience. There is not much research on resilience in health profession education and even less research on grit levels. There was also a grit evaluation that was conducted among pharmacy students from three different universities using a Short Grit Scale (Grit-S). The scale determined that students who showed higher levels of grit generally had a higher GPA (Stoffel, 2018).

Lastly, a study was conducted on nurses with a Student Course Experience Questionnaire (SCEQ) that measured engagement, such as skills, emotions, interaction, and performance. Higher levels of grit appear to show higher overall course engagement, as well as a strong link to student skills and emotions. Overall, the evidence concludes that there is a significant relationship between grit and student engagement. Grit and resilience have been linked to student success rates in health profession education, as well as being a contributing factor to well-being and the ability to persist in the face of challenges in higher education. The health professions in

education specify that grit and resilience are of significant interest with respect to academic, profession, and life success (Stoffel, 2018).

To help increase grit in college students, services should be available as necessary. This could include counseling, accommodations, and other support services that can ensure helping students to increase overall student success and lower dropout rates. The principle behind this support should be the well-being of the students and success as primary ideals. Providing excessive support for students will increase persistence and student success among students that lack characteristics of grit and resilience. However, the author also mentions that an approach that allows students to face challenges, fail, improve, and potentially grow resilience and accountability can be considered a valuable and essential part of proficient education (Stoffel, 2018).

There can be possible ways these approaches can lead to better student success, but no information of this presently exists in the literature. Grit and resilience seem to be the most relevant concepts with respect to aptitude to handle hindrances, adverse feedback, and challenges in health profession education and careers. However, much literature designates there is a list of other accessible concepts that connect, such as persistence, mentality, self-discipline, mindfulness, self-efficacy, and thoroughness. Furthermore, in a current meta-analysis of grit studies on behalf of 66,807 individuals, the authors concluded that the concept validity of grit is questionable. Grit has been found to strongly correlate with conscientiousness and is much more a measurement of persistence. The author notes that even the leading researcher of grit, Angela Duckworth, believes that passion for the concept is in advance of science and that attempts to quantify and make policy conclusions relating to noncognitive qualities may be mistaken because of procedural restrictions (Stoffel, 2018).

Bazelais, Lemay, and Doleck (2016) state that research has proposed that attainment is not exclusively founded on the cognitive aptitudes of the learner, but the combination of cognitive aptitude and personality traits. This study looks at how grit affects student academic performance and success in first-year college physics students. Two hierarchical linear regressions were completed using scores on a five-point Likert scale survey measure of Grit on student cumulative GPA and on final exam mark for an entry physics course. The controlled variables were gender and high school GPA. Previous academic performance was found to be a noteworthy predictor of college performance, as well as achievement in the entry physics course. Interestingly, grit was not found to be a substantial predictor of student academic attainment or course success. There was no substantial relationship found between grit and student achievement in an entry college physics course. Grit provided no prophetic validity over previous student attainment as measured by high school GPA (Bazelais, David & Doleck, 2016). Although this study found grit and student success rates to be less significant, other studies have found a significance between grit and student success, including many studies from Angela Duckworth.

Additionally, Duckworth found that grit varied with age. Therefore, it is likely that grit doesn't deliver sufficient control among younger students, possibly because their interests are not constant and the benefits of insistent effort have not been apparent. Grit may have improved power among older populations. The researcher argues that it is basically incorrect that persistent effort is continuously and essentially adaptive in every situation. Real grit is being able to get through failure, to recognize defeat, and try something new. Overcoming adversity is a form of achievement that does not just involve aptitude and effort, but also situational components that influence an individual's behavior (Bazelais et al., 2016). Higher learning institutions can

cognitive and non-cognitive opportunities for students to improve grit levels, which can have a positive impact on student success.

Even in the moderately transparent framework of academic attainment, it is not directly clear that all students face equal situations or that they face the same trials and hindrances to success. Grit also depends on social support systems. Furthermore, grit appears to evolve over time (as cited by Duckworth, et al., 2007). At the college-level, it becomes prominent for students to ask themselves whether the advantage of the outflow of amplified effort is the best course of action, when extra effort does not always involve greater achievement (Bazelaiz et al., 2016).

Ultimately, the researchers that examine grit determine this characteristic as having self-determination, resilience, perseverance, and a positive well-being. Even though some researchers have conducted studies and concluded that grit does not necessarily determine student success, much of the data points to grit having some type of impact on student success in higher education. Overall, the literature provides evidence that grittier individuals are more likely to prosper in higher education and excel in their career endeavors, post-graduation.

Social Capital and Grit

Based on the data from various research on social capital and grit, it can be determined that there is a relationship between social capital and grit. However, there are diverse ideologies on how grit is measured based on the levels of social capital an individual may possess. The primary trend in the data appears to be the higher amount of social capital a student possesses, the more grit they will have because they have those resources and support more readily available to them, compared to their peers that come from low social capital. However, there is

also certain data that determine that grit can be a result of low social capital because those students have an urge to succeed more because of their lack of emotional and financial support.

One study on female students with strong social capital suggests higher levels of grit pertaining to student success in higher education. Fenney and Lemay (2012), determined that women in steady and supportive relationships and who created strong assets of emotional capital with their partner were better able to be resilient when dealing with stress or pressure. The women observed in the study were able to draw on their commonly supportive and recognized relationship. (Fenney & Lemay 2012).

Fowler, Getzel, and Lombardi (2018) emphasize that self-determination, self-advocacy for skills, and social capital components, such as campus engagement and support systems offered by higher learning institutions are predictors of ensuring student success in higher education.

Johnson and Stage (2018), reveal that grades, parents' education accomplishments, family encouragement, and academic and social integration are factors of degree achievement. These factors are also significant predictors of socioeconomic status and environmental influences. Because persistence is a precondition of achievement, aspects contributing to successful college achievement can be understood through concepts of student perseverance (as cited by DesJardins, Kim, & Rzonca, 2003). Academic and social engagement are also entwined in connection to student persistence (as cited by Stage, 1989). Social engagement specifically is a device for student growth and for obligation to college achievement. Students who engage in campus activities and organizations and prosper academically are more likely to persevere in higher education and acquire a degree (Johnson & Stage, 2018).

Student Success

Everitt (2015) defines and discusses student success as offering interconnections between student sense making within values in K–12 education and higher learning institutions. In Lisa Nunn's new book, *Defining Student Success*, she emphasizes new mechanisms for how student careers are enthusiastically motivated along certain academic paths that seek to sustain insistent systems of inequality. Accountability as an institutional myth, and its countless efficient meanings are apparent in the figures in diverse conducts across schools. For example, student performance on standardized testing evidently structures observable outlines in instructional practice, as well as the ways adults in school incentivize student effort on tests. Overall, defining student success can be challenging for researchers. However, the ability to define and understand student success is a success in itself. Nunn wrote a book that fills significant gaps in what researchers formerly knew about the associations between institutions, student identity, and education. Furthermore, her book is transparent and concise without surrendering theoretical superiority. Her work delivers an effective means of conveying the matters of populated institutionalism, identity development, and educational stratification into undergraduate and graduate classrooms (Everitt, 2015). Additionally, according to Hepworth, Littlepage, and Hancock (2018) current research advocates that student awareness of institutional commitment to student success and student social integration aids in overall retention. However, the research in this study determines no significant relationship between awareness of commitment and social integration.

Roksa and Kinsley (2019) state that low-income students are considerably less likely to earn a four-year degree than students from a higher socioeconomic status. Previous higher education literature highlights many aspects contributing to student success, but minimal studies

reflect the role of family support after students enter higher education. The study examines how emotional and financial support are connected to academic results, such as grades, credit accretion, and perseverance among low-income college students. Based on a model of 728 first-year low-income students attending eight four-year institutions, the data specifies that family emotional support plays a vital role in developing constructive academic results. Family emotional support is valuable for academic results because it encourages psychological well-being and enables better student engagement. Financial support is not connected to the results observed in the model as a whole (Roska & Kinsley, 2019).

Nonetheless, interaction models point to the dissimilarity of first-generation rank where continuing generation students benefit more from family financial support than first-generation students. Young adults these days depend on their families for a longer duration of time. This contains college students who communicate with their families regularly and obtain many methods of support from them (Roska & Kinsley, 2019).

Sneyers and De Whitt (2017) assess increasing student success. A noteworthy portion of the research focuses on assessing the efficiency of interventions. One intervention that is significant is career counseling for students at risk of increased first-year students' credits and first-to-second year retention. Other evidence also determined that financial aid and peer mentoring can increase credits and GPA. Additionally, advising has a constructive influence on retention and GPA. The authors emphasize that data can aid in recognizing students at risk and ways to support their learning requirements. There are many components that can help with student success rates. For instance, financial aid can have a major influence on the enrollment result of low-income students. Research determines that reducing the cost of college can help increase enrollment. Furthermore, students who can attain grants may feel that they have more

opportunities in higher education, which can motivate them to study more efficiently and be more committed to their academics. Nevertheless, there is no guarantee that this time is used for studying. This meta-analysis examines the outcome of interventions on student outcomes (Sneyers & De Whitt, 2017).

Goncalves and Trunk (2014) suggest that retention and student success rates of higher education students at colleges and universities have been positively correlated with the level of student engagement in their academic setting. The research shows that nontraditional students may have a harder time with student engagement because of their family and/or employment obligations, which can prohibit student success rates (Goncalves & Trunk, 2014).

This study conducted face-to-face interviews with 10 nontraditional students at a small private college in New Jersey. The interviews found that feelings of seclusion, inattentiveness to nontraditional student needs, organizational inflexibility in distinct situations, and the lack of a nontraditional student association and connection were recognized as hindrances that continue to persevere for nontraditional students' academic success and engagement in their academic setting. When impediments on campus were addressed, participants articulated those feelings of seclusion and being indifferent, lack of access to computers, scheduling struggles, lack of course accessibility and course periods, financial complications, and the lack of overall accommodations to nontraditional students weakened from the overall college experience. Interestingly, parking was also highlighted as an issue for nontraditional students because of the significant cost of parking permits. On a positive note, 50% of participants mentioned that their professors help enrich their experience on campus. Additionally, a smaller campus size, meeting inspiring individuals (Goncalves & Trunk, 2014).

Social Capital Impact

   The research determines that social capital can significantly impact student success. Roska and Kinsley (2019) discuss disadvantages of low-income students in terms of student success rates. The authors suggest that low-income students are considerably less likely to earn bachelor's degrees than their peers that come from middle to high income backgrounds. Previous higher education literature illuminates several influences contributing to student success, but few studies reflect on the role of family support for students in higher education. The authors determine academic outcomes as grades, credit accumulation, and persistence. Emotional and financial support are related to academic outcomes. An assessment was conducted with 728 first-year low-income students attending eight different four-year institutions. The assessment specified that family emotional support plays a significant role in developing positive academic outcomes. Family emotional support is advantageous for academic outcomes because it encourages mental well-being and enables better student engagement. Interaction models of the study show that first-generation students had less family financial support than students who were not first-generation. When students conveyed receiving more emotional support from their families, they were more likely to obtain a GPA of 3.0 or higher, more likely to accrue at least 24 credits, and more likely to persevere through the second year of college. When looking at gender, women were more likely to earn a GPA of 3.0 or higher than men, but both groups had comparable probabilities of accruing at least 24 credits and persisting through the second year of college. Students from traditionally underrepresented racial minority groups were less likely to earn at least a 3.0 GPA or to accrue at least 24 credits than their peers. The interaction terms for GPA and credit accretion were significant at $p < 0.05$. Financial support is associated with only one indicator of student engagement. Previous literature has revealed that when students obtain

more financial aid, they tend to work fewer hours (as cited by Goldrick-Rab et al. 2009; Richburg-Hayes et al. 2015) (Roska & Kinsley, 2019).

Likewise, offered outcomes suggest that financial support from family is related to less time spent working. Family emotional support was related to the amount of time students spent studying and to the degree of their engagement with faculty. Furthermore, family emotional support was strongly connected to students' psychological well-being and a sense of belonging. When students feel more emotionally supported by their family, they show superior psychological well-being and are more likely to feel like they fit in at their institution (Roska & Kinsley, 2019).

Furthermore, the study specifies that family emotional support is an important predictor of student success involving grades, credit accumulation, and persistence. Family financial support is not connected to the results studied in the example as a whole. Yet, interaction models determine that continuing-generation students benefit more from family financial support than their first-generation peers. The results illuminate the significance of considering dissimilar kinds of family support and investigating restricted properties of that support for student results. The outcomes specify that family emotional support is advantageous because it encourages psychological well-being and better student engagement. Overall, low-income families have a restricted number of financial resources to offer their children, which may reduce the status of financial support (Roska & Kinsley, 2019).

Grit Impact

In addition to social capital, Grit has also been found to have an impact on student success. Jaeger, Freeman, Whalen, and Payne (2010) conducted a study on the effects of grit in engineering students. The results of their study indicated significant differences in gender pertaining to grit scores. Female students were found to have higher levels of grit than male students, but grit was not found to be a predictor of academic levels or SAT scores. Grit scores were found to be based more on concentration within the engineering program (Jaeger, Freeman, Whalen, & Payne, 2010).

Ultimately, no significant difference was found among honor students and non-honor students in the program. Interestingly, no significant difference was found in student athletes and students who were not athletes in the program, though the study did display that non-honors and athlete engineering students conveyed higher levels of grit than honors and non-athlete engineering students. Additionally, more research needs to be conducted on grit to create a better understanding of the effects grit has on academic performance and student success in higher education (Jaeger et al., 2010). Batres (2011) conveyed no gender variances in grit scores.

There are interventions that higher learning institutions can utilize to increase social capital and grit among students, which can benefit their student success. According to Durlak and Weissberg (2011), students may benefit from being linked to other adults who can aid as guides and role models or organized environments that may include campus programs and organizations, which can be vastly valuable for students' positive behavior regulations and academic performance (Durlak & Weissberg, 2011).

Students who give in under pressure may be struggling with internal insecurities that could be situational or induced by anxiety. Educators need to recognize the fundamental problems and offer smaller tasks and goals that students can utilize to discover and overcome any underlying insecurities (Clark et al., 2019). Many individuals trust that one can accomplish their goals through intellect, aptitudes, hard work, and skills. However, more recent research has focused on the higher education level to generate opportunities and discover numerous tactics that progress the academic capabilities of the students so they can perform better educationally (Arya, 2018).

In reference to grit, student success should not solely be based on the persistence and determination of the student. Dofat (2015) concludes that grit, determination, and persistence are defined and measured differently depending on the higher learning institution. The students are not the only ones responsible for student success, but also school counselors, admission counselors, and colleges to find the equilibrium, interconnect expectations, and know when the institutions or opportunities are the right fit for the student, specifically when looking at GPA and test scores (Dofat, 2015).

Aslam et al. (2013) developed a quantitative study and ran a multiple linear regression analysis to determine the relationship between social capital, knowledge sharing, and academic performance. Understanding how students learn to share knowledge in their social networks and the inspiration behind this knowledge sharing, can help higher education leaders' authorities to recognize steps that can enable the development of knowledge sharing, which can improve the quality of the learning process. The results of the study display limited support for the dispute that social capital leads to knowledge sharing. However, not all scopes of social capital are connected to knowledge sharing (Aslam et al., 2013).

The analysis discovered that organizational dimension does not influence knowledge sharing. These outcomes are different from Wasko & Faraj (2005) and Tsai & Ghoshal (1998) who found a significant relationship between structural dimension and resource/knowledge sharing. Tsai and Ghoshal (1998) displayed that social interaction ties are significantly connected to trust and trustworthiness, which is linked to resource exchange and grouping. Cognitive dimension of social capital was found to have a substantial relationship with knowledge sharing. This is in line with the findings of Wasko and Faraj (2005). Conclusively, the study leads to the conclusion that not all the extents of social capital are significantly connected to knowledge sharing by the students. Knowledge sharing atmosphere in a university can lead to a greater. Institutional leaders need to offer opportunities for knowledge sharing, such as improved team work (Aslam et al., 2013).

Summary

Upon analyzing the literature review, social capital and grit appear to have an impact on student success in higher education. While there was some evidence that determined social capital and grit do not have much of a significant impact on student success, the majority of evidence from qualitative and quantitative studies emphasized how much of a difference higher level of social capital and grit can make on student success in higher education. Additionally, there is some literature that determines social capital and grit to have a connection, which also impacts student success, although a slight amount of literature determines the opposite. Most evidence provides that students with more familial, financial, and emotional support possess a higher level of grit. Ultimately, the goal of this study is to determine if social capital and grit both have a positive impact on student success in higher education.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to examine the meaning of social capital, grit and student success individually, followed by connecting social capital and grit and how they affect student success in higher education. An in-depth literature review was assessed to determine the meaning for each component and a survey was distributed to undergraduate Freshman and Sophomore students at a regional comprehensive in the mid-south United States (four-year university) to see if there is a relationship between social capital and grit and how they affect student success in higher education.

The following research question(s) were examined in this study:

RQ1: Do college students with higher levels of social capital demonstrate increased grit?

    Null: College students with higher levels of social capital do not demonstrate increased grit.

RQ2: Does a higher level of social capital positively impact student success in college students?

    Null: Higher levels of social capital does not positively impact student success in college students.

RQ3: Does a higher level of grit positively impact student success in college students.

Null: Higher levels of grit do not positively impact student success in college students.

Research Design and Procedure

This research design utilized a survey to determine if there is a relationship between social capital and grit and how they affect student success in higher education. A survey was distributed to undergraduate Freshman and Sophomore students at a four-year university through Google Forms. According to Fields (2013) population sampling is a subgroup of focuses that signify a population and can provide statistical analysis (Fields, 2013). Collaboration with the department head of communications and instructors on campus provided an opportunity for administering the survey to at least 60 students on campus. A Likert scale was used for the survey and some of the questions will be based on Angela Duckworth's work on measuring grit. Additionally, social capital questions were used from various surveys of other research and additional questions developed by the researcher. There was an extensive list of demographics on the survey as well.

Study Site

The study site was virtual due to COVID-19. Originally, the plan was to administer the survey in the classroom to ensure thorough data collection. However, due to the pandemic, data collection was required to be conducted virtually. Therefore, the survey was administered through Google Forms. First Year Experience (FYE) and 100 level course professors provided the survey to their students. The data collection was conducted twice in 2020. Once in the spring semester and once in the fall semester. The pandemic resulted in less data results in the spring semester. Therefore, data collection continued at the beginning of the fall semester.

Participants

The population of the study was Freshman and Sophomore students at a four-year university The students were found in FYE courses and 100T level courses. The researcher chose to minimize the focus to only Freshman and Sophomore because social capital and grit impact may be the most prominent in student success in the beginning stages of a student's academic career. The sample population was not controlled based on demographics other than classification. The following demographics were focused on in this study:

Independent and Dependent Variables

The independent variables for this study were social capital and grit. The dependent variables for social capital and grit included race, gender, socio-economic status, first generation. In addition, the dependent variable, student success, were measured with ACT and GPA scores, which were self-reported by the students.

Demographics

The survey started with a questionnaire based on demographics that could impact social capital and grit. These components included race, age, gender, classification, marital status, major, campus living, socio-economic status, employment hours, first-generation status, out-of-state residence, student disability services, campus academic resources, and counseling services. Additionally, student success variables were measured with college GPA and ACT scores.

Race/ethnicity. The options on the survey included Caucasian, African American, Asian, Hispanic or Latino American, Indian/Alaska, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and I do not wish to disclose. The data results found 83% of participants reported Caucasian. Participants that

reported White were 6.7%. Additionally, 6.7% of Hispanic or Latino participants reported , and an even 3.3% of African American participants. There were no other reports for participation of individuals from other races/ethnicities.

Age. The options on the survey for age included less than 18 years of age, 18-20, 21-25, 26-30, 31-35, 36-40, 41-45, 46-50, 50+. The data determined that 96.7% of participants were 18-20 years old, while a very small percentage was 21-25 years of age. There were no other age groups where participants reported.

Gender. For gender, the options on the survey were male, female, other, and I do not wish to disclose. The survey showed that 83.3% of participants were female and 13.3% were male.

Classification. For classification status, the researcher chose to focus on only the Freshman and Sophomore class for this study. The results determined that 48.3% of participants were Freshman and 51.7% were Sophomore.

Marital status. Marital status was assessed with the options being married, widowed, divorced, single, or cohabitating. The survey reported that 96.7% were single and a very small portion was cohabitating.

Major. For major, a broad list of degrees was offered on the survey, which include pre-med, elementary education, Japanese, nursing, pre-vet, theater/performance, wildlife and conservation...etc. Most participants reported their major being nursing, elementary education, and pre-medicine.

Campus living. On campus living was reported as a Yes or no question, which resulted in 18 participants reporting yes and 13 participants reporting no.

Socio-economic status. Family income was assessed based on yearly income, which included options of making less than 20,000, 20,000 - 44,999, 45,000 - 139,000, 140,000 - 149,000, 150,000 - 199,000, 200,000+. The results indicated that 46.4% of participants' family income was between 45,000 and 139,000, 21.4% reported making less than 20,000, 24.4% reported 20,000 - 44,999. Additionally, a small percentage made between 140,000 and 149,000 and an even smaller percentage reported making 200,000 plus.

Work hours. For the number of hours worked each week, the options were 0-10, 11-20, 21-30, 31-40, and more than 40. The survey reported that 53.3% worked 0-10 hours each week, 30% worked between 21 and 30 hours each week, 10% worked between 11 and 20 per week.

Out-of -state students. The out-of-state student was a yes or no question. The survey indicated that five participants were out-of-state students and 25 participants were not.

First-generation. The first-generation question was also a yes or no question. The survey indicated that 10 participants reported being a first-generation student and 20 participants reported not being a first-generation student.

Student disability services. This question assessed if participants were utilizing student disability services at the higher learning institution with a yes or no question. The survey indicated that 24 participants reported yes and six participants reported no.

Campus academic resources. This question assessed if participants were utilizing academic resources on campus, which included options of the tutoring center, a private tutor,

Accelerate U!, TRIO, the writing center, and other. This particular question asked the students to select all that apply. The survey showed that five participants utilized the tutoring center, 12 participants saw a private tutor, three participants were a part of TRIO, eight participants utilized the writing center, and eight participants reported utilizing another academic resource not listed.

Counseling services. This question asked if participants utilized counseling services with a yes or no option. The survey showed that seven participants reported yes and 23 participants reported no.

Student success variables. The student success variables reported were college GPA and ACT score.

GPA. GPA was self-reported. Results from the survey indicated the majority of participants had an average to higher level GPA.

ACT. ACT was also self-reported. Like GPA scores, results from the survey also indicated the majority of participants had average to higher ACT scores

Grit Questionnaire

The results from the questionnaire determined that majority of participants had average to a higher level of grit.

Social Capital Questionnaire

Similar to the grit questionnaire, the social capital portion of the survey determined that most participants had an average to above average support system.

Instrumentation

To functionalize this study, demographic data and college academic success variables were collected through institutional research. Social capital questions were formed based on previous studies on the phenomenon, as well as the researchers interests in areas of life that could impact social capital. Grit questions were utilized based on Angela Duckworth's Grit scale (2019). A survey developed on Google Forms was sent to certain professors at the higher learning institution and was followed up by the researcher two times to help ensure there were enough participants for efficient findings in this study.

Analysis of Research Questions

The researcher administered an online survey to collect quantitative data on social capital, grit, and how these components impact student success in higher education. An analysis of the data was conducted based on the research questions.

Research question 1. To answer the first question, the researcher completed a Pearson r correlation coefficient to see if there was a relationship between college students' social capital and its relationship with perceived grit based on the normality. Emphasized in Fields (2013), this test was the best option because we were looking for a degree of the strength of the relationship between two dependent variables.

Research question 2. To answer the second research question, the researcher chose to run an ANOVA to determine whether differences in social capital existed between levels of either college GPA or ACT scores, also based on Fields (2013). A series of one-way between subjects ANOVA were conducted to determine if either GPA or ACT scores were determining

factors in the significance of social capital. Fields (2013) determines that an ANOVA is a procedure utilized when one or more independent groups (with at least two levels) are compared with a dependent variable. Normality assumption was satisfactory to run this particular type of ANOVA. Ultimately, this question was looking for significance among student success variables GPA and ACT, and their relation to social capital within this study.

Research question 3. To answer the last question of this study, the researcher determined the same ANOVA test should be utilized because research questions two and three are quite similar (Fields 2013). For research question three, we were looking for whether differences in grit existed between levels of either college GPA or ACT scores. Therefore, a series of one-way between subjects ANOVA were conducted to determine if either GPA or ACT scores were determining factors in the significance of grit. Normality assumptions were met to justify the same procedure used for question two. Ultimately, this question was looking for significance among student success variables GPA and ACT, and their relation to grit within this study.

Summary

This chapter emphasized the methods and procedures implemented for this study to determine if social capital and grit have an impact on student success in higher education, as well as if there is a relationship between social capital and grit. The purpose of the study, hypotheses, research design and procedures, instrumentation, and data analysis were included. The next chapter established an in-depth analysis of the research questions.

CHAPTER IV: DATA ANALYSIS

The purpose of this study was to examine the meaning of social capital, grit, and student success individually, followed by connecting social capital and grit and how they affect student success in higher education. A survey was distributed to undergraduate Freshman and Sophomore students at a four-year university to see if there was a relationship between social capital and grit and how they affect student success in higher education. This chapter examines the study's conclusions and is organized into the following sections: preliminary analysis, data analysis for the three research questions, and concludes with a brief summary.

The following research question(s) were examined in this study:

RQ1: Do college students with higher levels of social capital demonstrate increased grit?

Null: College students with higher levels of social capital do not demonstrate increased grit.

RQ2: Does a higher level of social capital positively impact student success in college students?

Null: Higher levels of social capital does not positively impact student success in college students.

RQ3: Does a higher level of grit positively impact student success in college students.

Null: Higher levels of grit do not positively impact student success in college students.

The previously described analyses are presented and determined with a summary of discoveries.

The research design utilized a survey to determine if there was a relationship between social capital and grit and how they affect student success in higher education. A survey was

distributed to undergraduate Freshman and Sophomore students at a four-year university through Google Forms. Collaboration with the department chair of communications and instructors on campus provided an opportunity for administering the survey to at least 60 students on campus. However, due to COVID-19 surfacing in spring of 2020 during the time of data collection, only 30 participants were acquired with more than one attempt of administering the survey virtually. A Likert scale was used for the survey and some of the questions were guided by Duckworth's (2019) work on measuring grit. Additionally, social capital questions were used from various surveys of other research and additional questions developed by the researcher. There was an extensive list of demographics on the survey. The dependent variables assessed were social capital and grit, while the independent variables included GPA and ACT scores.

Statistical Analyses

A statistical analysis was chosen and conducted for each research question based on normality assumption, independence of observation, and equal variance.

Research Question One

Normality assumptions. Research question one investigated the relationship between college students' social capital and its relationship with perceived grit. To answer this question, a Pearson product-moment correlation was conducted. According to Fields (2013), The Pearson correlation coefficient, r, is the degree of the strength of the relationship between two dependent variables (Fields, 2013). There are two core assumptions that must be satisfied before employing this procedure. First, it is vital that observers are independent from one another within groups. The survey was administered anonymously through Google Forms through a four-year

university. The likelihood of participants working together on the survey is highly unlikely. Therefore, it is reasonably assumed that independence of observation has been met.

Second, it is imperative that the group difference scores are normally distributed for the sample in order to justify using an inferential analysis procedure. To satisfy this assumption, the author conducted (1) a visual inspection of the histogram plots for all six composite scores, and (2) computed Z-scores for both skewness and kurtosis for all six composite scores (Kim, 2013; see Table 1). The researcher conducted a visual inspection of the histogram and P-P Plot graphs. For grit, the histogram showed a slight negative skew and platykurtosis, which indicated that the majority of scores were slightly larger than the overall mean and the range of scores were somewhat truncated (Field, 2013). Additionally, z-test scores for normality evidence (i.e., skewness, kurtosis) for grit were within the 95% confidence band.

In conclusion, the researcher determined that sufficient evidence of normality existed to justify the parametric analysis. For social capital, the histogram showed little evidence of skew with the majority of scores equally distributed around the mean (Field, 2013). Additionally, z-test scores for normality evidence (i.e., skewness, kurtosis) for social capital were within the 95% confidence band. In conclusion, it was determined that sufficient evidence of normality existed to justify the parametric analysis. See Table 1 for normality assumption data.\

Based on the normality determined in the analysis for research question one, a correlation analysis Pearson *r* correlation coefficient was conducted to determine if there was a relationship between social capital and grit.

Table 1.

Descriptive Statistics

Composite	*M*	*MED*	*SD*	Z (Skew.)	Z (Kur.)
G	24.13	24.50	3.71	.30	-.25
SC	51.57	52.00	4.56	-1.55	1.14

Note: G = Grit; SC = Social Capital

Results. There was not a significant relationship between social capital and grit, $r(29) = -.233$, $p > .05$.

Table 2.

Correlation Analysis

Composite	*N*	*r*	Sig. (2-tailed)
G x SC	30	-.233	$p > .05$

Note: G = Grit; SC = Social Capital

Research Question Two

For research question two, the current study investigated whether differences in social capital existed between levels of either college GPA or ACT scores. To accomplish this, a series of one-way between subjects ANOVA were conducted to determine if either GPA or ACT scores were determining factors in the significance of social capital. Fields (2013) determines that an ANOVA is a procedure utilized when one or more independent groups (with at least two levels) are compared with a dependent variable. According to Yockey (2018), ANOVA is an omnibus test statistic designed to test general rather than specific differences among means using the following null hypothesis statement:

$$H_o: \mu_1 = \mu_2 = \mu_3 = \ldots = \mu_k$$

Where μ= group mean and k= number of groups. Significant ANOVA results reject this notion in favor of the alternative hypothesis (H_1), which stipulates that significant differences exist between at least two group means (Yockey, 2018).

There are a number of core assumptions that must be met in order to justify employing the ANOVA procedure. First, the independence assumption determines that scores for each participant should not be influenced by other participant scores. In the current study, participants completed the survey via an online platform and did not interact with one another; thus, each participant's score is unique and reliable. Second, the dependent variable must demonstrate adequate evidence of normality. The normality assumption was satisfied for the social capital variable as described in the section for Research Question 1 (see Table 1). Third, the degree of variance within each level of the independent variable must demonstrate homogeneity, or equal variance. The Levene statistic was non-significant between all levels of GPA ($F=2.588$, $p>.05$) and ACT ($F=.421$, $p>.05$), indicating evidence of homogeneity. Together, these data provide justification for the ANOVA procedure.

Results. A one-way between subjects ANOVA were conducted to determine if either GPA or ACT scores were determining factors in the significance of social capital. The results determined there was non-significant difference between all levels of GPA and social capital, $F(2)25 = .029$, $p > .05$). Additionally, the results determined that there was a non-significant difference between all levels of ACT scores and social capital, $F(3)25 = 1.253$, $p > .05$).

Table 3.

Means and Standard Error of GPA and Social Capital

GPA Levels	*N*	*Mean*	*Std. Error*
3.1 - 4.0	16	51.44	1.21
2.1 - 3.0	11	51.00	2.27
1.1 - 2.0	1	51.00	4.69

Table 4.

Means and Standard Error of ACT and Social Capital

ACT Levels	*N*	*Mean*	*Std. Error*
26-36	10	50.60	1.48
16-25	17	52.29	1.77
0-15	1	51.00	4.69
Did not take	1	44.00	4.69

Table 5.

One way ANOVA Summary Table for GPA, ACT, and Social Capital

Model	*df*	*F*	Sig. Value
GPA	2 (25)	.029	*p* > .05
ACT	3 (25)	1.253	*p* > .05

Research Question Three

For research question three, the current study investigated whether differences in grit existed between levels of either college GPA or ACT scores. To accomplish this, a series of one-way between subjects ANOVA were conducted to determine if either GPA or ACT scores were determining factors in the significance of grit.

There are a number of core assumptions that must be met in order to justify employing the ANOVA procedure. First, the independence assumption determines that scores for each participant should not be influenced by other participant scores. In the current study, participants completed the survey via an online platform and did not interact with one another; thus, each participant's score is unique and reliable. Second, the dependent variable must demonstrate adequate evidence of normality. The normality assumption was satisfied for the social grit variable as described in the section for Research Question 1 (see Table 2). Third, the degree of variance within each level of the independent variable must demonstrate homogeneity, or equal variance. The Levene statistic was non-significant between all levels of GPA ($F=.020$, $p>.05$) and ACT ($F=.055$, $p>.05$), indicating evidence of homogeneity. Together, these data provide justification for the ANOVA procedure.

Results. A one-way between subjects ANOVA were conducted to determine if either GPA or ACT scores were determining factors in the significance of social capital. The results determined there was non-significant difference between all levels of GPA and grit, $F_{(3)}25 = 1.78$, $p > .05$). Additionally, the results determined that there was a non-significant difference between all levels of ACT scores and grit, $F_{(2)}25 = .740$, $p > .05$).

Table 6.

Means and Standard Error of GPA and Grit

GPA Levels	N	Mean	Std. Error
3.1 - 4.0	16	24.56	.967
2.1 - 3.0	11	23.18	1.81
1.1 - 2.0	1	30.00	3.75

Table 7.

Means and Standard Error of ACT and Grit

ACT Levels	N	Mean	Std. Error
26-36	10	24.80	1.18
16-25	17	24.23	1.41
0-15	1	19.0	3.75
Did not take	1	0	3.75

Table 8.

One-way ANOVA Summary Table for GPA, ACT, and Grit

Model	df	F	Sig. Value
GPA	2 (25)	1.78	$p > .05$
ACT	3 (25)	.740	$p > .05$

Summary

This chapter provided an in-depth analysis of social capital and grit and their impact on student success in higher education, as well as if there is a relationship between social capital and grit. A Pearson *r* correlation coefficient was used for research question one and an ANOVA was used for both research questions two and three. The next chapter will discuss the overall findings of this study, the limitations, and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine if social capital and grit impact student success in higher education with a survey measurement administered to Freshman and Sophomore students at a four-year university. In this study, the researcher sought to develop the current literature by investigating if certain factors determine social capital or grit, if there is relationship between both components, and the impact they may have on student success in higher education. Three research questions guided this study:

RQ1: Do college students with higher levels of social capital demonstrate increased grit?

Null: College students with higher levels of social capital do not demonstrate increased grit.

RQ2: Does a higher level of social capital positively impact student success in college students?

Null: Higher levels of social capital does not positively impact student success in college students.

RQ3: Does a higher level of grit positively impact student success in college students.

Null: Higher levels of grit do not positively impact student success in college students.

Summary of Results

To answer the research questions, the analysis found that there was not a significant relationship between social capital and grit. Additionally, the results determined there was a non-significant difference between all levels of GPA and social capital, as well as the results determined that there was a non-significant difference between all levels of ACT scores and social capital, Lastly, the results determined there was non-significant difference between all

levels of GPA and grit, as well as a non-significant difference between all levels of ACT scores and grit.

Research Question 1

Research question one investigated the relationship between college students' social capital and its relationship with perceived grit. To answer this question, a Pearson product-moment correlation was conducted. The Pearson correlation coefficient, r, is the degree of the strength of the relationship between two dependent variables (Fields, 2013). There are two core assumptions that must be satisfied before employing this procedure. First, it is vital that observers are independent from one another within groups. The survey was administered anonymously through Google Forms through a regional comprehensive in the mid-south United States. The likelihood of participants working together on the survey is highly unlikely. Therefore, it is reasonably assumed that independence of observation has been met. Sufficient evidence of normality existed to justify the parametric analysis. For social capital, the histogram showed little evidence of skew with the majority of scores equally distributed around the mean (Field, 2013). Additionally, z-test scores for normality evidence (i.e., skewness, kurtosis) for social capital were within the 95% confidence band. Based on the normality determined in the analysis for research question one, a correlation analysis Pearson r correlation coefficient determined there was not a significant relationship between social capital and grit.

Research Question 2

For research question two, the current study investigated whether differences in social capital existed between levels of either college GPA or ACT scores. To accomplish this, a series of one-way between subjects ANOVA were conducted to determine if either GPA or ACT scores

were determining factors in the significance of social capital. Fields (2013) determines that an ANOVA is a procedure utilized when one or more independent groups (with at least two levels) are compared with a dependent variable.

A one-way between subjects ANOVA were conducted to determine if either GPA or ACT scores were determining factors in the significance of social capital. The results depicted a non-significant difference between all levels of GPA and social capital. Additionally, the results showed there was a non-significant difference between all levels of ACT scores and social capital.

Research Question 3

For research question three, the current study investigated whether differences in grit existed between levels of either college GPA or ACT scores. To accomplish this, a series of one-way between subjects ANOVA were conducted to determine if either GPA or ACT scores were determining factors in the significance of grit. A one-way between subjects ANOVA were conducted to determine if either GPA or ACT scores were determining factors in the significance of social capital. The results determined there was non-significant difference between all levels of GPA and grit. Additionally, the results determined that there was a non-significant difference between all levels of ACT scores and grit.

<center>**Analysis of Findings**</center>

The data collection for this study followed a simple design. There was not a random selection or assignment, as well as no controlled group or pre-post test. A survey created on Google Forms was administered through 100-level courses at a four-year university. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of participants resulted in half of the population size the

researcher was hoping for in this study. Overall, the hypotheses of this study were rejected and the nulls were accepted. The lack of participants and the circumstances those who did participate may have been experiencing due to the pandemic may have affected the overall results of this study.

Limitations

A survey was created and delivered through Google Forms at a four-year university in the spring of 2020. About 20 participants responded, which was not even half of the population goal. Furthermore, the researcher administered the survey a few more times throughout the summer 2020 semester, which only accrued about 10 more participants. Due to the pandemic and the summer semester having lower enrollment, the population goal was not met, but the research had to continue and consider this one of the major limitations of the study.

One of the major limitations for this study was the time and circumstances of data collection and the recruitment of participants. The data collection method was reconsidered a few times before it was finally implemented in spring 2021. Initial data collection was planned for 2020 but postponed due to the pandemic. Similarly, the originally intended university was limiting in-person research, so a different campus was selected. The researcher hoped to administer the survey in-person at a college in the Northern Texas region of the United States to gain at least 60 participants in a short period of time. However, right before this could occur, the COVID-19 pandemic spiked and caused many businesses and higher education facilities to close face-to-face courses and operations. Due to this quick change, the researcher returned to the original idea of administering a survey electronically. This is where the study reached an attrition dilemma due to some questions only receiving 29 responses instead of 30. However, most questions had 30 participants. Since the pandemic hit suddenly, it was overwhelming for

many individuals, both faculty and students, to adjust to the new schedule, which may have limited participation in the survey during the spring 2020 semester. The survey was also administered in summer 2020. Subsequent administrations of the survey did not result in much more return than initially received in the spring.

Additionally, this study was not necessarily unique. Studies on social capital have been studied for quite some time, while grit has more recently been studied, but quickly became a popular subject. Future studies should be conducted on components that could impact social capital and grit, such as financial hardship and first-generation students.

Survey Administration

According to Broghammer (2017), the survey administration timing ensures effectiveness of determining the prediction of grit on outcomes quantified in short-term success rates. This study followed Duckworth's (2007) and determined that it would seem rational that persistence and retention in the second semester or second year does not correlate overtly with a perseverance and devotion for long-term objectives, but may anticipate retention in the third year or further towards graduation. Ultimately, the timing of data collection and end result could have made a significant difference in the findings (Broghammer, 2017).

Broghammer (2017) also provides thorough insight into online survey responses and non-response biases. According to Fluidsurveys (2014), online survey administration and response results continue to be a challenge in research, with an average response rate of survey administration through email to equal only 24.8% (Fluidsurveys, 2014). Broghammer (2017) also mentions a large sample size diminishing the concern of biased responses. Due to external factors, this study had a very small sample size, which could indicate a concern for a Monroe

bias response rate, which should be considered as a limitation. Additionally, responses from the spring and summer semester enrollment may present unproductiveness on predicting enrollment rates, which could determine grit levels (Broghammer, 2017). Furthermore, instrumentation threats may have taken place in the data collection phase, based on Fields (2013) work. Future research can utilize innovative strategies and additional time in research to improve response rates.

Grit Quantification

Broghammer (2017) also contemplates grit quantification and a limitation that may exist within the grit scale. Grit is not a new phenomenon and has been vastly studied by Angela Duckworth and other researchers that connect grit to success rates in higher education. However, there are some researchers that have questioned the effectiveness of the grit scale. Crede, Tyan, and Harms (2017) suggests that the enhancement value of grit for the contribution of performance may be restricted. Even though the grit scale has been considered reliable in metrics, many concerns subsist about the overall measurement of the grit scale (Crede et al., 2017). Future research could be considered on enhancing the measurements of the grit scale.

Additional Populations to Consider

There are many student populations to consider when looking at social capital and grit. These concepts are not one size fits all. Consequently, more research should focus on transfer students and students that are past young adulthood, which Broghammer (2017) mentions within the research. Broghammer states that as the price of higher education continues to increase, the number of applicants qualified to transfer to four-year colleges will rise and it would be valuable for an admissions office to maintain an all-inclusive assessment of transfer students outside of

transfer GPA and high school transcript. Community colleges would also profit from learning more about their student population and offer intensive intervention to progress success rates of community college students (Broghammer, 2017).

Future Research

Grit was established in this study based on the research by Angela Duckworth (2013), which has become a popular grit measurement in research. Furthermore, it is important to note that but there may still questions about their construct validity on if they measure grit adequately. Therefore, the measurements used in this study for both grit and social capital should not be automatically considered distinguished. More focus should be put on the efficiency of measurement on both grit and social capital components in future studies. Additionally, this study was not necessarily unique. Studies on social capital have been studied for quite some time, while grit has more recently been studied, but quickly became a popular subject. Future studies should be conducted on components that could impact social capital and grit, such as financial hardship and first-generation students. Additional steps should be implemented in research on social capital and grit and how they may impact student success in higher education to determine innovative solutions that can increase social capital and grit higher learning institutions. Gall, Gall, and Borg (1996) emphasize the significance of convenience sampling. This study focused on Freshman and Sophomore students who were enrolled at a four-year university. If data could be collected from numerous institutions, the results may have been more significant.

If this study could be conducted again, it would be more appropriate to administer a survey using a different method, such as in-person, while utilizing more time to gain a substantial number of participants for adequate results. Additionally, a focus on specific

components of social capital, such as financial hardships, could be focused on more in-depth. Moreover, a future study on social capital and grit level among community college students and four-year university students could be compared and analyzed.

Understanding the experiences of students that impact their level of social capital and grit is important for higher learning institutions and educational personnel to obtain. A qualitative study would provide further insight into student's personal experiences and perspectives. For example, Olson (2017) conducted a quantitative study on a first-year seminar course to gain more insight on how to facilitate and progress grit levels (Olson, 2017). Facilitating grit levels can enhance persistence and retention in higher learning institutions. Quantitative studies on persistence and retention have been thoroughly conducted over the years. However, a more qualitative approach could provide a deeper understanding of developing social capital and grit

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a detailed analysis of the findings of this research beginning with a review of the characteristics of the sample, preliminary analysis including reliability and validity factor analysis, as well as the results related to the research questions. This study relied on a correlation Pearson *r* and an ANOVA to answer the research questions. The analysis found that there was not a significant relationship between social capital and grit. Additionally, the results determined there was non-significant difference between all levels of GPA and social capital, as well as the results determined that there was a non-significant difference between all levels of ACT scores and social capital, Lastly, the results determined there was non-significant difference between all levels of GPA and grit, as well as a non-significant difference between all levels of ACT scores and grit.

There were certain limitations that may have impacted this study, such as internal validity threats of history and attrition. Future research pertaining to this study should focus on tactics to decrease internal validity threats by changing the method of survey distribution and acquiring more participants. Additionally, focusing on more specific areas of social capital and grit components, such as financial hardships and first-generation students could provide more insight into how this impacts student success in higher education and what we can do for students to attain and maintain student success through various levels of support and encouragement.

P-20 Implications

Even though the results of this research were insignificant due to the small sample size, many researchers emphasize the importance of social capital and grit among that can positively impact students and their journey in education. As educators, we aim to provide resources and opportunities for student success. Therefore, we need to continuously assess the level of student success, the factors that benefit student success, and contemplate innovative strategies that will provide students with the highest level of opportunity for student success. To ensure this occurs efficiently, we need to also collaborate and determine the best approach and methods to implement these innovative strategies.

To do this adequately, we need to remain mindful and empathetic that all student come from different backgrounds and it's not one size fits all. We must be consistently aware and mindful of all levels of diversity among students and assess what we can do to guarantee that they have the highest level of support and encouragement in higher education.

Education leaders should strive to create a sense of community where students from all kinds of cultures and support systems are welcome and have resources that match their needs.

Ultimately, to make this a reality, we need to stay on top of our leadership skills. Collaboration, connectivity, transparent communication, and limiting silos as much as possible will help produce these innovative methods and resources that provide opportunity to students from all backgrounds.

Lastly, creating these innovative strategies and implementing them effectively will provide students the opportunity to excel in their academic career, where they can then excel in their professional endeavors, and hopefully become positively impactful and effective leaders, to develop a brighter future for our society. Ultimately, finding ways to increase social capital and grit among students with these four foundations of innovation, implementation, diversity, and leadership, could have a substantial impact on student success.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine the meaning of social capital, grit and student success individually, followed by connecting social capital and grit and how they affect student success in higher education. An in-depth literature review was assessed to determine the meaning for each component and a survey was distributed to undergraduate Freshman and Sophomore students at a four-year university to see if there is a relationship between social capital and grit and how they affect student success in higher education. Based on Fields (2013) suggestions on normality of assumptions, a Pearson r correlation coefficient was conducted for research question one to determine if there was a relationship between social capital and grit. Additionally, a series of one-way ANOVAs were conducted for research question two and three to determine if social capital and grit had an impact on student success.

This study found that there was not a significant difference between social capital and grit. Furthermore, the results determined there was a non-significant difference between all levels of GPA and social capital, as well as the results determined that there was a non-significant difference between all levels of ACT scores and social capital. Lastly, the results determined there was non-significant difference between all levels of GPA and grit, as well as a non-significant difference between all levels of ACT scores and grit.

Because of the lack of significance found in this study, the hypotheses were rejected. Numerous limitations were present in this study that could have impacted the outcome of significance. The researcher found internal validity threats that may have occurred. Due to the pandemic that impacted the nation and higher learning institutions in 2020 and the survey administration following up in the summer semester, only half of the participants needed were acquired.

One of the most imperative goals of higher learning institutions and their faculty and staff is to produce significant student learning outcomes for all students. Costa, Taylor, Goodfellow, and Ecochard (2020) emphasize the importance of policies in higher education consciously acknowledging that diverse forms of social capital are connected. Therefore, the students' needs should be considered within the support system dynamics that impact students' lives outside of the university. Students who lack social capital outside of the university may need additional resources to excel in the academic environment. For instance, students who lack social capital may experience fear of homelessness due to lack of financial support. This not only relates to a lack of funds, but also to the absence of distinguished social support that could provide assistance during economic adversity (Costa et al., 2020). Increasing student learning outcomes is not limited to academic support. Social capital can play a major role in student success based on a student's academic support, financial support, and emotional support.

Like most things, persistence will not appear magically in any given educational environment. If students are to be made cognizant of this important and powerful aspect of their learning repertoire, persistence in all its component parts must be planted, cultivated, and nurtured if it is to take root and prosper.

The phenomenon of grit, also known as resilience, can be impacted by the level of support systems a student has. Roberson (2020) discusses the importance of grit in higher education. Persistence does not magically appear in an academic environment. Higher learning institutions need to plant, cultivate, and nurture the concept of grit for students to attain the cognitive awareness of the importance and power of grit in their academic journey. In doing so, this allows grit among students to grow and prosper (Roberson, 2020). We should be mindful and empathetic that students come from diverse backgrounds, as well as support systems.

Students that have lower social capital may face more obstacles in higher education, which would require them to have a higher amount of grit to excel compared to students that have a higher level of social capital. Since many students may come from a background that lacks social capital, higher learning institutions and higher learning personnel need to provide a multitude of resources to help increase social capital and grit among students in higher education. Resources should be made available for academic support, social support, emotional support, and financial support. Creating a sense of community and empathy among a college campus and within the institution, along with overt resources would aid in the opportunity to increase student success. Additionally, these resources may increase grit among students to excel in their academic career, regardless of adversity.

Future research on social capital and grit should focus on tactics to decrease internal validity threats by changing the method of survey distribution and acquiring more participants. Additionally, focusing on more specific areas of social capital and grit components, such as financial hardships and first-generation students could provide more insight into how this impacts student success in higher education and what we can do for students to attain and maintain student success through various levels of support and encouragement.

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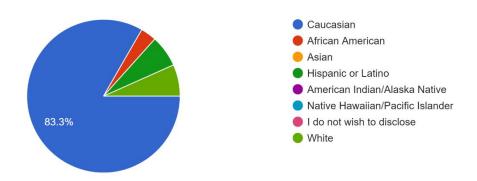
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Appendix A
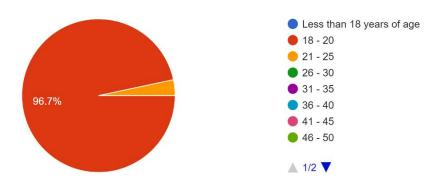
Survey Responses – Demographics

1. Race/Ethnicity

30 responses

- Caucasian
- African American
- Asian
- Hispanic or Latino
- American Indian/Alaska Native
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- I do not wish to disclose
- White

83.3%

Age

30 responses

- Less than 18 years of age
- 18 - 20
- 21 - 25
- 26 - 30
- 31 - 35
- 36 - 40
- 41 - 45
- 46 - 50

1/2

96.7%

Gender

30 responses

- ● Male
- ● Female
- ● Other
- ● I do not wish to disclose

83.3%

13.3%
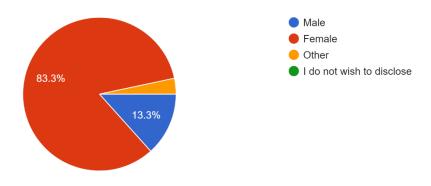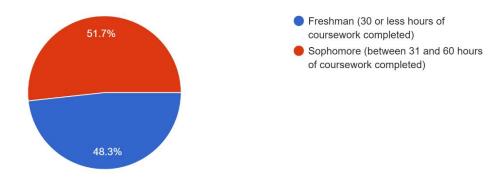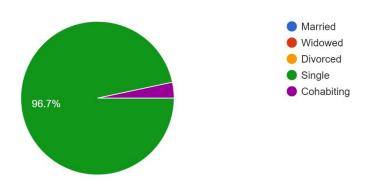
Classification

29 responses

- ● Freshman (30 or less hours of coursework completed)
- ● Sophomore (between 31 and 60 hours of coursework completed)

51.7%

48.3%

Marital Status

30 responses

- ● Married
- ● Widowed
- ● Divorced
- ● Single
- ● Cohabiting

96.7%
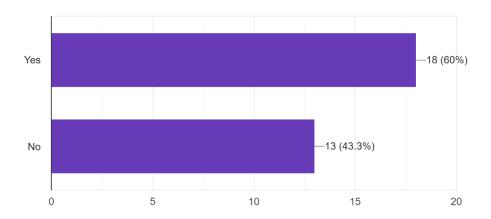
Major

30 responses
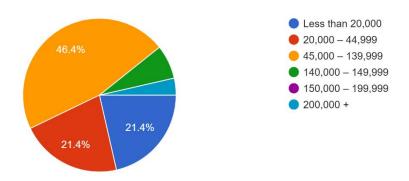
Are you living in on-campus housing?

30 responses
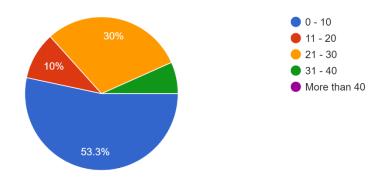
Family income range

28 responses

- Less than 20,000
- 20,000 – 44,999
- 45,000 – 139,999
- 140,000 – 149,999
- 150,000 – 199,999
- 200,000 +

46.4%
21.4%
21.4%
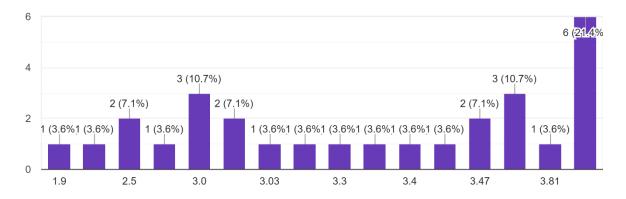
How many hours a week do you work?

30 responses

- 0 - 10
- 11 - 20
- 21 - 30
- 31 - 40
- More than 40

30%
10%
53.3%

College GPA

28 responses

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|1.9|2.5|3.0|3.03|3.3|3.4|3.47|3.81| | | | | | |

1 (3.6%) 1 (3.6%) 2 (7.1%) 1 (3.6%) 3 (10.7%) 2 (7.1%) 1 (3.6%) 1 (3.6%) 1 (3.6%) 1 (3.6%) 1 (3.6%) 1 (3.6%) 2 (7.1%) 3 (10.7%) 1 (3.6%) 6 (21.4%)
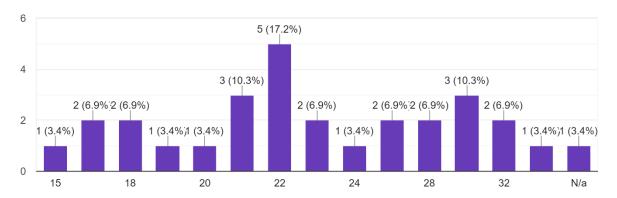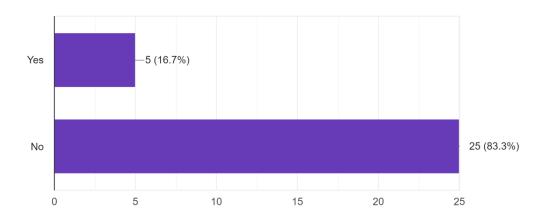
ACT Score

29 responses
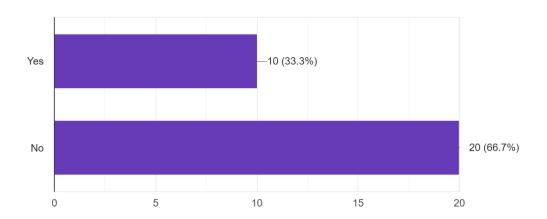
Are you an out of state student?

30 responses
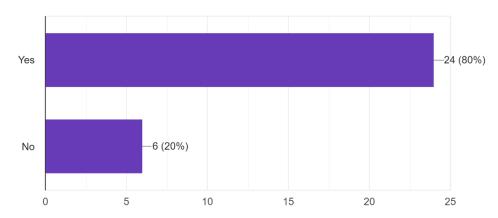
Are you a first-generation student?
30 responses
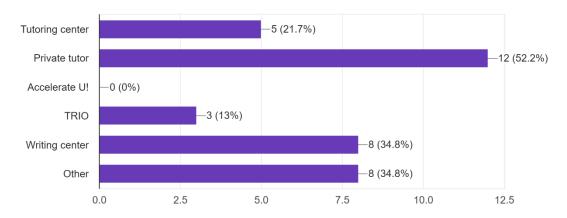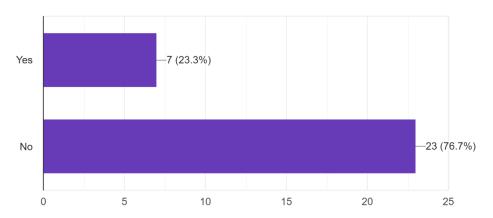
Are you currently utilizing services at MSU through the student disability services?
30 responses
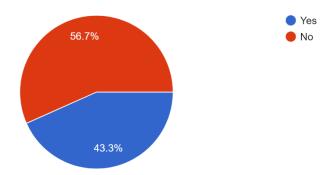
Do you currently utilize any academic resources on campus? Select all that apply

23 responses

Tutoring center	5 (21.7%)
Private tutor	12 (52.2%)
Accelerate U!	0 (0%)
TRIO	3 (13%)
Writing center	8 (34.8%)
Other	8 (34.8%)

Do you utilize counseling services at Murray State?

30 responses

Yes	7 (23.3%)
No	23 (76.7%)

Do you utilize counseling services outside of Murray State?

30 responses
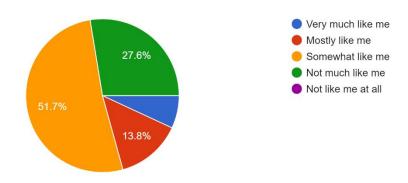
Appendix B
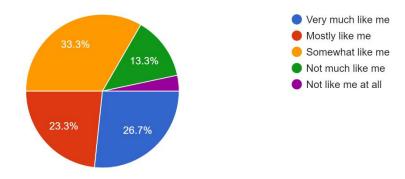
Survey Responses – Grit

New ideas and projects sometimes distract me from previous ones.
29 responses

- ● Very much like me
- ● Mostly like me
- ● Somewhat like me
- ● Not much like me
- ● Not like me at all

27.6%
51.7%
13.8%
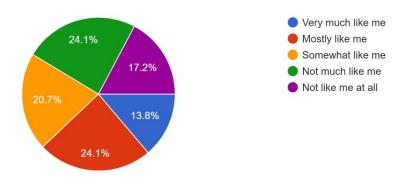
Setbacks don't discourage me. I don't give up easily.
30 responses

- ● Very much like me
- ● Mostly like me
- ● Somewhat like me
- ● Not much like me
- ● Not like me at all

33.3%
13.3%
23.3%
26.7%
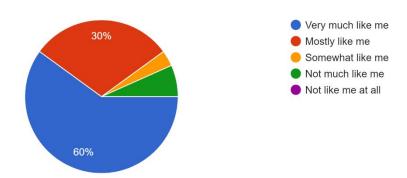
I often set a goal but later choose to pursue a different one.

29 responses

- Very much like me
- Mostly like me
- Somewhat like me
- Not much like me
- Not like me at all

24.1% 17.2% 20.7% 13.8% 24.1%
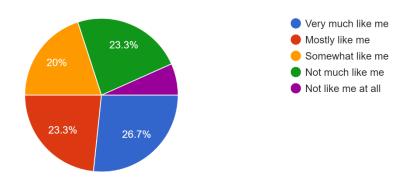
I am a hard worker.

30 responses

- Very much like me
- Mostly like me
- Somewhat like me
- Not much like me
- Not like me at all

30% 60%
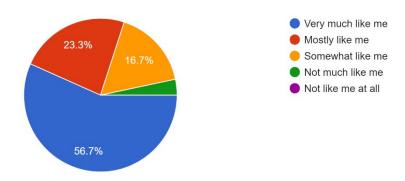
I have difficulty maintaining my focus on projects that take more than a few months to complete.

30 responses

- Very much like me
- Mostly like me
- Somewhat like me
- Not much like me
- Not like me at all

23.3% 20% 23.3% 26.7%
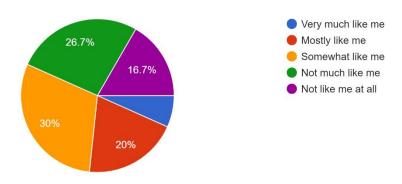
I finish whatever I begin.
30 responses

- ● Very much like me
- ● Mostly like me
- ● Somewhat like me
- ● Not much like me
- ● Not like me at all

23.3%
16.7%
56.7%
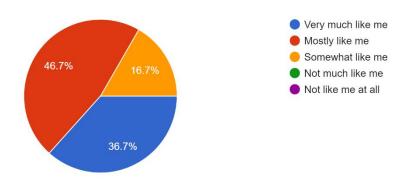
My interests change from year to year.
30 responses

- ● Very much like me
- ● Mostly like me
- ● Somewhat like me
- ● Not much like me
- ● Not like me at all

26.7%
16.7%
30%
20%
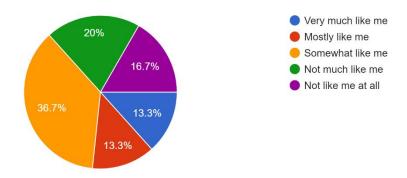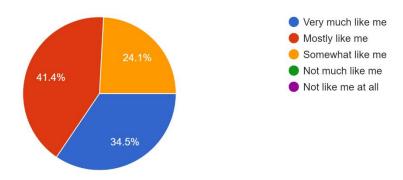
I am diligent. I never give up.
30 responses

- ● Very much like me
- ● Mostly like me
- ● Somewhat like me
- ● Not much like me
- ● Not like me at all

46.7%
16.7%
36.7%

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

30 responses

- ● Very much like me
- ● Mostly like me
- ● Somewhat like me
- ● Not much like me
- ● Not like me at all
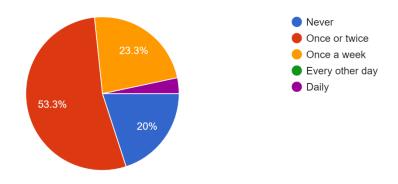
I have overcome setbacks to conquer an important challenge.

29 responses

- ● Very much like me
- ● Mostly like me
- ● Somewhat like me
- ● Not much like me
- ● Not like me at all
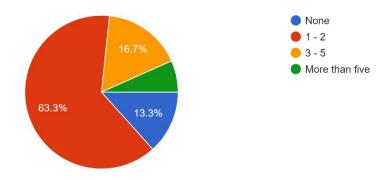
Appendix C

Survey Responses – Social Capital
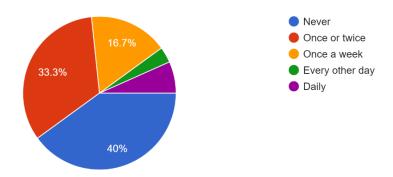
How many times a month do you engage in community service?
30 responses

Legend:
- Never
- Once or twice
- Once a week
- Every other day
- Daily

(23.3%, 53.3%, 20%)

How many campus organizations are you involved in?
30 responses

Legend:
- None
- 1 - 2
- 3 - 5
- More than five

(16.7%, 63.3%, 13.3%)
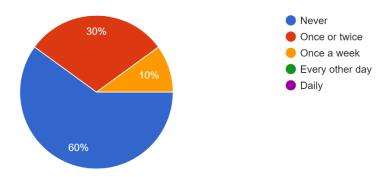
How often do you work with other people in your community to fix or improve something?

30 responses

- Never
- Once or twice
- Once a week
- Every other day
- Daily
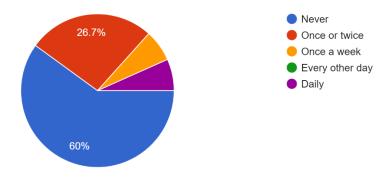
How often do you attend any public meeting in which there was discussion of local or school affairs?

30 responses

- Never
- Once or twice
- Once a week
- Every other day
- Daily

How often do you meet personally with someone you consider to be a community leader?

30 responses

- Never
- Once or twice
- Once a week
- Every other day
- Daily
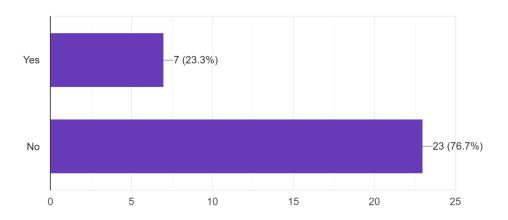
How often do you attend any group, club, society, union or organizational meeting?
30 responses

- Never
- Once or twice
- Once a week
- Every other day
- Daily
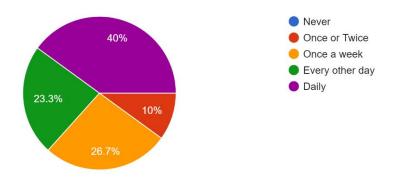
Do you come from a blended family?
30 responses
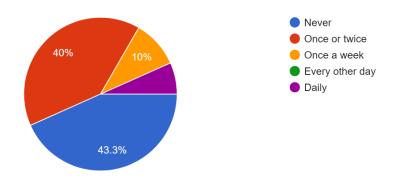
How often do you spend time with your friends?
30 responses

- Never
- Once or Twice
- Once a week
- Every other day
- Daily
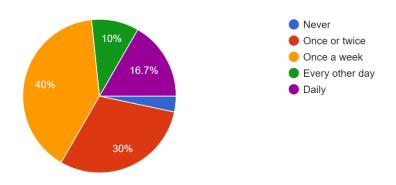
How often do you socialize with co-workers outside working hours?

30 responses

- Never
- Once or twice
- Once a week
- Every other day
- Daily
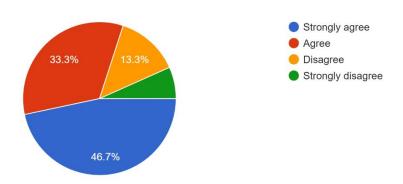
How often do you attend social meetings, activities, programs or events or to visit friends or relatives?

30 responses

- Never
- Once or twice
- Once a week
- Every other day
- Daily

I had a good childhood.

30 responses

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
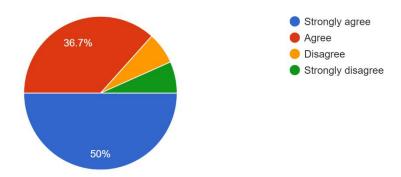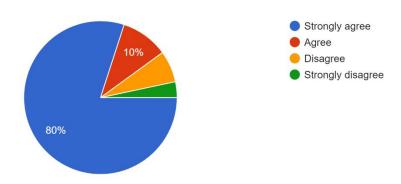
My family provides financial support when I need it.

30 responses

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

36.7%

50%
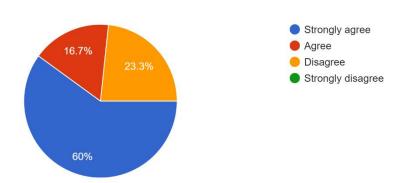
My family supports my education.

30 responses

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

10%

80%
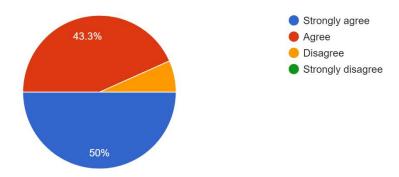
My family gives me emotional support.

30 responses

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

16.7%

23.3%

60%
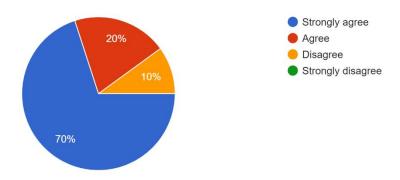
My friends give me emotional support.
30 responses

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

43.3%

50%
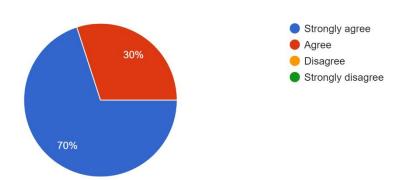
My family supports my academic choices.
30 responses

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

20%

10%

70%
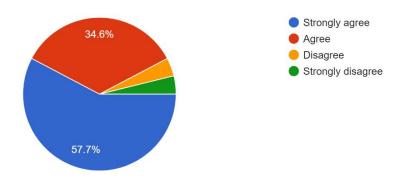
My friends support my academic choices.
30 responses

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

30%

70%
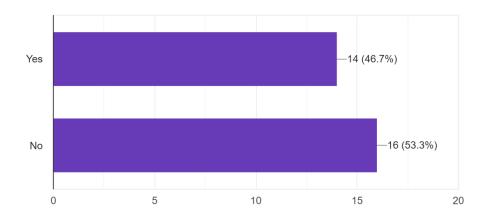
My significant other is emotionally supportive.

26 responses

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

34.6%

57.7%
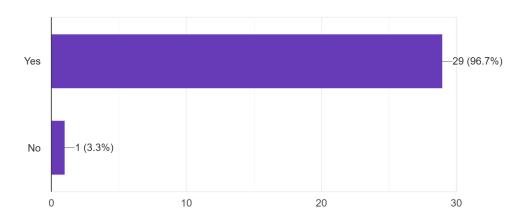
Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted?

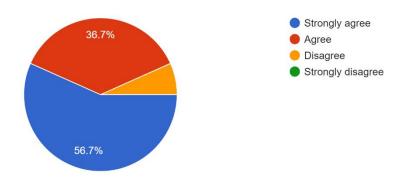30 responses

Yes — 14 (46.7%)

No — 16 (53.3%)

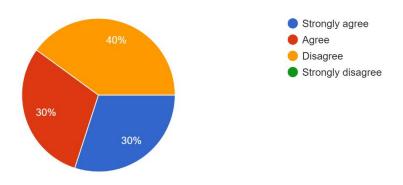Do you have someone you can trust and confide in?

30 responses

I feel safe from crime and violence when I am alone at home.

30 responses

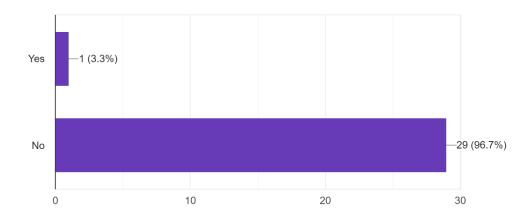I feel safe when I walk down my neighborhood street alone after dark.
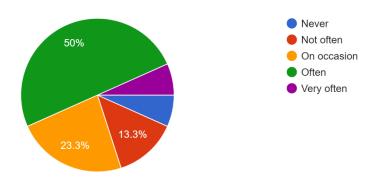
30 responses

In the last 12 months, have you or anyone in your household been the victim of a violent crime, such as assault or mugging?
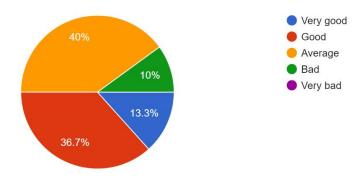
30 responses

How often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?
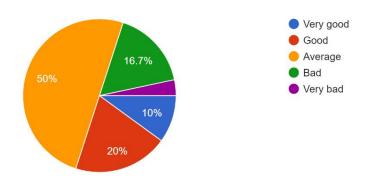
30 responses

How would you rate your health today?

30 responses

Legend:
- Very good
- Good
- Average
- Bad
- Very bad

40%
10%
13.3%
36.7%

How often do you feel sad or depressed?

30 responses

Legend:
- Very good
- Good
- Average
- Bad
- Very bad

50%
16.7%
10%
20%

When you do feel sad or depressed, how extreme is it?

30 responses

Legend:
- N/A
- Not extreme
- Manageable
- Extreme
- Very extreme

50%
23.3%
16.7%