Oh The Places You’ll Go: Does Student Involvement, Student Perception of Parent Involvement, and High School Academic Achievement Impact the Level of Higher Education Achievement

Thesis

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Bachelor of Science in Social Work with Honors Research Distinction

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Abstract

According to the U.S. News & World Report (2015), Ohio State University has a four year graduation rate of 58%. This study seeks to investigate the advantages of this 58% over their peers and intends to address the gap of knowledge between the relationship of student high school academic involvement and achievement, student perception of parental involvement, and higher education academic achievement. Research has consistently shown that students who report their parents as displaying academic support have higher academic achievement and report greater intrinsic motivation. High school students who participate in extracurricular activities are more likely to yield higher grade point averages and higher education aspirations. The study methods include an online survey of students enrolled in The Ohio State University during the 2014 autumn semester and focus groups composed of survey participants. Analysis revealed High School Grade Point Average, ACT score, and Parental Involvement, Parental Expectations, Parental Emotional Support, and Paternal Monitoring are predictive of Academic Trajectory. Theme analysis of focus groups pointed to alternative explanations related to academic trajectory.

Key Words: academic achievement, parental expectations, parental involvement
Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my parents, Janet and Dean Feiler, and my best friend Anna Jaskowiak, for their unwavering love and support, and reminding me that with a little work I can achieve anything.
Acknowledgements

This thesis would not have been possible without the support of numerous individuals. First, and foremost, I would like to thank Dr. Linda Helm, without whom, this project would have been nearly impossible. Her unending support and guidance throughout the entire process has left me filled with awe and gratitude. I want to express my appreciation to Jennie Babcock and Byron Roush for their support throughout this entire project. I would also like to thank my fellow cohort members for their endless encouragement and unflagging support. Lastly, I would like to acknowledge my friends and family for always lending an ear and their unceasing support.
Curriculum Vitae of Tessa Feilor

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Fields of Study

Major Field: Social Work
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Chapter 1: Statement of Research Topic

Introduction

According to the U.S. News & World Report (date), Ohio State University has a four year graduation rate of 58%. This study seeks to investigate the advantages of this 58% over their peers and intends to address the gap of knowledge between the relationship of student high school academic involvement and achievement, student perception of parental involvement, student high school academic involvement and achievement, and higher education academic achievement. Research has consistently shown that parental encouragement may be manifested through high expectations of their children’s degree attainment and a motivational form of encouragement (Cabrera and La Nasa, 2000). High school students who participate in extracurricular activities are more likely to yield higher grade point averages (GPA) and higher education aspirations, (Mcgaha & Fitzpatrick, 2010). Studies have shown that high school (or pre-university) achievement and ongoing achievement predict subsequent achievement through the university experience (Martin, Wilson, Liem, & Ginns 2006). It is essential that parents are knowledgeable about educational disparities and give students the tools to allow them to succeed in academia.

Purpose of the Study

This study aims to illustrate how student involvement in academic and extracurricular school activities, student achievement scores, and student perception of parental involvement in their academic life affect higher education achievement. Students and parents who understand the importance of the parent child relationship and the level of involvement in high school education can ensure success in higher education.
Research Questions

The research questions of this study are as follows:

1. Does student perception of parental involvement impact higher education achievement?
2. Does high school academic achievement impact higher education achievement?
3. Does student involvement in high school impact higher education achievement?
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Student Perception of Parental Involvement

The degree and type of parental involvement are instrumental factors when predicting a child’s academic achievement. Parent’s expectations for their children are linked to how far their children go in academia. The U.S. Census Bureau (2000) reports that earnings from a bachelor’s degree will be over one million dollars more than from a high school diploma over a person’s lifetime. Guttman and McLoyd (2000) found the highest achieving students have parents who facilitate supportive conversations with their child. Students’ perceptions of their parent’s active participation in their schooling have a powerful effect on achievement (Regner, Loose, & Dumais, 2009).

Typically, two types of supports are analyzed when considering parental involvement: academic support and academic monitoring behaviors, (Regner, Loose, & Dumas, 2009). For this study, academic support will be defined as the extent to which parents provide encouragement, help, and support concerning their child’s academic behaviors and outcomes. Academic monitoring refers to the behavioral control parent’s exert on their child’s academic behaviors and outcomes, such as controlling whether homework is done and supervising academic outcomes (Regner, Loose, & Dumas 2009). Research has consistently found students who report their parents as displaying academic support have higher academic achievement and report greater intrinsic motivation (Regner, Loose, & Dumas 2009).

Downers and Pianta (2006) found that children with involved parents who were stimulating and supportive in the home were more likely to develop higher academic functioning. Early and cumulative maternal sensitivity and home learning environment were among the strongest predictors of academic functioning, (Downers and Pianta, 2006). The more
interactive and supportive parents are with their children the higher chance their child will succeed in academia.

Results suggest that by the time students are in the ninth grade, the experiences for those who are going to be eligible for university are different than those who are not going to be eligible, with those who are going to be eligible reporting much higher levels of encouragement from both their parents and their friends. This higher level of encouragement held constant across the high school years (Witkow & Fuligni, 2011).

Cabrera and La Nasa (2000) conclude that parental encouragement may be manifested through high expectations for their students’ degree attainment and a motivational form of encouragement (Kenyon, Bell, & Perna, 2004). Consistent with past research, Wong (2008) found perceived parental involvement was correlated to high academic conduct and greater perceived parental involvement and autonomy support were related to more effortful control and identified regulation, which in turn predicted better academic performance. High school students showed improved academic accomplishments when the perception of support from all sources was higher. Despite the scarcity of research with college students, similar results were found. Better academic achievement was linked to perceived support from teachers and parents (Iglesia, Stover, & Liporace, 2014).

Hayes (2012) found that overall, home-based involvement was a significant factor predictive of academic outcomes. The results suggest that parents were more likely to promote school success in their high school adolescents by engaging in more frequent conversations about school and learning.

In a 2004 study (Kenyon, Bell, &Penna) assessing contextual influences on parental involvement, children whose parents had high expectations and regularly asked their child about
college related plans and activities had higher rates of academic achievement. Parents have a positive influence on their child’s academic outcomes by engaging in frequent dialogue that focuses on schooling and learning (Hayes, 2012).

**Student Extracurricular Involvement**

Extracurricular activities are a normative part of the youth experience and create a connection to the school and community. Extracurricular activities refer to participation in school and neighborhood sponsored clubs and sports. Each additional hour that a 1990 sophomore spent on school sponsored extracurricular activities was associated with an increase in his or her math achievement score of .038 units, and each additional hour raised a 2002 sophomore’s score by .036 units (Dumais, 2009). Another study (Fredricks, 2012) found that tenth graders who participated frequently in extracurricular contexts as positively related to outcomes for up to two and four years later. Sophomore participants tended to have higher grades, test scores, educational expectations, and educational status.

Students who participated in extracurricular activities in high school are more likely to yield higher grade point averages, have improved test scores, hold higher postsecondary aspirations, and experience improved literacy scores (Mcgaha & Fitzpatrick, 2010). Extracurricular activities are a way for students to build ingenuity and confidence which may help bolster dreams of postsecondary education. McGaha and Fitpatrick (2010) hypothesize that physical fitness is related to aspirations as part of a larger self-improvement effort and predict fitness and education go hand-in-hand.

Prior research tends to support the developmental benefits of extracurricular involvement and participation in a range of organized contexts as related to higher grades, motivation, and school completion rates. Sophomores were asked a series of yes/no questions regarding their
participation in seven interscholastic and seven intramural sports. It was found that tenth graders who participated in some sort of extracurricular activities at high levels had higher levels of academic well-being then those who were not involved in any organized contexts. It was also established that youths who participated in extracurricular activities have higher academic adjustment and psychological well-being then their peers who do not participate (Fredricks, 2012).

School bonding has an important effect on academic achievement. Attachment to school and school involvement has a significant impact on academic achievement. School involvement has been shown to have significantly positive effects on academic achievement, even after controlling for prior academic achievement (Bryan, Moore-Thomas, Gaenzle, Kim, Lin, & Na, 2011). Research has consistently found positive effects relating extracurricular activities and academic achievement (McGaha & Fitzpatrick 2010; Fredricks, 2012; Dumas, 2009).

**Socioeconomic Status**

According to a report released by the National Center for Educational Statistics (2000), young people living in families with incomes in the lowest quintile were six times more likely than their counterparts in the top twenty percent to drop out of high school. Ten percent of students from the lowest income group dropped out of school versus 1.6 percent from the top 20 percent of income (Joseph, 2004).

Bok (2004) states education and income are highly correlated that in many studies one may be a proxy for another. Socioeconomic status (SES) and educational attainment are highly correlated. Past research has shown that higher SES is related to college attendance, (Bok, 2004; Cassidy, 2012; Lemmens, Plessis, & Marce, 2011).
As we continue to diversify demographically, we are increasingly balkanizing our communities and schools. Much of the division can be attributed to housing patterns that foster residential segregation, which directly impacts the way our schools are populated and their capacity to educate students who attend them. Balkanization is being defined along the lines of economics or class (Futrell, 2004).

Authors noted that higher basic skills on entering the workforce are linked to modestly higher wages later on and education beyond high school is linked to subsequently higher wages later on, holding all other factors equal (Bok 2004).

**Race and Ethnicity**

A number of studies have found the attainment of white students at institutions of higher education as appreciably higher than that of students from most other ethnic groups (Richardson, 2010). Consistent with patterns in many schools, disproportionately high numbers of black students are present in lower level courses, and are disproportionality low in numbers in the schools more advanced courses (Archbald, Glutting, & Qiann, 2009). Bryan, Moore-Thomas, Gaenzle, Kim, Lin, and Na (2011) showed black, Hispanic, and multi-racial students had lower academic achievement than their white peers.

Lemmens, Plessis, and Maree (2011) found white and black students have differing variables that predict academic success. The factors that commonly predicted white student’s success included high school grades, goal orientation, credits registered, learning efficacy, gender, and parental education. The factors that predicted black student’s academic success were: high school marks, credits registered, and parental education.
Parental Education Level

Mother’s education, was a significant and robust predictor of both academic outcomes. Maternal education is commonly related to children’s language and cognitive development. Mothers with more education had children who were achieving more and functioning higher cognitively (Downer & Pianta, 2006).

Maintainers were more likely to have fathers with more education (Wintre, Dilouya, Pancer, Pratt, Birnie-Lefcovitch, Polivy, & Adams, 2011). Maintainers are defined as students who maintain consistent grades in high school and at university.

Academic Achievement

A multitude of studies have investigated academic achievement. These studies have shown that high school (or pre-university) achievement and ongoing achievement predict subsequent achievement through the university experience (Martin, Wilson, Liem, & Ginns 2006). According to Ohio States (OSU) admission criteria (2015) a student fresh out of high school must have taken four units of English, three (4) units of math, three units of natural science with significant lab experience, two (3) units of a social science, two (3) units of the same foreign language, one visual or performing arts unit, and have a high school GPA ranked in the top 25 percent of their class.

Academic achievement, measured as high school GPA and thus subsequent steps of a student’s academic trajectory, in regards to the predicted degree of completion (i.e. Bachelors, Masters, Ph.D. or equivalent) is related to university academic achievement (Martin, Wilson, Liem, & Ginns 2006).
Gender

According to Dumais (2002), 78.6 percent of males and 85.3 percent of females who were sophomores in 2002 anticipated achieving a bachelor’s degree or higher (p<.001). Current statistics support females attaining degrees at higher rates than males (Buchmann & DiPrete, 2006).

School sponsored activities were found beneficial for both males and females, although the average time spent on school sponsored activities was equal. The activities students participated in varied. For instance, for their chosen extracurricular activities, males were more likely to compete in sports while females were more likely to participate in academic clubs, honor society, service clubs, and band (Dumais, 2002).

Summary Statement

Further research is needed to understand this topic. Many of the studies failed to discuss both student perception of parental involvement and extracurricular activities in high school achievement, and thus there is little information on their overall impact when taken together or holding one constant. However, much of the information from the literature does fortify the idea that student perception of parental involvement and extracurricular activity are instrumental in discussing student academic achievement and trajectory. Students and parents need to understand the relationship of these variables in order to ensure that children are equipped to succeed in academia. This study addresses the gap of knowledge between the relationship of student perception of parental involvement, extracurricular activities, and academic trajectory.
Chapter 3: Methodology

This section will discuss the research design, data collection, measures, sampling procedure, and data analysis. This section will provide the reader with a comprehensive understanding of how this research was completed.

Research Design

The study was designed to investigate the relationship between academic achievement, extracurricular involvement, and student perception of parental involvement in high school and these factors impact on academic trajectory. The study adopted a mixed methods cross-sectional design and was exploratory in nature. The participant pool was drawn from a stratified random sample derived from the Office of Enrollment Services and convenience sampling through advertisement recruitment.

Academic achievement was collected in the form of final cumulative high school GPA as well SAT/ACT score. Using overall GPA and SAT/ACT scores as an index of prior education achievement was justified on the bases that both are standardized across America and both are necessary to gain entry to a university. Student extracurricular involvement data was amassed through student self-selection of clubs and self-reporting levels of involvement on a Likert scale. The level of parent involvement based on students’ perception of parent engagement was self-reported and recorded on a Likert scale.

Data Collection Procedure

Survey data was collected using an online survey developed through Qualtrics. Qualtrics is online survey software provided through the College of Social Work for faculty and student research. The survey was developed specific to this research. The surveys were distributed through an email, sent by the researcher, to 24,000 undergraduate, masters, and Ph.D. students
who attend The Ohio State University. The email contained a brief description of the study along with a link to the survey. Students had a two week period to complete the survey. A reminder email was sent on day seven to prompt students in order to increase participation. A link and a brief description were also placed on fifty six Ohio State University Facebook groups. Additionally advertisements were placed on two Ohio State newspapers: *Honors and Scholars Weekly* and *Buckeye Net News*. Both news advertisements ran for two weeks and contained a succinct characterization of the survey and a link to the study.

Upon clicking on the survey link, participants were directed to the survey where they were presented with further information about the research, estimated time commitment, statement of confidentiality, contact information for researchers and Institutional Review Board (IRB) office, and consent. By clicking yes on the consent document, participants were able to begin the survey. If participants selected no, they were taken to the incentive page.

Participants had the option of entering their email address twice; once, if they wanted to be included in the incentive drawing for a $25 Chipotle gift card. Twenty five winners were chosen at random and the $25 Chipotle gift cards were sent electronically after data collection was complete. The second time participants had the option to enter their email addresses was to indicate interest in engaging in a focus group to discuss the research.

Members interested in the focus group were contacted after the close of the survey. Seven hundred members were contacted via email and were asked to respond after selecting one of the four dates and times presented to them. The focus group was considered full once eight individuals had selected the day and time. Participants were then sent a confirmation email reminding them of the day and time of their focus group.
When a focus group commenced, participants were read a consent form and verbal consent was obtained. Members were also given a contact card that provided them with the contact information of the researchers as well as the IRB office. Participants were then asked a series of six open-ended questions for discussion. On average, focus groups lasted one hour.

Survey participants were asked a series of demographic questions such as race, age, income level, and gender. Survey members were also asked an array of questions regarding their parent’s perceived involvement, extracurricular involvement, and their academic achievement in high school and university. Responses were able to be selected in a multitude of ways including: a Likert scale, a menu which enabled participants to select multiple answers, and open ended which allowed participants to fill in their major and email addresses.

Focus groups were asked a sequence of the six open-ended questions. The queries were expansions on questions that participants had previously completed in the survey. The questions all related to high school academic achievement, parental involvement, and extracurricular involvement. Each focus group was recorded and transcribed verbatim.

**Measures**

The dependent variable of interest is the current and the anticipated level of educational achievement. The independent variables of interest are gender, age, race, family income, major, high school grade point average, ACT/SAT score, student involvement in high school, parental involvement in their child’s high school education, parental involvement in their child’s university education, and student involvement at the higher education level.

**Sampling Procedure**

The characteristics for proposed participants are students at the Ohio State University who are 18 years and older. The nature of the research requires their inclusion because the study
is looking at how parent and student involvement in high school affect academic trajectory. Anyone who is below the age of 18 and is not a student at Ohio State was excluded from the survey because the aim of the study was to survey college students who had completed high school and determine if their involvement in high school has impacted their achievement at the higher education level.

**Data Analysis**

The raw data was exported from Qualtrics to Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The data was cleaned for missing responses and then quantitative analysis commenced. The surveys used multinomial regression analysis. Multinomial regression analysis was chosen in order to compare two or more categories to the independent variable in order to understand which variables held the greatest significance. Multinomial regression analysis is a predictive analysis used to describe data and to explain the relationship between one dependent nominal variable and one or more continuous-level (interval or ratio scale) independent variables (Statistic Solutions, 2014).

The focus group was measured using a thematic content analysis. Themes were recorded by one of three reviewers separately and then compared to see if the same themes are found by all three members of the research analysis team. Consensus of themes was achieved through comparison and discussion. Thematic analysis is a cluster method that focuses on identifying patterned meaning across a dataset (Aukland, 2015).
Chapter 4: Results

Sample

Survey participant recruitment yielded 2,855 respondents. Of these 2,855 responses, 2,429 participants completed 100 percent of the survey and were analyzed. The focus group consisted of nineteen participants.

The majority of survey respondents were between the ages of 18-23 years. Sixty-four percent of the participants reported as female and thirty-six percent reported as male. As shown in Figure 1, the majority of participants self-identified as white non-Hispanic (n=2195; 77%). Other races represented in the sample included Hispanic (n=82; 3%), Black non-Hispanic (n=167; 6%), American Indian/Alaskan Native (n=9; 0%), Asian/Pacific Islander (n=288; 10%) and other (n=111; 4%).

Figure 1: Participant Race
Survey members classified their family income level as: low (6%), Low Middle (16%), Middle (41%), Middle High (32%), and High (5%). Participant’s Year in School was classified as: Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior, Masters1, Masters 2, or Ph. D/Equivalent. Table 1 illustrates the cross tabulation of Family Income Level and Year in School.

**Table 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Income Level</th>
<th>Year in School</th>
<th>Freshman</th>
<th>Sophomore</th>
<th>Junior</th>
<th>Senior</th>
<th>Masters 1</th>
<th>Masters 2</th>
<th>PhD/Equivalent</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-Middle</td>
<td></td>
<td>32</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td></td>
<td>114</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle-High</td>
<td></td>
<td>118</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>796</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>298</td>
<td>409</td>
<td>514</td>
<td>711</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>2429</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 is the Chi Square for the relationship between Family Income Level and Year in School. The Chi Square value for the association between Family Income Level and Year in School was obtained as 58.025 with 24 degrees of freedom and a significance probability of less than .000. The result appears to demonstrate the association between Family Income and Years in School. However the cell count is less than 5 in a minimum expected count of 7.06, thus calling the results into question.
**Table 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Income Level</th>
<th>Chi Square</th>
<th>58.025</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degrees of Freedom</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p-value</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Academic Trajectory**

To address the research question, participants completed an incentive survey and a 34 question survey, found in Appendix 1 and 2. Multinomial regressions were run to determine the factors that are most predictive of higher education achievement. Student’s level of planned degree attainment was used as the independent variable throughout the analysis.

To obtain an Associate’s degree, academic achievement, \( p=0.000 \) defined through high school G.P.A. is the most predictive variable. Academic achievement defined through high school G.P.A \( p=0.000 \) and ACT score \( p=0.000 \) foretold a Bachelor’s Degree. Further analysis of those who planned on earning a Master’s degree revealed that academic achievement, in the form of ACT score \( p=0.001 \) and parental support \( p=0.000 \) to be the most influential.

Taking the results in conjunction, parental support and academic achievement are shown to be the most predictive of academic trajectory. The results are summarized in Table 3.

Completion of theme analysis presented new variables that were analyzed using multinomial regression analysis. The same independent variable as the previous analysis was used. Analysis of Associates Degree revealed new predictive factors other than academic achievement. The new predictive factors included parental expectation \( p=0.000 \), parental emotional support \( p=0.010 \), parental monitoring \( p=0.000 \). The focus groups revealed the researchers were conflating parental involvement with parental volunteering, after separating and
redefining, parental involvement was shown to have significant predictive qualities (p=.007) as well.

Attainment of a Bachelor’s Degree was now shown to be impacted by not only academic achievement but parental expectation (n=.000) as well.

In the pursuit of a Master’s Degree, parental expectation (n=.000) was shown to be a significant factor in addition to the previous analysis which showed academic achievement and parental involvement as predictive factors. Further analysis was run on Master’s degree attainment with the three significant factors to determine which had the greatest predictive quality. Parental expectation (n=.000) was revealed to be the main significant predictor of academic trajectory.
Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter Estimates</th>
<th>(n=2429; α=.05)</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval for Exp(B)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.S.G.P.A.</td>
<td>.833</td>
<td>.219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.S. Parent Involve</td>
<td>-2.387</td>
<td>.890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.S. Parent Expect</td>
<td>7.176</td>
<td>1.068</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.S. Parent Monitor</td>
<td>-6.323</td>
<td>1.071</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.S.G.P.A.</td>
<td>.279</td>
<td>.058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>-.127</td>
<td>.029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.S. Parent Expect</td>
<td>1.776</td>
<td>.175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>-.079</td>
<td>.023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.S. Parent Involve</td>
<td>.798</td>
<td>.206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.S. Parent Expect</td>
<td>1.425</td>
<td>.136</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following outlines the generated results in Table 4.

**Table 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Associates</td>
<td>Academic Achievement</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td>Academic Achievement</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>Academic Achievement, Parental Support</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Theme Analysis**

Four separate focus groups, with a combined total of nineteen participants, were held to further explore questions on the survey. The groups were asked six questions, as shown in Appendix 4.

The focus groups quickly revealed the idea of an unspoken expectation that their parents had for them to attend college,

“...whether they were real or imagined, yes, I felt a lot of pressure from them, although they wouldn’t really hover over me in high school because by then they kind of realized I was able to motivate myself, but yea they expected me to go to college.”

Participants accounts of the expectation to attend college was rarely spoken as something they must do but more present as tangible feel of assumption demonstrated through college visits and discussion of which college they would attend and dialogue on majors and future professions.

True to adolescent development, participants wanted distance from their parents and parents support, but are retrospectively grateful.

“I think I hated it at the time, but in hindsight, hindsight’s 20/20, if my parents hadn’t been breathing down my neck to keep my grades up or whatever, I don’t know, I probably would have blown a few more things off.”

Participants were asked what this parental support looked like
“They kind of just reminded me of the consequences of some actions. I’ll cite a specific example: when I was a sophomore, in high school, I was taking AP U.S. history and the teacher said we could turn things in by the end of the quarter so I didn’t do her work because as long as you had it by deadline, maybe I misinterpreted and I wanted it to be that but I just didn’t do an essay one time and my teacher actually emailed my mom, my mom teaches at elementary in the same building and I was at baseball practice later that day after school, and my mom literally walked into the baseball practice where we were throwing baseballs and just yelled at me and said “John Now.” And like pointed at me and pointed right at the space in front of her, I needed to leave the practice and go and I was going to go talk my teacher about why I didn’t do my paper. To this day, I don’t know why I didn’t do it. But that’s an example, she was just obviously extremely invested in my success and I thank her for it.”

Participants believed parental support encompassed parents checking your grades and making sure their children participated in various activities. The goal of the parents was to assist the child is reaching adulthood successfully and independently.

Analysis also revealed high school academic preparation was important, especially in the form of AP classes. The analysis revealed that students who took AP classes felt better prepared to handle the content in their university classes. These classes enabled students to graduate early or enable them to pick up another major or minor which gave them an edge over their peers.

The focus groups also consistently stated that parental involvement and parental volunteering are two separate entities. Parental involvement is the more important of the two.

“It’s more personal if they are watching you. If they’re supporting the whole team it doesn’t mean as much to you specifically because they are there for everybody, not just you. It’s selfish but....”

Analysis found that students preferred seeing their parents in the stands versus running the concession stand. Table 5 outlines the themes that were generated during the focus groups.
Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus Group Themes (n=19)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parental Expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental Emotional Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Academic Preparation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental Involvement more important than Parental Volunteering</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 5: Discussion

This study sought to understand what factors best gear students to higher education achievement. In order to equip students with the best chance of higher education achievement, parents must have high expectations for their children to succeed. Despite this, there is limited research on parental expectations and their impacts on kid’s academic trajectory.

Results indicate that while academic achievement and parental involvement are significant, parental expectations are paramount. The knowledge gained from this study will be useful when utilized for parenting classes. It is absolutely essential that parents are knowledgeable about educational disparities and give students the tools to allow them to succeed in academia. By teaching parents to hold high expectations for their children, their children are more likely to attend college and obtain higher degrees which will enable them to find higher paying jobs.

To further understand predictive factors of academic trajectory, it would be advantageous for future studies to assess multiple universities as this data can only be generalized to The Ohio State University. Collecting data from a larger number of students could produce more generalizable findings. It would also be beneficial to future research to conduct a longitudinal study of high school students throughout their academic career. Collecting longitudinal data would allow researchers to gain a better understanding of which factors impact higher education achievement.
Chapter 6: Limitations

As this study is of an exploratory nature, results are tentative. Perception bias was a possible issue. Students were asked to rate their parents involvement as well income level. An objective of the survey was to discuss an issue objectively in the third person about something that is subjectively experienced in the first person. This is difficult and beyond the ability of the researcher to verify results of each study participant. The study group consisted solely of Ohio State University students so results are not generalizable to other populations. The study was self-report and cross-sectional so it is difficult to establish causality between variables. One question on the survey had to be thrown out (What was your score the SAT) as the test changed its rating scale in 2005. Many participants took the test before 2005 making the results unreliable for analysis.
References


Appendix 1: Incentive Survey
Appendix 1: Incentive Survey

Thank you for participating in the Oh The Places You’ll Go: Does High School Academic Achievement, Student Involvement, and Parent Involvement Impact the Level of Higher Education Achievement Survey. To be eligible for the $25 Chipotle Gift Card, please provide your email. At the conclusion of the survey, a drawing will be conducted to award 25 Chipotle gift cards. Your email address will not be linked to the survey.

Thank you for your assistance in the completion of this survey.

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Please enter your email.
Appendix 2: Survey
Oh The Places You’ll Go: Does High School Academic Achievement, Student Involvement, and Student Perception of Parent Involvement Impact the Level of Higher Education Achievement Survey

Investigators: Tessa Feiler and Linda Helm

This is a consent form for research participation. It contains important information about this study and what to expect if you decide to participate. The purpose of this research is to see how high school academic achievement, student involvement, and student perception of parent involvement in high school impact academic achievement at the university level.

Your Participation is Voluntary.

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete a survey about your experiences in high school and higher education. The survey is anonymous and will not require you to give your name or other identifying information. If you give consent, you will then be taken to the survey where it will ask you a series of questions. You can skip any question you do not wish to answer or stop taking the survey at any time. The survey will take approximately 5 minutes. We will work to make sure that no one sees your survey responses without approval. But, because we are using the Internet, there is a chance that someone could access your online responses without permission. In some cases, this information could be used to identify you.

Risks/Benefits. You may feel some discomfort answering some of the questions, if this is the case you can skip the question(s) or leave the survey with no penalty. There are no direct benefits to the participants for completing the survey.

Incentives.

At the conclusion of the survey, a drawing of all participants will be conducted to award 25 Chipotle gift cards. The researchers will utilize a statistical software program to randomly select gift cards winner. The winners will be notified by email. The gift card will be included in the notification email.

Participant Rights:

You may leave the study at any time. If you decide to stop participating in the study, there will be no penalty to you, and you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Your decision will not affect your future relationship with The Ohio State University. If you are a student or employee at Ohio State, your decision will not affect your grades or employment status. By checking yes on this form, you do not give up any personal legal rights you may have as a participant in this study.
An Institutional Review Board responsible for human subject’s research at The Ohio State University reviewed this research project and found it to be acceptable, according to applicable state and federal regulations and University policies designed to protect the rights and welfare of participants in research.

For further information about the study or if you feel you were harmed as a result of study participation, please contact.

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Giving Consent.
I have read (or someone has read to me) this form and I am aware that I am being asked to participate in a research study. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered to my satisfaction. Please select YES if you choose to participate in this survey.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Are you an Ohio State University student?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
What is your gender?
- [ ] Male
- [ ] Female

How old are you?
- [ ] 18-20
- [ ] 21-23
- [ ] 24-26
- [ ] 27+

What is your race?
- [ ] American Indian/Alaskan Native
- [ ] Asian/Pacific Islander
- [ ] Black Non-Hispanic
- [ ] White Non-Hispanic
- [ ] Hispanic
- [ ] Other

What is your family's income level?
- [ ] Low
- [ ] Low-Middle
- [ ] Middle
- [ ] Middle-High
- [ ] High
What year in school are you?
- [ ] freshman
- [ ] sophomore
- [ ] junior
- [ ] senior
- [ ] masters 1
- [ ] master 2
- [ ] ph. d or equivalent

What is your major?

What was your high school grade point average (G.P.A.) at graduation?
- [ ] 3.8 or higher
- [ ] 3.5-3.79
- [ ] 3.0-3.49
- [ ] 2.5-2.99
- [ ] 2.49 or below

What was your score on the A.C.T.?
- [ ] 34-36
- [ ] 31-33
- [ ] 28-30
- [ ] 25-27
- [ ] 22-24
• □ 19-21
• □ 18 or below
• □ I did not take the A.C.T.

What was your score on the S.A.T.?
• □ 2400
• □ 2200-2399
• □ 2000-2199
• □ 1800-1999
• □ 1600-1799
• □ 1400-1599
• □ 1399 or below
• □ I did not take the S.A.T.

What extracurricular(s)/activities were you involved in in high school? check all that apply
   □ Student Government
   □ 1 Sport/Recreational Sport
   □ 2 Sports/Recreational Sports
   □ 3 or more Sports/Recreational Sports
   □ Key Club
   □ Environmental Club
   □ Language Club
   □ Glee Club
   □ 4H
   □ Debate Team
   □ National Honor Society
   □ Prom Committee
   □ Girl/Boy Scouts
   □ Ski Club
   □ ROTC
   □ Tutor/Mentor
☐ Parkour Club    ☐ Drama Club
☐ Chess Club    ☐ LGBTQ Club
☐ Art Club    ☐ Engineering Club
☐ Science Club    ☐ Math Club
☐ Photography Club    ☐ Marching Band
☐ Religion Club    ☐ General Volunteering
☐ Yearbook    ☐ Other

☐ Journalism

My high school involvement was because...check all that apply

☐ To help build my resume
☐ I felt passion/enjoyment for my activity
☐ I wanted to build a relationship with my community/school
☐ My friends were involved in the activity or wanted to gain friends
☐ My parents expected me to be involved

How involved were you in your high school activities?

☐ Very Involved
☐ Involved
☐ Somewhat Involved
☐ Not very Involved
☐ Not at all Involved

How involved are you in your college activities?

☐ Very Involved
☐ Involved
☐ Somewhat Involved
☐ Not very Involved
☐ Not at all Involved
What was your parent's highest level of education?

- [ ] Some high school
- [ ] High School Diploma
- [ ] Some College
- [ ] Associates Degree
- [ ] Bachelor's Degree
- [ ] Master's Degree
- [ ] Ph. D or equivalent

How involved were your parent's in your high school?

- [ ] Very Involved
- [ ] Involved
- [ ] Somewhat Involved
- [ ] Not very Involved
- [ ] Not at all Involved

How regularly did your parent's volunteer at your high school?

- [ ] Very Frequently
- [ ] Frequently
- [ ] Occasionally
- [ ] Rarely
- [ ] Never

How regularly did your parents attend your high school events?

- [ ] Very Frequently
- [ ] Frequently
- [ ] Occasionally
- [ ] Rarely
- [ ] Never
If you needed transportation to high school related activities, how often did your parents assist with transportation?

- Very Frequently
- Frequently
- Occasionally
- Rarely
- Never

My parents monitored my academic outcomes in high school.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Does not Agree or Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

My parents talked to me about my academic difficulties in high school.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Does not Agree or Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

My parents encouraged me when I got good grades in high school.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Does not Agree or Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

My parents supported me when I had academic difficulties in high school.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Does not Agree or Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
My parent's desire for me to attend college greatly influenced me to attend college.

- □ Strongly Agree
- □ Agree
- □ Does not Agree or Disagree
- □ Disagree
- □ Strongly Disagree

What is the highest level of education you expect to complete?

- □ High School
- □ Associates
- □ Bachelors
- □ Masters
- □ Ph. D or Equivalent

What is the highest level of education your parents expect you to complete?

- □ High School
- □ Associates
- □ Bachelors
- □ Masters
- □ Ph. D or Equivalent

How involved are your parents in your school today?

- □ Very Involved
- □ Involved
- □ Somewhat Involved
- □ Not very Involved
- □ Not at all Involved
How regularly do your parents attend your school events today?

- □ Very Frequently
- □ Frequently
- □ Occasionally
- □ Rarely
- □ Never

My parents monitor my academic outcomes in college.

- □ Strongly Agree
- □ Agree
- □ Does not Agree or Disagree
- □ Disagree
- □ Strongly Disagree

My parents talk to me about my academic difficulties in college.

- □ Strongly Agree
- □ Agree
- □ Does not Agree or Disagree
- □ Disagree
- □ Strongly Disagree

My parents encourage me when I get good grades in college.

- □ Strongly Agree
- □ Agree
- □ Does not Agree or Disagree
- □ Disagree
- □ Strongly Disagree

My parents support me when I have academic difficulties in college.

- □ Strongly Agree
- □ Agree
- □ Does not Agree or Disagree
- □ Disagree
- □ Strongly Disagree
If you're interested in participating in a focus group to further discuss these issues please enter your email address or enter not interested

Enter Email Here    ________
Enter Not Interested Here    ________

Thank you for participating in the Oh The Places You’ll Go: Does High School Academic Achievement, Student Involvement, and Student Perception of Parent Involvement Impact the Level of Higher Education Achievement Survey. To be eligible for the $25 Chipotle Gift Card, please provide your email. There will be 25 winners randomly pulled from a drawing. Your email address will not be linked to the survey.

Thank you for your assistance in the completion of this survey.

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Thank you for considering participation in the Oh The Places You’ll Go: Does High School Academic Achievement, Student Involvement, and Student Perception of Parent Involvement Impact the Level of Higher Education Achievement Survey.

FOLLOW THIS LINK TO SUBMIT YOUR EMAIL IN ORDER TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR THE CHIPOTLE GIFT CARD:

https://cswosu.co1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_8wCi93SFhnbojWd
Appendix 3: Email to Schedule Focus Groups
Appendix 3: Email to Schedule Focus Groups

Dear __________________,

You participated in the Oh, The Places You’ll Go survey and indicated your desire to participate in a focus group. If you are still interested in participating, please respond to this email indicating which day and time work best for you.

Day 1 Time 1          Day 2 Time 2          Day 3 Time 3          Day 4 Time 4

Thank you,

Tessa Feiler
Appendix 4: Focus Group Questions
Appendix 4: Focus Group Questions

1. Does high school academic achievement relate to your higher education achievement?

2. Does involvement in extracurricular activities in high school have an impact on higher education achievement? How do you define involvement?

3. Does parental support relate to your high school education achievement? How do you define parental support?

4. Does parental support relate to your higher education achievement?

5. We asked questions on the survey such as “my parents monitored my academic outcomes in high school,” how would you define monitored?

6. Our data has showed that participants rated their parents volunteering in high school was low but parents willing to drive if transportation was needed and parents attendance at high school events were high; why do you believe this is the case?

7. How far do your parents expect you to go in higher education? How far do you intend to go in higher education?
Appendix 5: Verbal Script
Appendix 5: Verbal Script

“Hello, my name is Tessa Feiler. I am an undergraduate student at The Ohio State University, and I am undertaking research that will be used in my senior thesis project.

I am studying student involvement in high school, student perception of their parent or parent’s involvement in their student’s education, and high school academic achievement effects on the level of higher education achievement? The focus group will involve questions similar to those on the Oh, The Places You’ll Go survey that you have already completed.

This focus group will take about an hour of your time.

We will work to ensure that your participation remain confidential. But, because the group consists of other participants confidentially cannot be secured; we ask that keep other participants and their responses confidential. Your name will not be collected and therefore will not be linked to anything you say, in either the text of my thesis or any other publications.

There are no other expected risks of participation.

Participation is voluntary. If you decide not to participate, there will be no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You can, of course, decline to answer any of the questions as well as to stop participating at any time, without any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

If you have any additional questions concerning this research or your participation in it, please feel free to contact me, my thesis advisor or our university research office at any time. Here is a contact card.

“Do you have any questions about this research? Do you agree to participate?

If so, let’s begin….
Appendix 6: Contact Card
Appendix 6: Contact Card

Contacts and Questions

For further information about the study, please contact

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Appendix 7: Recruitment Post
Appendix 7: Recruitment Post

OSU Educational Barriers Study. We are looking for undergraduate through PhD Ohio State students to provide information about their pathway to higher education. This research study includes an anonymous online survey. At the close of the survey, 25 winners will be awarded a $25 Chipotle gift card.
Appendix 8: Notification of Winners
Appendix 8: Notification of Winners

Dear ______________.

CONGRATULATIONS! You took part in the Oh, The Places You’ll Go survey and have been selected as one of the $25 Chipotle gift card winners. You will find your gift card attached to this email!

Congratulations,

Tessa Feiler