

FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS FOR HISPANIC
STUDENTS IN TEXAS SCHOOL DISTRICTS

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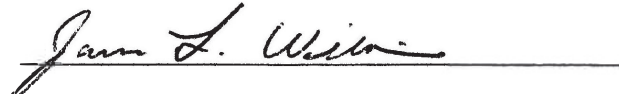
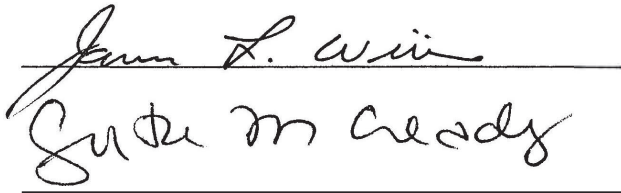
To the Dean of the Graduate School:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Karen Louise Hale entitled "Factors That Contribute to Educational Success for Hispanic Students in Texas School Districts." I have examined this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy with a major in Sociology.

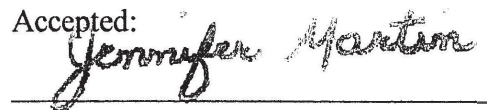


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We have read this dissertation and recommend its acceptance:



Department Chair

Accepted: 

Dean of the Graduate School

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DEDICATION

To my mother, Olga Hale,

thank you for molding me into the person I am today

and your support, love, and encouragement.

To my siblings, Kathleen Hale & Mark Avera and Brian Joseph Hale,

thank you for your unwavering support, patience, and love.

To my daughter, Karina Lauren Perusquia,

thank you for your understanding, inspiration, and love.

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ABSTRACT

KAREN LOUISE HALE

FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS FOR HISPANIC STUDENTS IN TEXAS SCHOOL DISTRICTS

DECEMBER 2010

The purpose of this study is to identify factors that contribute to educational success for Hispanic students in Texas school districts. The study applies and tests a synthesis of social capital and political resource theories to identify the structural determinants that impact positive educational outcomes. Three research questions guided the study: (1) Does social capital have an effect on educational success of Hispanic students in Texas school districts? (2) Does political resource theory have an effect on educational success for Hispanic students in Texas school districts? (3) Does social capital combined with political resource theory further predict educational success for Hispanic students in Texas school districts?

This study uses secondary data to test the research questions. The Academic Excellence Indicator System for 2006-2007 published annually by the Texas Education Agency is used in this study. This study tested twelve hypotheses using ordinary least squares regression. Five models are presented to determine what factors have a significant effect on Hispanic TAKS cumulative pass rate.

Findings supported the central research question that a combination of social capital and political resource theories further explained factors that contribute to Hispanic educational outcomes in Texas school districts. Revenue and the percent of economically disadvantaged in a school district are overlapping themes in both social capital and political resource theories and both significantly influence education outcomes for Hispanics in Texas. English language proficiency, the percent of gifted and talented, and attendance rates improve educational outcomes among Hispanic students in Texas. Conversely, the percent of at-risk students and dropout rates have negative effects on Hispanic students' educational outcomes in Texas school districts.

Administrators who employ social policy to decide how to allocate resources must be aware of the underlying structural factors that help shape educational success. Understanding what factors contribute to positive education outcomes allows administration to advocate and designate resources where needed to foster success. Equally as important, knowing what diminishes success allows policy makers to identify programs that can reduce the effects of those factors.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF STUDY

Sociology of education is a field of study devoted to understanding the dynamics of educational systems and their impact on society. It provides inquiry to policies, practices, and procedures within the social institution of education. Researchers conduct methodological inquiry to understand the dynamics within educational systems and provide guidance to best meet the needs of a changing society. Scholars began studying educational systems in the late 1800s with the intent of reforming society (Bidwell 1979). Education was seen as a means of providing socialization, creating social change and human progress. Today sociologists focus on public policy, demographic changes, educational outcomes, and theoretical applications when studying educational systems.

Social structure is an important concept in sociological research. Social structures are the macro level agents that influence society and behavior. The foundations of structure in society have been studied in both classical and contemporary theory. Classical theorists Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim, and Max Weber each have their own contributions to the concept of social structure. The foundations they provide are a pathway for contemporary theorists to formulate more specific contributions to the knowledge of structures in society and how they influence behavior. Contemporary

theorists like Talcott Parsons and Robert Merton focus on the functionality of social structures in society. The structure of society consists of all macro and microorganisms, is based on reoccurring patterns of organizations and behaviors to meet the needs of society, and provides consistency. Within the social structure there are several major social institutions that are studied in sociology including the family, politics, economics, religion, health, and education.

The educational system is one of many social institutions in the structural system. Schools are formal complex organizations that are a part of the integrated institutional structure (Bidwell 2001). Formal organizations have specific responsibilities in society and communities; they are governed by rules to provide social control of behavior and designate appropriate means to achieve goals in society. Institutionalized educational systems are structured and function to create social and cultural reproduction (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977). The structure of schooling has remained virtually the same throughout the 20th century (Gamoran 2001). On a macro level, functionalist and conflict theories have been the most cited when conducting inquiry and explaining educational practices.

The purpose of this dissertation is to explore and examine factors that contribute to educational success for Hispanic students in Texas school districts. This study will analyze school districts based on border versus non-border location, social capital, and political resources that have been known determinants of educational outcomes to understand what factors influence Hispanic students' educational performance.

This study will contribute to existing literature by applying the theoretical constructs from social capital and political resource theories to provide a critical assessment of a neglected area (Texas Border) that is highly populated by a minority group (Hispanics). The persistent differences in educational outcomes between racial and ethnic groups are a critical issue in U.S. schools today, and will continue to be in the future.

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Research on race and inequality routinely assesses the relationship of race and access to social capital and political resources in the United States by examining disparities in income, occupations, and education. Most comparative studies focus on factors of income inequality and the impact it has on school performance. Comparative studies linking income and performance demonstrate that, in the U.S., educational achievement and success is not merely racially ordered. Administrators must consider the level of political resources available to minorities, which in turn influences the development of strategies to achieve goals (Polinard, Wrinkle, and Meier 1995). Studies focusing on educational achievement link racial in achievement differences to inequality in social capital and political resources thus asserting that performance is determined for children based on race and ethnicity and access to resources rather than racial inequalities alone (Pollock 2001:2). The main question addressed in many education studies is whether differences in income inequality combined with race and ethnicity account for disparities in educational achievement and success of students.

Location

There are 1222 school districts in Texas located in 254 counties within the 20 regions designated by the Texas Education Agency (TEA). The Texas border is comprised of 14 counties along the U.S. Mexico border at the Rio Grande River and includes 71 school districts. In places like the U.S. South and Southwest, low wage, low skill work creates limited opportunities. Family disadvantages are greater for those living in locales with limited opportunities. In areas where racial segregation is persistent and in locales with limited opportunities, disparity in resource allocation has negative consequences for educational outcomes. Living in the U.S. South has been shown to impact the likelihood of dropout (Teachman, Paasch, and Carver 1996). National trends from the late 1960s through the early 1980s suggest that minority students are more likely to encounter barriers to advancement (England, Meier, and Fraga 1988).

The relationships between the community and schools have also been noted in literature as having political, institutional, and network dimensions that impact inequality (Arum 2000). Neighborhood characteristics, such as having high status residents or economic deprivation, have been linked to reading and math test scores and were found to have a significant impact on educational outcomes (Ainsworth 2002). Arum (2000) offers research to understand the role of neighborhoods and communities with respect to local school systems and in the reproduction of inequality of resources, racial segregation, and curriculum variation. Local government and taxes largely fund schools in the United States, thus it is imperative to focus on the differences within local

communities by identifying limitations imposed on educational success at the district level. Districts each have authority to impose regulations beyond the federal and state guidelines (Arum 2000). Social capital combined with resource allocation inequality suggests the need for a multi-level process to understanding racial educational disadvantage (Roscigno 2000).

Schools in poor neighborhoods are more likely to be inferior than schools in affluent communities (Murphy 1986). Schools located in areas of high concentrated poverty have greater rates of adolescent delinquency (Arum 2000). Communities with greater percentages of families living in poverty and higher crime rates produce less social integration and have less social capital available to its inhabitants (Ainsworth 2002). Researchers have failed to explain how poverty restricts educational opportunities or other forms of constraints it creates (Padilla 2004). The percent of poverty among groups is often overlooked when comparing ethnic groups and minorities' educational outcomes.

Social Capital

Studies focused on inequality in the U.S. became more prevalent while civil rights groups seeking equality for minorities began to mobilize for social change. This occurred in studies of education focusing on differences in educational outcomes among minority groups. The most noted was the Coleman Report in 1966, also called the Equality of Educational Opportunity Report (Heyns 1986). This report examined the importance of social capital in educational outcomes among students. This functionalist perspective

argues that the purpose of higher education is to provide educational skills and training for roles and occupational advancement by learning skills needed to continue productivity in an industrial economy (Collins 1971). Consequently, Bourdieu (1986) argued that functionalist theory is incomplete because it fails to consider the reproduction of social structure created by the educational system. Capital, Bourdieu proposed, exists as real forms of assets, symbolically as reputation and social networks or as credentialism in educational qualifications.

Social capital theories have been applied in structural models of educational attainment specifically looking at cultural capital. Teachman (1987) identifies cultural capital as an element of status distinct from class position, which can impact the access to educational resources and ultimately educational outcomes. Family background, home environments, and family educational resources are embedded factors in cultural capital that can propel advancement and positive educational outcomes. Ream (2003) applies social capital theory, as social mobility, in explaining educational disadvantage among Mexican Americans. According to Ream (2003) and Roscigno and Ainsworth-Darnell (1999), language barriers, socioeconomic disadvantage, and student mobility can be detrimental to educational achievement. Ream and Palardy (2008) insist that race and class are interwoven when looking at social capital theories to assess educational outcomes. Children whose parents possess more human capital have better educational outcomes (Padilla 2004). Parental involvement and family structure are factors that must

be considered when determining the educational utility of parental social capital and the rewards it provides to children.

Political Resources

The political resource model is the most widely used model when studying educational politics (Polinard et al. 1995). The level of political resources available to minorities, which in turn influences the development of strategies to achieve their goals, is an alternative explanation to social capital for differences in achievement. This model looks at factors similar to the social capital models, but focuses on the mobilization of those resources. For example, Roscigno (2000) combines aspects of cultural capital and resource allocation to understanding racial educational disadvantage.

SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

Theoretical

The theoretical model used in this study includes factors from social capital and political resource theories to explain positive educational outcomes among Hispanics attending school districts in Texas. It is an integrated model using concepts derived from stratification and studies of educational attainment and disparity. The dissertation focuses on the variation in capital and resources available that significantly impact divergence in educational outcomes and attainment in Texas school districts for Hispanics. Both social capital and political resource theories provide evidence to support that income and the percent of economically disadvantaged students have a mitigating effect on educational outcomes (Johnson et al. 2001; Lee and Wong 2004). The first research question looks at

the relationship between social capital theory and educational success among Hispanic students, the second focuses on political resources and educational success among Hispanic students, and the third combines social capital and political resource theories to further explain educational success among Hispanic students in Texas school districts. This is important because it provides further explanation of the differences in educational outcomes for Hispanic students.

Practical

E. Michael Madrid (2008) employs a Brown/White Paradigm to explain the segregation of Mexican Americans in the U.S. He argues that the Lemon Grove case is not covered in history courses and textbooks nor given the same attention as Brown v. Board of Education because Lemon Grove does not fall into the Black/White paradigm. In 1954 de jure racial segregation was held unconstitutional in Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, but it took about another 15 years before de facto Hispanic ethnic segregation was ruled unconstitutional in Cisneros v. Corpus Christi Independent School District (England et al. 1988; Madrid 2008). The exclusion of Hispanics is an indication of the marginalization, history of intolerance, and bigotry they have endured. Mexicans Americans are viewed as immigrants and foreigners in the U.S. because of historical and linguistic differences (Madrid 2008). Proximity to Mexico allows for continuous cultural renewal, especially for those areas adjacent in the borderlands.

Despite policy efforts, equal treatment for minority students has not been realized (England et al. 1988). Differences in educational attainment between Hispanic and Non-

Hispanics persisted into the 1990s (Wojtkiewicz and Donato 1995). Educational attainment for Hispanic groups is important to contribute to success and increases in human capital and labor market outcomes (Borjas 1982; Bean and Tienda 1987; Wojtkiewicz and Donato 1995). Differing qualities and stock in human capital, like education and work experience, account for differentials in labor market outcomes between Hispanic and non-Hispanic White workers (Bean and Tienda 1987; Warren 1996). This is important because it allows policy makers and administrators to further understand what characteristics, programs, and resources propel positive educational outcomes.

Contribution of Literature

This dissertation research advances knowledge about Hispanics' educational success in Texas. Few studies focus on differences in education outcomes in Texas school districts. Studies concentrated on Hispanic differences are limited in existing research. I put forth a synthesized model, including aspects of social capital and political resources, as a valuable explanation to successful educational outcomes for Hispanic students in Texas school districts. Unlike previous studies, this dissertation focuses on the factors that foster success rather than issues that impact failure.

DISSERTATION OVERVIEW

The dissertation is divided into six chapters. The current chapter provided a brief introduction to the purpose of the study, the research problem, and the significance of the study. The second chapter provides a detailed review of the existing literature on

location, social capital, and political resource theories. Chapter 3 includes the conceptual framework for the dissertation including how social capital and political resource theories are synthesized to better explain educational success among Hispanic students in Texas school districts. Chapter 4 describes the methodology and data analysis used for this project. The findings for each of the hypothesis and models tested are provided in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 provides a discussion and conclusion, addresses the implications of this research with regard to the roles of location, social capital, and political resource mobilization, limitations to the study, and possibilities for future research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter reviews existing research on educational outcomes. After a discussion of high stakes testing, this literature review will detail the existing research on studying Hispanic disparity including the impact of location, communities, and neighborhoods. Literature on social capital theory, consisting of financial, human, and cultural capital will be presented. Literature on political resource theory and overlapping areas of both social capital and resources theories are presented.

HIGH STAKES TESTING

Standardized tests have commonly been used to measure student performance. Research focused on educational attainment, success, or failure includes some measure of achievement utilizing standardized tests. Standard testing is taken by the majority of students across schools, districts, and localities allowing for meaningful comparisons and generalizability. Many studies approach measuring achievement by focusing on reading and mathematics scores (Roscigno 1998). Polinard et al. (1995) employed reliable and effective measures of student performance to assess minority student performance also using a state mandated standardized test, the TAAS. Ainsworth (2002) used a composite of math and reading standardized test scores to measure educational achievement among tenth graders. Rivkin, Hanushek, and Kain (2005) also employ a composite of reading

and math TAAS scores to measure the effects of teaching quality on educational outcomes. Lee and Wong (2004) used mathematics scores alone to measure the effects of schooling environment on student achievement. Previously used measures of achievement and outcomes have included GPA, standardized science test scores, and core course composite scores (Dika and Singh 2002). Ream and Palardy (2008) created a construct by combining standardized test scores in math, reading, science, and history; additionally they included track placement indicators to assess academic outcomes across ethnic and racial groups.

High stakes testing has also received mixed reviews. Although reliance on high stakes testing to measure and improve the quality of public education has grown since the 1990s, little progress has been achieved in narrowing the gaps between White and minority students and differing income brackets in mathematics achievement (Lee and Wong 2004). Inequalities in schooling conditions and opportunities for racial and ethnic minorities have persisted. Public policy in the school system has been the main approach to counteract possible differences in life chances for low income and minority students (England et al. 1988). While some studies have noted high stakes testing has motivated low-achieving minority students and schools with high proportions of minority students to reduce the achievement gap, other studies in comparison ignore the factors that could contribute to equitable resources and opportunities for success (Lee and Wong 2004).

STUDYING EDUCATIONAL DISPARITY OF HISPANICS

Studies on social capital effects on educational achievement in the 1990s include teenage mothers, Southern students, and two studies on Mexican-origin youth (Dika and Singh 2002). While most research focuses on disparity between Blacks and Whites, Warren (1996) is one of the few researchers concerned with the inequality among White and Mexican-origin adolescents educational achievement in the Southwest (Ream 2003). Previous research centered on the effects of social capital on educational outcomes focus on individual factors rather than structural or institutional factors. Stanton-Salazar and Dornbusch (1995) is one of few studies concerned with institutional forms of social capital, focusing on social ties within the school, outside school, and the proportion of non-Mexican origin members, effects on grades.

Location

The geographic location of school districts impacts the ability of the district to foster social capital and resource mobilization. In places like the U.S. South and Southwest, where excessive low wage, low skill work exists there are limited opportunities. Family disadvantages are greater for those living in locales with limited opportunities. In areas where racial segregation is persistent and in locales with limited opportunities, disparity in resource allocation has negative consequences for educational outcomes. Teachman (1987), comparing men and women's educational resources, found the effects of living in the South were worse for men's educational outcomes. Living in

the U.S. South has been shown in research to impact the likelihood of dropout (Teachman, Paasch, and Carver 1996).

The relationships between the community and schools have also been noted in the literature as having political, institutional, and network dimensions that impact inequality (Arum 2000). Understanding the role of neighborhoods and communities in school districts ability to reproduce inequality of resources, racial segregation, and curriculum variation was presented by Arum (2000). Local government and taxes largely fund schools in the United States. Thus, by focusing on the differences within the local communities, studies can identify limitations in educational success at the district level. Districts each have authority to impose regulations beyond the federal and state guidelines that impact allocation of resources (Arum 2000).

Schools in poor neighborhoods are more likely to be inferior to schools in more affluent communities (Murphy 1986). Adolescent delinquency is greater in schools located in areas of high concentrated poverty (Arum 2000). Communities with high percentages of families living in poverty and high crime rates produce less social integration and limit social capital available to it inhabitants (Ainsworth 2002). The percent of poverty among groups is often overlooked when comparing ethnic groups and minorities' educational outcomes. National trends in data from the late 1960s through the early 1980s suggest that minority students are more likely to encounter barriers to advancement (England et al. 1988).

SOCIAL CAPITAL

Social capital includes forms of human, financial, and cultural capital that can be utilized by inhabitants as assets to meet goals in society. A main aspect of cultural capital is linguistic capital. Human capital is more concerned with ability and intelligence.

Human capital, such as physical ability or ability to achieve credentials through education, can also contribute to reputation and social capital. Factors such as being an at-risk student or in a special education program can diminish human capital. Lastly, the ability to create networks requires associations with people thus frequent mobility diminishes access to social capital each time one relocates.

Cultural Capital

A type of social capital includes cultural capital. Cultural capital is the knowledge of the cultural behaviors and networks within society. It is attained through class status and daily living. Family background, environment, and educational resources are examples of available cultural capital. For example, language ability provides a source of cultural capital and understanding of cultural behavior in society. Linguistic capital incorporates the understanding and use of language, transmitted by families, during schooling (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977). Studies in the Netherlands found that the possession of books and other forms of knowledge of the language or “culture of literacy” can affect educational outcomes (Driessen 2001). In the U.S. studies have shown that linguistic proficiency is important for educational outcomes in countries with great variety in languages spoken.

Language in the home and language choice also has been examined as impacting achievement in young children in elementary school (Driessen 2001). Students living in a home where a foreign language is spoken had lower high school graduation rates compared to students living in homes where English is spoken (Wojtkiewicz and Donato 1995). Language barriers have been cited as explanation for underachievement of many Mexican-American students and most policy efforts have focused on English language acquisition (Ream 2003). Studies have found that proficiency in English reduces the likelihood that Hispanics will drop out of high school (Bean and Tienda 1987; Wojtkiewicz and Donato 1995). Cultural differences and language ability can affect students tracking imposing designations such as student with limitations, or as slow learners, and have them placed in remedial classes (Warren 1996). Districts with high percentages of limited language proficient students have lower graduation rates (Orfield, Losen, Wald and Swanson 2004).

Human Capital

Human capital refers to individual physical ability both in strength and intelligence. Students in special education courses are limited in their human ability, or at least perceived to be so. At-risk students are also at a disadvantage reducing their potential human capital by not achieving at the same level as other students. Continual mobility impacts student potential to create lasting friendships and network associations that help insulate students from becoming at-risk of dropout.

Hispanic students are overrepresented in learning disability classes according to ability grouping research, but suggest a convergence toward equity in ability is projected in the future (England et al. 1988). Students in special education programs or receiving special education services are less likely to graduate from high school (Orfield et al. 2004). Students with limited language proficiency are more likely to be placed in special education programs, which limit their learning abilities, educational outcomes, and possibilities of graduation. Students who are foreign born are at a higher risk of dropping out (Wojtkiewicz and Donato 1995).

Students with limited English language ability, in special education programs, and living in poverty are at a great risk of dropout. At risk students do not have the means or social networks available to help them be successful in their educational goals. The greater number of at risk students in a school district diminishes the resources available for all students in the district by limiting the overall social capital.

Mobility has been determined to be a factor in educational outcomes. Students who move frequently during their adolescent school years are at a disadvantage and have less stock in social capital. Moving and changing schools has a negative effect on educational outcomes (Coleman 1988). Students who move are more likely to dropout and less likely to enroll in college (Dika and Singh 2002). Ream (2003) points out that the effects of student mobility on educational outcomes of Mexican-American youth have not been thoroughly examined. Reactive mobility as a result of changing family situations such as divorce or expulsion is more likely to cause academic difficulty (Ream

2003). Mobility can affect existing forms of social capital, student engagement and school completion (Ream 2003).

POLITICAL RESOURCE THEORY

Political resource theory considers the resource mobilization of funding. Resource theory includes the control structures that shape school districts and the programs available to students (Meyer, Scott, and Strang 1987). Funding and allocation of resources are decisions made by policymakers and school board members. Determining how resources are allocated has a direct impact on educational outcomes by implicitly acknowledging what services and programs to fund (Dee 2005).

Political resource theory is one of the most widely used perspectives in educational and aggregate research studies focusing on demographic measures of available resources (Polinard et al. 1995). The level of political resources available to school districts influences the tactics employed to achieve goals. Control structures and resources shape school districts, where federal and state funding has the most significant effects on administrative complexity (Meyer et al. 1987). For school districts with higher percentages of minorities it is critical to look at differences in the resources available that impact their success in educational outcomes (Polinard et al. 1995). Previous research has included measuring school resources to understand the relationship of academic achievement (Lee and Wong 2004). Educational resources have been shown to have a greater impact on men's educational outcomes than on women's (Teachman 1987). Because disparities in educational resources continue to exist, achievement gaps remain

for minority and low-income students' achievement. School resources have been measured by per pupil expenditures, class size, and teacher quality to understand disparity in access to resources and its relation to mathematics achievement and accountability at the aggregate state level (Lee and Wong 2004).

Measures of Political Resources

Some political factors that impact the educational outcomes of students include the percent of teachers of the same racial and ethnic composition as the schools, percent of students in gifted and talented programs, and attendance rate. Hispanic teachers provide Hispanic students with positive role models in the schools they attend. Higher percentages of Hispanic teachers have a positive impact on Hispanic students' educational outcomes (Polinard et al. 1995). Having teachers that are of the same racial and ethnic composition allows students to have both role models and creates an environment that allows for attachment and engagement (Johnson et al. 2001). The number of students in gifted and talented programs increases evidence of the political resources available to the school district. Studies have shown that Hispanics along with other minorities are significantly underrepresented in gifted and talented programs (England et al. 1988).

Attendance rates affect all students, not just the students that do not attend classes. School funding is based on attendance per pupil; thus low attendance will limit the financial resources available to the school district. At the individual level, attendance is not only a predictor of positive educational outcomes but it is also used as a measure of

dropout and at-risk status. Absenteeism is related to GPA and graduation rates (Carbonaro 2005). High absenteeism predicts dropout for all racial and ethnic groups (Rumberger 1995). For Hispanics, higher levels of attendance contributed to higher TAAS pass rates for Hispanic students (Polinard et al. 1995).

Dropout rates can also impact the political resources available to school districts. Hispanics have been more likely to drop out and less likely to graduate from high school (Roscigno 2000). Some prior research has found up to a thirty percent deficiency in graduation rates for Hispanics (England et al. 1988). Previous research has supported the conclusion that socioeconomic status predicts dropout rates for Hispanics and Whites (Rumberger 1995). Family/ student mobility is another factor related to dropout. Changing schools increases the likelihood of dropping out (Teachman et al. 1996). Dropout rates have been stated as having a negative effect on both students who drop out and students who remain in school as well. High dropout rates in school districts lead to lower student performance within those districts (Polinard et al. 1995).

Although some research has shown negative education outcomes for minority students where there is a large population on minorities, there also exists research that concludes that high minority student bodies helps increase positive education results. The percent of minority students in a school district has a strong relationship with low graduation rates (Orfield et al. 2004). School districts where minorities are majority and segregated districts have graduation rates below the state average. However, other studies have shown students who attend schools with higher proportions of the student body that

are of their own race and ethnicity have greater levels of attachment to those schools (Johnson et al. 2001). Attachment to school reduces the likelihood of dropout, and helps foster inclusion promoting positive education outcomes.

COMBINED SOCIAL CAPITAL AND POLITICAL RESOURCE THEORIES

Merging social capital and political resource theories to better explain attainment is not new. Both theories have valued explanations of factors that contribute to education outcomes. The overlap between these two theories that is most apparent includes the level of fiscal resources and economic disadvantage. For example, Lin (1999) combines social resources with social capital theory to explain status attainment. Differential access to social capital because of groups' advantaged or disadvantaged position in the structure or social networks is deserving of more attention by researchers. As a result, findings have shown fewer opportunities are offered for women and minorities to mobilize better social resources that impact status attainment such as educational success (Lin 1999).

Fiscal Resources/ Financial Capital

Fiscal resources, such as revenue, provide a glimpse at the social capital available to students within a school district and the overall accessibility of the political resources of the school district. Financial capital provides districts the ability to fund specific programs that contribute to overall social capital and reputation of the district.

Many studies incorporate either expenditures or revenue to measure structural changes among schools and districts when analyzing student achievement outcomes (Lee and Wong 2004). Fiscal resources have a positive effect on academic achievement

indirectly through smaller teacher-student ratios and higher teacher qualifications (Bidwell and Kasarda 1975; Biniaminov and Glassman 1983). Organizational factors such as school funding have a positive influence on test scores (Polinard et al. 1995). Revenue per pupil is positively related to Hispanic student performance on the TAAS (Polinard et al. 1995). Roscigno (2000) found that instructional expenditures have significant effects on math comprehension of African-American and Hispanic elementary and middle school students but not on reading comprehension. Educational spending can impact student/teacher ratios but also the facilities, equipment, and diversity of classes available to students (Roscigno 1998).

Economic Disadvantaged

The influences of family and socioeconomic (SES) background on educational goals and achievement have been studied using social capital and political resource theories. Cultural capital as applied by Bourdieu (1977) and DiMaggio (1982) focus on the contribution of family cultural capital and SES to higher educational achievement (Roscigno and Ainsworth-Darnell 1999). Economic deprivation in neighborhoods has a negative effect on math and reading standardized test scores (Ainsworth 2002). Research has determined that poverty has a strong effect on reading achievement (Epps 1995). Districts with high poverty rates are more likely to have low graduation rates (Orfield et al. 2004).

Gamoran (2001) predicts that inequality of educational outcomes due to socioeconomic background will continue throughout the 21st century. Minority children

have a higher risk of living in economic deprivation. Poverty can deprive these children of educational opportunities and access to education resources (Murphy 1986). Education has been found to predict future welfare status, persistence of poverty, and chronic unemployment (Krein and Beller 1988). There is a relationship between the percentage of low income Hispanic families in a district and the Hispanic student TAAS rates (Polinard et al. 1995). Conversely, Goddard (2003) measured disadvantaged socioeconomic status using the average number of students receiving free or reduced lunch at each school, yet found school level SES was not a significant predictor of academic success.

Influences on educational attainment as a result of social and economic background can include family structure, family income, parental education and occupation (Warren 1996). Family background attributes are shown to be conducive to educational success (Roscigno 2000). For example, family income is a predictor of both mathematics and reading achievement (Roscigno 1998). Parental education has a positive effect on childrens' mathematics achievement (Roscigno 1998). Students whose parents graduated from college are more likely to graduate from high school (Wojtkiewicz and Donato 1995). Various studies have reported that financial resources and socioeconomic status of parents have an impact of educational achievement (Warren 1996; Driessen 2001; Ream 2003). Parents with increased socioeconomic status are better equipped to transmit valued forms of cultural capital and have more resources available to provide to their children (Roscigno 2000). Students whose parents have greater incomes and financial capital have more access to educational institutions and resources such as tutors,

private schooling, and educational stimulation in the home (Teachman 1987; Roscigno 2000).

Household/Family Composition

Family structure and number of siblings have also been shown to impact educational attainment and outcomes. Single-parent families tend to have fewer resources available than two-parent homes (Krein and Beller 1988; Portes 1998). The deprivation of resources can cause negative effects on the cultivation of human capital in single-parent homes (Krein and Beller 1988). Living in families with both parents may provide increased income differences and reduced psychological distress, have been noted in literature as increasing the possibility of successful educational outcomes (Warren 1996; Roscigno 2000). Students from single parent households are at a disadvantage in both reading and mathematics achievement compared to those living with both natural parents (Roscigno 1998). Single parent families are at a disadvantage in regard to the time and energy available to their children compared to two-parent families (Wojtkiewicz and Donato 1995; Teachman et al. 1996). Additionally, there exists some evidence that children in stepparent families are at a disadvantage and have less social capital available compared to children living with both natural parents (Teachman et al. 1996).

Families with more children have to distribute their resources between all members of the household and this reduces the likelihood of positive outcomes for each child. Higher numbers of siblings dilute the amount of financial resources parents can invest in each child (Coleman 1988). Thus, the greater the number of siblings within a

household the fewer financial resources parents can provide to cultivate the success of each child in the home (Lamont and Lareau 1988; Roscigno and Ainsworth- Darnell 1999). The number of siblings in a home can reduce mathematics achievement, but has an even stronger effect on reading achievement (Roscigno 1998). Students with more siblings are less likely to complete high school than students with fewer siblings (Wojtkiewicz and Donato 1995).

CONCLUSION

Social capital and political resource theories have provided useful insights into the impact of macro factors on the educational success of students. Social capital and political resource theories each have their own explanation as to what factors impact overall educational outcomes and success. Each theory has identified precipitating conditions that can either help or hinder school districts in providing their students with environments conducive to successful outcomes. While these theories are distinctive they also overlap in some ways. Fiscal resources and economic deprivation are commonalities between social capital and political resource theories. While it is important to distinguish which theory may be better at explaining the factors that contribute to successful outcomes, it is also possible that it may be some amalgamation of the two.

Among the research that has been conducted there exist differences among measurements of concepts and inconsistency of results. Research linking relationships between racial and ethnic status, socioeconomic status, and educational achievement outcomes vary in their conclusions. Most literature and research suggest that access to

both social capital and political resources are necessary to achieve successful educational outcomes.

CHAPTER III

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the foundations and application of social capital and political resource theories to explain educational outcomes. Both theories have been applied in sociology of education and used to describe structural and institutional arrangements that affect educational outcomes. It is necessary to understand the influence structures have on educational outcomes to determine what factors foster positive outcomes.

SOCIAL CAPITAL

Social capital theory has been applied in various areas from individual outcomes due to family structure to community networks. Most research has focused on individual factors or small groups in the application of social capital (Portes 2000). Broad definitions of social capital refer to networks of relationships created for individuals to exchange in social support (Ream 2003). Network ties provided by communities add to the “stock” of social capital that individuals have available (Putnam 1993). The emphasis is on the functional aspects of social capital in the social structure and how it facilitates individuals and groups within the structure (Coleman 1988).

Education research on social capital focused on differences in educational outcomes among minority groups. The most noted of these studies is the Coleman Report, also known as the Equality of Educational Opportunity Report (Heyns, 1986). This report examined the importance of social capital in educational outcomes among students. The Equality of Educational Opportunity report was published in 1966 (Coleman 1966). It was a congressionally mandated survey with specific policy inquiries (Heyns 1986). Several definitions of equal opportunity including access to school resources, racial composition, community support, schooling outcomes, and comparability of educational opportunity were included in the report (Heyns 1986; Arum 2000). Educational opportunity is a powerful political ideology in American society (Heyns 1986). Access to school resources is an indicator of opportunity according to the Equality of Educational Opportunity report (1966). The report was based on a functionalist perspective on the role of social capital in educational stratification and Davis and Moore's theories which argue that the purpose of higher learning is to provide education and training for roles and occupational advancement by learning skills needed to continue productivity in an industrial economy (Collins 1971). In response a conflict approach addressing the reproductive nature of social capital in education was also introduced.

Bourdieu (1986) defines social capital as:

the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual

acquaintance and recognition-or in other words, to membership in a group- which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectivity- owned capital, a “credential” which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word. (P. 249)

Capital can exist as real forms of assets, symbolically as reputation and social networks or as credentialism in educational qualifications. On the other hand social capital can also be defined by its function within the social structure (Coleman 1988). Social capital focuses on the relation to the social structure and social relations between people. Coleman's studies were centered on the social control aspects of social capital and the observance of norms (Portes 1998).

Social capital addresses the changes among the relationships between actors who utilize social connections productively (Goddard 2003). Social capital is a valued resource in the social structure that allows actors to achieve their interests (Furstenberg and Hughes 1995; Portes 1998; Ream and Palardy 2008). These social relations can provide useful capital resources for groups as well. Educational outcomes can vary based on the level of social capital within a family or community. It can also be cultivated between the social relations parents have with community organizations (Gamoran 2001). Applying Coleman's view, educational achievement is itself a form of capital that can be used to benefit groups and communities.

Studies following a reproduction approach to social capital effects on educational outcomes have become increasingly popular in the past 30 years. Cultural and social

environments, or Habitus, socialize children and also provide them with particular attributes (Bourdieu 1986). Families with greater forms of capital can socialize and expose their children to more valued experiences and social networks giving them access to extended cultural capital. High social class groups use the educational system to provide socialization for their children and continued reproduction of inequality in society (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977; Lamont and Lareau 1988; Gamoran 2001; Ream and Palardy 2008). Social capital pertains to resources accessed through social networks that provide access to economic resources (Portes 1998; Lin 1999). Based on this approach participation and knowledge of religious groups or ethnic groups can itself be a form of capital.

Social Capital includes network connections, family acquaintances, or social connections (Portes 1998; Schwalbe 2008). Social capital incorporates social control, family network benefits, and non-family network benefits (Portes 2000). Parental involvement and family structure are individual factors that must be considered when determining the educational utility of parental social capital and the rewards it provides to children. Family structure and mobility have been linked to stocks in social capital. These forms of capital provide numerous advantages to individuals who possess them and can use them to advance their positions in both their academic and occupational endeavors. Social capital addresses the changes among relationships between actors who utilize social connections productively (Goddard 2003). Social capital is a valued resource in the social structure that allows actors to achieve their interests (Furstenberg and Hughes

1995; Portes 1998; Ream and Palardy 2008). Social relations can provide useful capital resources to groups as well. Educational outcomes can vary based on the level of social capital with a family. It can also be cultivated between the social relations parents have with community organizations (Gamoran 2001). Social capital has been applied to explain the structure of the stratification system in education (Collins 1979).

Within social capital theory there are several types of capital including financial, human, and cultural capital. Financial capital refers to the funding resources school districts have accessible. Human capital addresses skills attainment, natural ability, and social networks that can assist students in achieving success. Lastly, cultural capital is taught to students by their families and cultural surroundings such as language spoken in the home. Each of these forms of capital contributes to students and school districts available social capital to enhance student outcomes and success.

Financial Capital

Expenditures or revenue are frequently cited as factors that impact structural changes among schools, districts, and student achievement outcomes (Lee and Wong 2004). Financial resources have a positive effect on academic achievement indirectly by impacting hiring and student resources like teacher-student ratio and teacher qualifications (Bidwell and Kasarda 1975; Biniaminov and Glassman 1983).

Organizational factors such as school funding have a positive influence on test scores (Polinard et al. 1995). Financial capital provides a glimpse of the social capital available to students within a school district. Revenue per pupil is positively related to Hispanic

student performance on the TAAS (Polinard et al. 1995). Educational spending can impact student/teacher ratios but also the facilities, equipment, and diversity of classes available to students (Roscigno 1998).

Human Capital

Human Capital includes physical ability and can be combined with status attainment by looking at credentialism and skills attainment during educational attainment (Collins 1971). Physical capital includes the tools and mechanical skills learned and human capital is employing those tools and skills in new ways. Human capital encompasses the skills and capabilities that promote behavior that fosters social networks (Coleman 1988). Children from homes with greater human capital perform better and at higher levels than children whose parents have less human capital available (Padilla 2004).

Cultural Capital

Cultural Capital attained by class habitus and living in a particular social environment can also contribute to human capital (Bourdieu 1986). Cultural capital has been most focused on when studying factors that foster educational attainment. Status, separate from class position, can affect access to educational resources and impact educational outcomes (Teachman 1987). Family background, home environment, and family educational resources are some attributes used to determine the level of cultural capital (Portes 2000). Cultural capital is attached to groups and individuals that are involved with groups of high status within the cultural or social structure (Lamont and

Lareau 1988; Lareau and Weininger 2003). Cultural capital has also been used to explain differences in educational attainment due to educational resources available to promote successful outcomes (Teachman 1987). Most recently the cultural transmission of cultural resources or social inequality had been applied to explain differences among ethnic minorities and immigrants in education (Driessen 2001). Cultural Capital is attained by class habitus and living in a particular social environment also can contribute to human capital (Bourdieu 1986). Language barriers, socioeconomic disadvantage, and student mobility can be detrimental to educational achievement (Ream 2003; Roscigno and Ainsworth-Darnell 1999).

The number of students who are English language proficient impacts the level of social capital school districts have available to produce positive educational outcomes. Language barriers have been frequently cited as causes of Mexican-American under-achievement (Ream 2003). Lower competency in English language ability hinders academic achievement when students are not able to speak and comprehend what is taught in the schools (Wojtkiewicz and Donato 1995). Proficiency in English reduces the chances of dropout among Hispanic students (Bean and Tienda 1987). Living in a home where a foreign language is spoken increases the likelihood of dropout among Hispanic students (Wojtkiewicz and Donato 1995). Teachers are more likely to treat English language learners as slow learners increasing the chances these students will be placed in special education programs and at-risk (Warren 1996).

Definitions, applications, and measurements of social capital vary widely in existing literature. Factors such as poverty are often overlooked when comparing social capital of ethnic groups and minorities. Educational achievement is itself a form of capital that can be used to benefit groups and communities. This approach explains how physical mobility such as changing schools or moving to a new location can diminish social capital of the family requiring them to make new social connections.

Recently an alternative theory, political resource theory, has been applied to educational research (Polinard et al. 1995). Political resource theory includes factors that are not addressed in social capital theories such as resource allocation.

POLITICAL RESOURCE THEORY

Political resource is the most widely used theory when studying educational politics (Polinard et al. 1995). The political resource model looks at demographic characteristics that impact education outcomes. Unlike social capital, political resource theory focuses on the district attributes, policymakers, and school board members who have direct impact on how resources are allocated (Polinard et al. 1995). Political resources include level of disadvantage, fiscal resources, funding allocations, school district resources, and political involvement of minority members of the community. Political and school district resources are negotiated and allocated by political entities such as school boards. Resource allocation impacts what programs and incentives receive funding and as a result, student outcomes (Dee 2005). Studies of inequality in terms of

school resources show that disadvantaged students are more likely to attend schools that spend less, lack infrastructure, and have fewer course offerings (Klugman 2005).

The level of political resources available to minorities influences the development of strategies used to achieve their goals. Minorities are less likely to engage in school because they perceive minimal returns and limited opportunities for the future (Johnson et al. 2001). Schools with high minority populations are more likely to be located in poor areas and have limited opportunities (Roscigno 2000). Practices that promote segregation of minority students deny them access to equal opportunities in education (Levin 1975). The use of property taxes as the mode of funding of public schools has been blamed for disparities in educational resource allocation and contributing to residential segregation (Roscigno 2000). Districts with higher socioeconomic status families are more able to lobby local and school officials to provide resources that satisfy their needs (Klugman 2005).

Studies focused on school resources are more limited compared to studies of individual student or family environment characteristics (Biniaminov and Glasman 1983). Little attention has been given to structural factors that can shape individual outcomes. Resource allocation in school districts is shaped by political practices and negotiations at local, state and federal levels. Few studies focus on the availability of resources at the school or district level including revenue and expenditures, programs offered, and ability or qualifications of staff and administrations impact on educational outcomes. Economic disadvantage and resource allocation are the important factors in

political resource theories. Economic disadvantage influences the community's ability to support success among children living in the area.

Economic Disadvantage

Fiscal and human resources are influenced by the socioeconomic composition of the school (Johnson et al. 2001). Districts composed of students with family backgrounds in higher socioeconomic status brackets have higher levels of engagement among the student body and lower dropout rates (Johnson et al. 2001). Communities with high percentages of families with low income do not have the financial resources to provide stimulating materials in comparison to more affluent communities (Murphy 1986). Economic deprivation in communities can result from family structures such as high rates of single-parent households (Krein and Beller 1988).

Resource Allocation

Resource allocation refers to the distribution of financial resources to meet the needs of the school district. For example, allocation for spending on textbooks as opposed to direct instruction impacts the educational outcomes of students. Allocations of resources to programs or services that best meet the goals of the district are an indication of the political resources available to foster student success.

Fiscal resources have a positive influence on educational outcomes (Biniaminov and Glasman 1983). Poorer school districts with greater percentages of minority students in the student body spend less on education (Lee and Wong 2004). Differences in allocation can impact resources available to students such as computers, textbooks, and

facilities. School revenue can shape the student-to-teacher ratio, which is known to affect educational outcomes (Roscigno 2000). Revenue impacts a school district's ability to hire qualified teachers, courses offered, and extracurricular programs. Schools serving students in neighborhoods that have high poverty rates need more resources to create productive environments conducive to positive educational outcomes (Murphy 1986).

Decisions regarding the allocation of resources are made at the district and school levels. School boards decide what projects will be undertaken and funding for school campuses. School boards and administrative educators may allocate resources based on perceived needs of the communities and local labor market in which they serve (Roscigno, Tomaskovic-Devey, and Crowley 2006). Resource allocation affects direct instruction and program availability for students through the quality of teachers, course offerings, and funding for intervention and bilingual programs.

Investments in direct instruction impact educational outcomes. In the case of minorities, having minority staff and administrators provides minority students with valuable role models. Having teachers that resemble the student body can promote student engagement and academic outcomes (Johnson et al. 2001). Little research has been conducted on the effects of teacher composition on student's educational outcomes, but studies suggest that having more teachers of one's own group promotes ties to the school (Johnson et al. 2001). Having minority members on the school board has been found to provide benefits of lobbying for increased resource allocation in school districts with high minority students (Polinard et al. 1995).

School districts with higher average achievement can sustain academic environments that emphasize positive educational outcomes (Johnson et al. 2001). Schools with high percentages of students in advanced programs have greater access to resources. Students' access to library books, computers, and other resources is imperative for positive educational outcomes. The percentage of students in advanced courses can impact funding and access to resources for school districts. Schools that have high percentages of advanced students are more likely to have higher scores on standardized tests and overall accountability ratings. Minority students are overrepresented in low ability groups (Hawley et al. 1983). Hispanics along with other minorities are significantly underrepresented in gifted and talented programs (England et al. 1988). Minority student segregation can have consequences that effect self-esteem and produce differential teacher expectations (England et al. 1988). The greater the number of students in gifted and talented programs increases the resource allocation available to the school district for those programs.

School districts receive funding based on student counts and attendance. Schools with high rates of attendance have greater fiscal resources. Low attendance will limit the resources available to the school district. Attendance is not only a predictor of positive educational outcomes but it is also used as a measure of dropout and at-risk status. Absenteeism reduces feelings of student attachment and engagement (Johnson et al. 2001). High absenteeism predicts dropout for all racial and ethnic groups (Rumberger 1995). Higher levels of attendance contribute to higher TAAS pass rates for Hispanic

students (Polinard et al. 1995). Absenteeism is also related to GPA and graduation rates (Carbonaro 2005).

School districts that have greater percentages of students with higher SES produce greater levels of involvement in school and lower dropout rates (Ainsworth-Darnell and Downey 1998; Johnson et al. 2001). Socioeconomic status predicts dropout rates for Hispanics and Whites (Rumberger 1995). Dropout rates have been stated as having a negative effect on the entire student body. High dropout rates in school districts lead to lower student performance within those districts (Polinard et al. 1995). Dropout rates impact the level of resources and funding school districts receive.

Studies of the effect of racial composition and educational outcomes in school districts have reported mixed finding (Biniaminov and Glasman 1983). According to some research, the percentage of minorities within a school contributes to decreased academic engagement (Johnson et al. 2001). Yet other studies have reported that students who attend schools with higher proportions of the student body that are of their own race and ethnicity have greater levels of attachment to those schools (Johnson et al. 2001). Later studies found the percent of minority students in a school district has a strong relationship to low graduation rates (Orfield et al. 2004). School districts where minorities are the majority and segregated districts have graduation rates below the state average. Attending a high school with a high minority population greatly decreases the chance of graduating (Orfield et al. 2004).

SOCIAL CAPITAL AND POLITICAL RESOURCE COMBINED

Lin (1999) combines social resources theory with social capital theory to explain status attainment. Differential access to social capital because of groups' advantaged or disadvantaged position in the structure or social networks is deserving of more attention by researchers. Findings have shown fewer opportunities are offered for women and minorities to mobilize better social resources that impact status attainment such as educational success (Lin 1999). Many studies incorporate either expenditures or revenue to measure structural changes among schools and districts when analyzing student achievement outcomes (Lee and Wong 2004). Fiscal resources have an effect on academic achievement. Organizational factors such as school funding have a positive influence on test scores (Polinard et al. 1995). Fiscal resources provide a glimpse at the social capital available to students within a school district and the overall accessibility of the political resources the school district has.

The influences of family and socioeconomic (SES) background on educational goals and achievement have been studied using cultural and social capital theory. Economic deprivation in neighborhoods has a negative effect on standardized math and reading test scores (Ainsworth 2002). Cultural capital conceptualizations pertain to the contribution of family cultural capital and SES to higher educational achievement (Bourdieu 1977; DiMaggio 1982; Roscigno and Ainsworth-Darnell 1999). Parents with greater SES are better equipped to transmit valued forms of cultural capital and have

more resources to provide to their children (Roscigno 2000). Various studies have reported that financial resources and socioeconomic status of parents have an impact of educational achievement (Warren 1996; Driessen 2001; Ream 2003). Students whose parents have greater incomes and financial capital have more access to educational institutions and resources such as tutors, private schooling, and educational stimulation in the home (Teachman 1987; Roscigno 2000).

Poverty has a strong effect on reading achievement (Epps 1995). Districts with high poverty rates are more likely to have low graduation rates (Orfield et al. 2004). Minority children have a higher risk of living in economic deprivation. Poverty can deprive these children of educational opportunities and access to education resources (Murphy 1986). Education has been found to predict future welfare status, persistence of poverty, and chronic unemployment (Krein and Beller 1988). The relationship between incidences of low income Hispanic families in a district the Hispanic student TAAS rates have been studied (Polinard et al. 1995).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK APPLIED

The theoretical frameworks applied in this dissertation are social capital and political resource theories. Both social capital and political resource theories have been used to explain factors that facilitate positive education outcomes. Although social capital and political resource theories each have explanations for the process of attaining positive outcomes in education, this project will combine aspects of both to better explain factors that contribute to educational success of Hispanic students in Texas school districts.

Institutional factors include location, language proficiency, school programs, and resources. Figure 1 provides a diagram of the combined social capital and political resource theoretical model explaining educational outcomes.

Institutional Factors

Institutional factors impact the educational outcomes of students. Institutional forms of social capital, focusing on social ties within the school, outside school, and the proportion of non-Mexican origin members, effects on grades have previously been studied (Stanton-Salazar and Dornbusch 1995). Social capital and resources available to districts provide students with assets that promote positive educational outcomes. Organizational theories have looked at the structure and contributions resource allocation and control mechanisms have to the environment (Meyer et al. 1987). Federal, state, and local funding are based on institutional factors such as population, district property taxes, and students in specific programs.

Border Area and Location in Texas

There are 1222 school districts in Texas located in 254 counties within the 20 regions designated by the Texas Education Agency (TEA). The Texas border area includes 71 school districts located within 14 counties along the U.S. Mexico border at the Rio Grande River. This area is unique geographically and culturally. Geographic proximity to Mexico creates differing economic, linguistic, and cultural exposure to residents than other areas or regions of Texas. Inhabitants of the border region are predominantly of Mexican-American descent. The border is similar to other ethnic

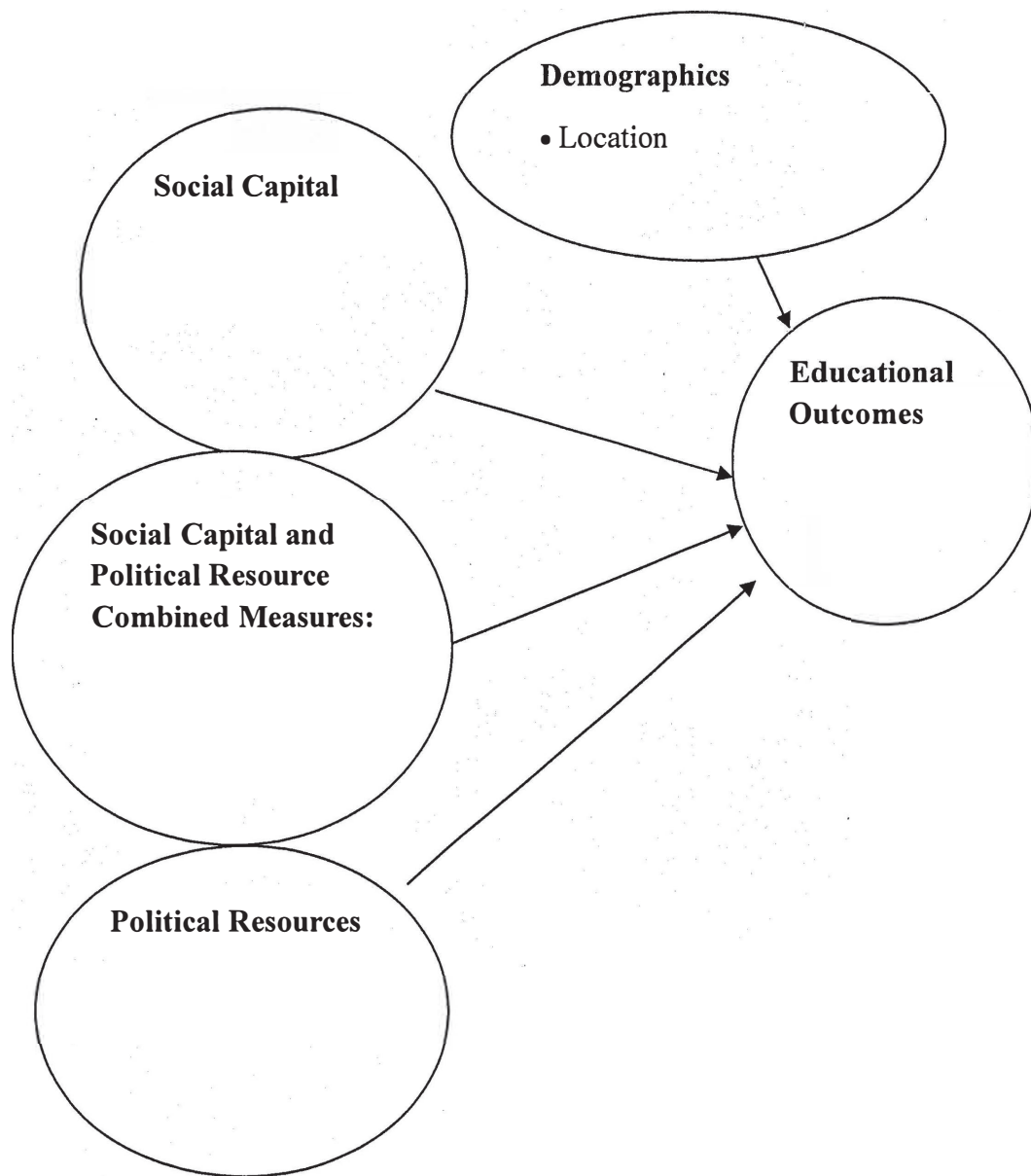


FIGURE 1. Combined Social Capital and Political Resource Theoretical Model, Explaining Hispanic Educational Outcomes

enclaves that provide social and networking skills to more recent immigrants. As a result of a continuous flow between the U.S. and Mexico border crossing, cultural renewal occurs in the region.

The border area is a main entry point to the rest of the state and the country. Many immigrants remain at the border to pursue occupational opportunities and cultural assimilation. Poverty levels are also greater in the border area than in other areas of Texas. The amount of poverty impacts the levels of social capital in the communities and the political resources school districts have available to foster positive educational outcomes.

Location has been defined as both regional areas such as the South or Southwest as well as more specific locales like neighborhoods (Teachman et al. 1996; Ainsworth 2002). Based on 1997 data, the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts reported the poverty rate for the 14 county border region was 34% compared to 16.7% for Texas and 14.3% for the non-border area in Texas (Texas Comptroller 2003). For school children between the ages of 5 and 17, 40.5 % were living in poverty in the border region compared to 18.9% of children in the non-border region in Texas (Texas Comptroller 2003). The 2000 Census data indicates that 35.3 % of school age children in the 14 county border area live in poverty, about twice the amount for school children living in the non-border counties of Texas 15.8 % (Texas Comptroller 2003). The number of children living in poverty in the border area increased slightly between 1997 and 2000. In the border region high rates of poverty are present along with high percentages of the

population with low levels of education. The percent of persons age 25 and older without a high school degree is almost twice the amount (43.2 %) compared to persons living in the non-border counties (22.2 %). The percent of female headed households is five percentage points greater in border counties, 17% compared to 12% in non-border counties. Incomes also tend to be lower in the border area than the rest of Texas. The State Comptroller estimates in 2001 indicate that that per capita income was about \$16,500 while the non-border area per capita income was almost \$23,000. Levels of poverty, education in the community, and income, are measures of political resources. All of these factors impact the percentage of families economically disadvantaged living the border region.

Language Proficiency

Knowledge of the English language is an important skill needed for students to be successful in American schools. In the U.S. studies have shown that linguistic proficiency is important for educational outcomes in countries with great variety in languages spoken. Instruction in U.S. schools is primarily in English. Students who are not proficient in English are at a disadvantage over those who have a better understanding of the language. Proficiency in English allows students to interact with their teachers, other students, administrators, and members of other organizations that can provide educational assistance thereby increasing social networks. Students with a greater knowledge of the English language also have a better understanding when reading and test taking to measure educational outcomes. Language ability has been shown to impact

dropout rates within a district. Hispanic student proficiency in English lowers the likelihood of drop out during high school (Bean and Tienda 1987; Wojtkiewicz and Donato 1995). Language barriers have been cited as explanation for underachievement of Mexican-Americans and most policy efforts have focused on English language acquisition (Ream 2003).

Special Education Programs

Determining the level and need for special education programs for students is done by the administration, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee, consisting of parents, teachers, administrators or counselors. Minority students with limited English language proficiency are more likely to be classified and tracked into special education programs. Students tracked into special education programs can become stigmatized and perceived as less intelligent than students who do not have this designation. Placing students in special education increases their risk for dropping out. School districts with higher percentages of students in special education programs have less social capital accessible to provide positive educational outcomes.

Ability grouping research has found that Hispanic students are overrepresented in “educable mentally retarded” and specific learning disability classes, but suggests a convergence toward equity (England et al. 1988). Students in special education programs or receiving special education services are less likely to graduate from high school (Orfield et al. 2004). Students with limited language proficiency are more likely to be

placed in special education programs, which limit their learning ability, educational outcomes, and possibility of graduation.

Students with limited English language ability, in special education programs, and living in poverty are at a great risk of dropout. At-risk students do not have the means or social networks available to help them be successful in their educational goals. The greater number of at-risk students in a school district diminishes the resources available for all students in the district by limiting the overall social capital through diminished reputation and reduced revenue. Students who have limited English proficiency, are placed in special education programs, and are economically disadvantage are more likely to dropout. Students can be classified at-risk based on several criteria including not passing to the next grade level one or more times, failing two or more subjects in a semester during grades 7-11, not meeting assessment requirements, becomes pregnant or has a child, is on probation or other form of custodial release, has limited English proficiency, is a ward of the state, or homeless (TEA 2006). Districts with greater rates of at-risk students tend to have less social capital available to them based on the overall student status.

Resources

The level of political resources available to school districts influences the tactics and strategies employed to achieve predicted educational outcomes. Control structures and resources shape school districts, where federal and state funding has the most significant effects on administrative complexity (Meyer et al. 1987). Organizational

factors, such as school district resources, influence test scores which are commonly used measures of education outcomes (Polinard et al. 1995). Organizational traits of school districts and political resources impact educational outcomes.

Several resources taken from political resources theory are applied in the theoretical framework. The percentage of Hispanic teachers and students, attendance and dropout rates, and the percentage of students in gifted and talented and advances courses are indicators of the level or resource allocation available to school districts. In border districts there are high percentages of Hispanic students, thus it is important that there are equally a high percentage of Hispanic teachers. School districts with higher percentages of Hispanic students in gifted and talented courses provide higher levels of political resources accessible to the entire student body and foster an environment that promotes positive educational outcomes. School districts with high levels of attendance have more political and school resources to provide to the students to promote positive educational outcomes. Dropout rates reduce the amount of political resources school districts can provide to foster positive educational outcomes. Factors that influence dropout rates in school districts include high percentages of students who are in special education programs, limited English language programs, and economically disadvantaged. Students who are foreign born are also at a higher risk of dropping out (Wojtkiewicz and Donato 1995). Most of the research focuses on negative consequences of having a high minority population in the school district. Border cities tend to have higher populations of

Hispanics overall, so high percentages of Hispanic students in border district schools can be a positive influence on attachment and positive educational outcomes.

CONCLUSION

Social capital has been criticized for not considering social resources and access to social networks (Dika and Singh 2002). Political resource theory fails to consider differing forms of capital, including social and linguistic, that allow for social network associations. Although social capital and political resources each have their contributions to understanding educational outcomes there is overlap. Geographic location impacts both the level of social capital and political resources school districts have available. Economic deprivation and district financial resources are both measures of political resources and social capital of a school district. Both theories have important insight into conditions that produce positive education outcomes.

Combining resources and social capital theories to explain status attainment outcomes is not new (Lin 1999). Social capital pertains to the resources accessed by social networks (Lin 1999). Synthesizing political resources and social capital theories strengthens the understanding of resource mobilization and characteristics accessed within social networks (Lin 1999). Different groups have differing access to social capital and resources that promote positive educational outcomes (Lin 1999).

In the next chapter research questions and hypotheses are presented along with measurements of border, social capital, and political resource. The data, unit of analysis, dependent and independent variables are presented in detail. Statistical models are

provided for each of the models used to test hypotheses. Ordinary least squared assumptions and diagnostics are also presented.

CHAPTER IV

DATA AND METHODS

The purpose of this chapter is to present the methods and data used in this dissertation. The research questions and hypotheses are detailed, along with a description of the data and unit of analysis. Measurements of dependent and independent variables are defined and operationalized. Data analysis techniques used in the study are discussed. A diagram of the statistical models tested is provided in Figure 2.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

There are three research questions motivating this study. The first research question addresses social capital theory and the second focuses on political resource theory.

RQ1: Do factors measured by Social Capital Theory have a linear effect on educational success for Hispanic students in Texas school districts?

The second research question is focused on political and school district resources effects on educational success and outcomes.

RQ2: Do the factors measured by Political Resource Theory have a linear effect on educational success for Hispanic students in Texas school districts?

The third research question focuses on the syntheses of Social Capital and Political Resource Theories, with the combined overlap, to further explain effects on educational success and outcomes.

RQ3: Do the factors measured by Social Capital combined with Political Resource Theory have a linear effect on educational success for Hispanic students in Texas school districts?

HYPOTHESES

Based on the research questions, there are twelve hypotheses addressed in this dissertation. The hypotheses are derived from the theoretical constructions of social capital and political resource theories. Each hypothesis is discussed in the context of the theoretical models tested for this project.

Location

The first hypothesis addresses the question, does attending a border school district influence the TAKS cumulative pass rate for Hispanic students in Texas school districts? The literature discusses the limited social capital and political resources for students living in locals with higher rates of poverty and stagnant economic growth, or limited opportunities. Border cities tend to have higher populations of Hispanics overall, so high rates of Hispanic students in border district schools may be a positive influence on attachment and positive educational outcomes. This hypothesis tests if location, border region school districts, has an affect on Hispanic student's outcomes.

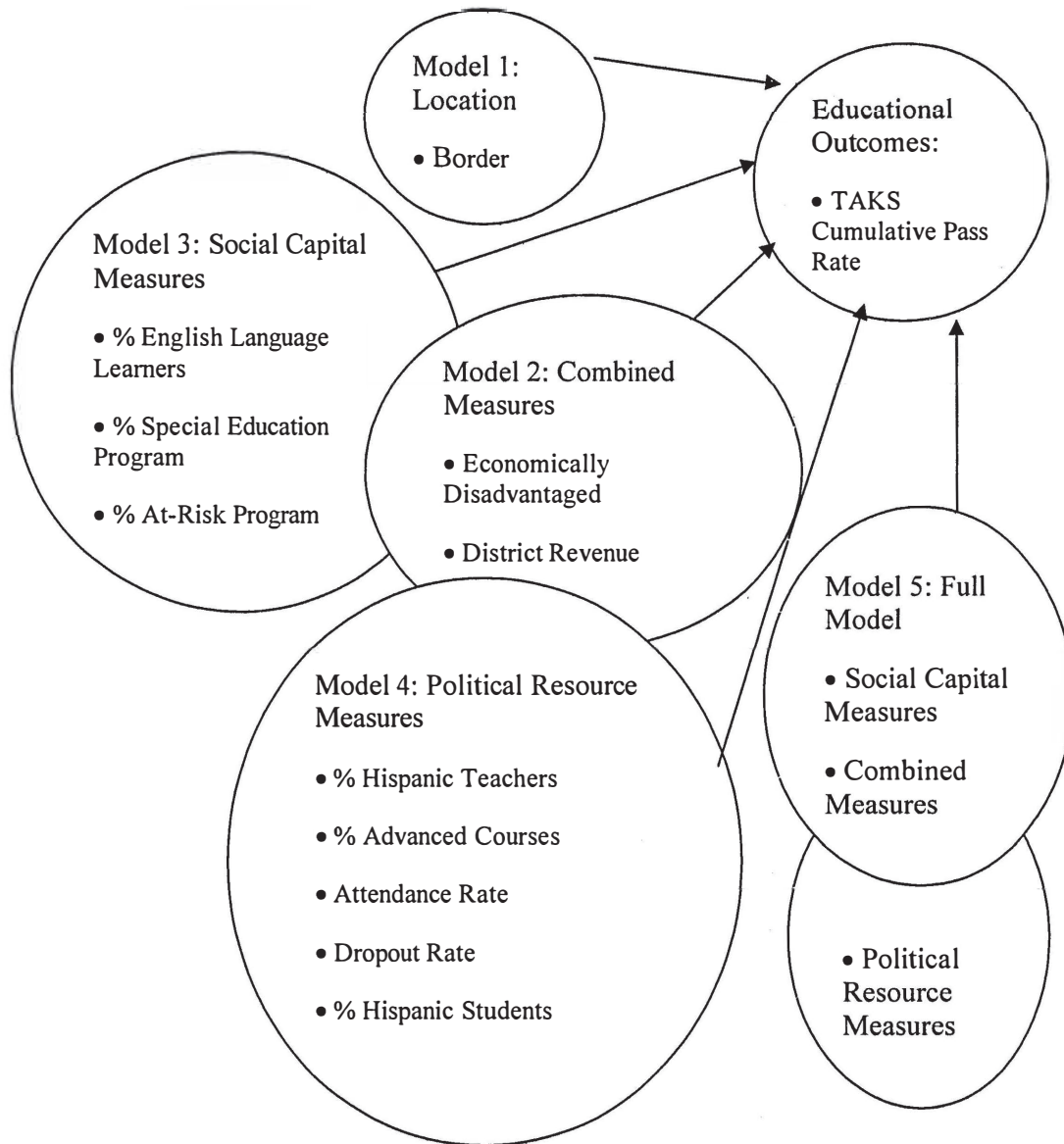


FIGURE 2. Statistical Models, Hispanic Educational Outcomes in Texas School Districts

H1: Attending a border school district negatively affects the TAKS cumulative pass rate for Hispanic students in Texas school districts.

Combined Constructs

Two overlapping constructs of social capital and political theories are economic disadvantage and revenue. Both social capital and political resource theories include factors of economic disadvantage and revenue influencing educational outcomes. Economic deprivation looks at the percent of economically disadvantaged students within a district. The second hypothesis tests if the percent of economic disadvantaged students in a district negatively affects the TAKS cumulative pass rate for Hispanics students in Texas school districts. Revenue is a form of financial capital and resource available to school districts. Revenue per pupil is predicted to be positively related to Hispanic student performance on the TAAS (Polinard et al. 1995). The third hypothesis tests if the amount of school revenue per pupil positively affects the TAKS cumulative pass rate for Hispanics students in Texas school districts.

H2: The percent of economically disadvantaged students negatively affects the TAKS cumulative pass rate for Hispanics students in Texas school districts.

H3: The amount of school revenue per pupil positively affects the TAKS cumulative pass rate for Hispanics students in Texas school districts.

Social Capital

Social capital effects on educational outcomes are divided into human, financial, and cultural capital. Language ability is a form of cultural capital for students. English language proficiency is predicted to have a negative affect on educational outcomes of Hispanic students in Texas school districts. The fourth hypothesis tests if the percent of

Hispanic English language learners negatively affects the TAKS cumulative pass rate for Hispanics students in Texas school districts.

H4: The percent of Hispanic English language learners negatively affects the TAKS cumulative pass rate for Hispanics students in Texas school districts?

The percent of students in learning programs and at risk of dropout diminishes the human and cultural capital within a school district. The fifth hypothesis tests if the percent of Hispanic students in special education programs has a negative affect on Hispanic student's TAKS cumulative pass rates. A student is designated as at risk for dropping out of school based on state defined criteria. The sixth hypothesis tests if the percent of at-risk Hispanic students in a district has a negative affect on the TASK cumulative pass rates of Hispanic students in Texas school districts. Both students in special education programs and at-risk students are an indication of diminish social capital available to the district.

H5: The percent of students in special education programs negatively affects the TAKS cumulative pass rate for Hispanics students in Texas school districts.

H6: The percent of at risk students negatively affects the TAKS cumulative pass rate for Hispanics students in Texas school districts.

Political Resources

The remaining hypotheses test effects of political resources available to school districts that impact educational outcomes. The seventh hypothesis tests if the percent of Hispanic teachers positively affects the TAKS cumulative pass rate for Hispanics

students in Texas school districts. The percent of students in gifted and talented programs is an indication of the political resources available to the school district. The eighth hypothesis tests if the percent of Hispanic students taking advanced courses positively affects the TAKS cumulative pass rate for Hispanics students in Texas school districts. The percent of students in gifted and talented programs is included as an alternate measure of advanced student status. The ninth hypothesis tests if the percent of students in gifted and talented programs positively affects the TAKS cumulative pass rate for Hispanics students in Texas school districts. Another indicator of academic performance in districts is student attendance rate in 2006. The tenth hypothesis tests if the attendance rate of Hispanic students positively affects the TAKS cumulative pass rate for Hispanics students in Texas school districts. According to Polinard et al. (1995) study, the dropout rate negatively affects both the Hispanic students who drop out and the students who remain, thus this variable will be included to measure educational success of districts. Dropout rates are predicted have a negative affect on TAKS exit pass rates for Hispanic students in Texas school districts. The eleventh hypothesis tests if the dropout rate of Hispanic students negatively affects the TAKS cumulative pass rate for Hispanics students in Texas school districts. The twelfth hypothesis tests if the percent of Hispanic students positively affects the TAKS cumulative pass rate for Hispanics students in Texas school districts.

H7: The percent of Hispanic teachers positively affects the TAKS cumulative pass rate for Hispanics students in Texas school districts.

H8: The percent of Hispanic students taking advanced courses positively affects the TAKS cumulative pass rate for Hispanics students in Texas school districts.

H9: The percent of students in gifted and talented programs positively affects the TAKS cumulative pass rate for Hispanics students in Texas school districts.

H10: The attendance rate of Hispanic students positively affects the TAKS cumulative pass rate for Hispanics students in Texas school districts.

H11: The dropout rate of Hispanic students negatively affects the TAKS cumulative pass rate for Hispanics students in Texas school districts.

H12: The percent of Hispanic students positively affects the TAKS cumulative pass rate for Hispanics students in Texas school districts.

DATA

The Academic Excellence Indicator System for 2006-2007 (AEIS) data are used in this dissertation. The data for AEIS are collected annually in the fall by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and are available from the agency website (Texas Education Agency 2006-2007). There are 1222 school districts in Texas located in 254 counties within the 20 regions designated by the TEA. The data are arranged in 23 files and can be downloaded by district aggregates. The data set includes state, county, district and school performance indicators. The contents include information on the district reference, student demographics, staff information, finances, non-TAKS performance indicators, college admissions and college ready grads, completion rates, and TAKS indicators for different grades and grade aggregates (Texas Education Agency 2006-2007). District

reference information includes the county name, county number, charter status, district name, district number rating, region, region name, and special education monitoring results status. These variables allow for the data in each set to be arranged by district name and number to combine reference sets. For this project, a single working data set on all Texas school districts was constructed from variables selected from five main reference sets including district student information, district staff information, district financial information, district non-TAKS performance information, and TAKS cumulative pass rate for 2006. Twenty variables are included in the constructed working data file for analysis.

UNIT OF ANALYSIS

This study uses school districts as the unit of analysis. One of the first studies using school districts as the unit of analysis looked at the influence of organizational structures on educational outcomes. Bidwell and Kasarda (1975) use school districts as the unit of analysis to measure school district organization and student achievement in Colorado. Meyer et al. (1987) also focus on the school district when analyzing centralization and fragmentation in district organization and federal funding. Meyer et al. (1987) employ school districts to assess changes in organizational structure and administrative complexity in relation to federal, state, and local funding. Polinard et al. (1995) agree with Bidwell and Kasarda (1975), who suggested that school districts are an appropriate unit of study when looking at organizational structures. Bidwell and Kasarda also state that using school districts, (instead of individual schools), as the unit of analysis

will provide a richer source of study (Polinard et al. 1995). It is important to look at complex structures and what impact they have on overall educational success. By studying the aggregate and identifying the variation in the structural forms that contribute to educational outcomes we can implement policy to foster an environment that is optimal for successful outcomes. School districts are the unit of analysis that accounts for district resources including funding sources.

VARIABLES

This section describes and provides operational definitions for the dependent and independent variables used in this dissertation. The dependent variable is scores on state mandated standardized test used to measure educational outcomes for Hispanic students in Texas school districts. Independent variables were selected that have been found in the literature to reliably measure both social capital and political resources. Variables are defined in the TEA codebook for the AEIS 2006-2007 data (Texas Education Agency 2006-2007).

Dependent Variable: TAKS Cumulative Pass Rate for Hispanics Students

Educational success is a positive outcome defined as successfully passing the TAKS exit level assessments also called the TAKS cumulative pass rates. Measuring for accountability at a school and district level provides insightful knowledge into the organizational factors that foster positive educational outcomes.

A state-mandated standardized test The Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills, the TAKS, will be used to measure student achievement within school districts.

The TAKS is a comprehensive testing program for public school students in grades 3-11 (Texas Education Agency 2006-2007). The AEIS includes results of the TAKS by grade, subject, and all grades along with other performance indicators. Educational success is defined as successful completion determined by the TAKS Cumulative Pass Rate in 2006 for Hispanic Students (Texas Education Agency 2006-2007). TAKS is designed to measure the extent a student has learned, understood, and is able to apply important concepts and skills expected at each tested grade level. The exit-level test given in the 11th grade includes English language arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. The TAKS exit level cumulative pass rate is given for district level performance only. The cumulative pass rate shows the percent of students who first took the exit level tests in the spring of 2006 and eventually passed all tests taken by spring 2007 (Texas Education Agency 2006-2007). Cumulative pass rate measure is intended to show the relative success of districts in their efforts to help all their students pass the exit-level TAKS, a requirement for graduation from Texas public schools.

The dependent variable to measure student achievement within districts is the TAKS cumulative pass rate for Hispanic students. The variable measures educational outcomes as described in both the social capital and political resource models. Success, for the purpose of this dissertation, is defined as passing all areas of the exit level TAKS test or cumulative pass. The variable will be measured by the mean of average pass rates for each district located in Texas. Each school provides an average pass rate; all the schools in the district are combined to calculate a mean for the school district as a whole.

To calculate the mean of average pass rates, all district averages, with valid responses, are combined to determine the mean.

Independent Variables

The Texas border is comprised of 14 counties along the U.S. Mexico border at the Rio Grande River and includes 71 school districts. Location can impact both social capital and political resources available to school districts. Location can influence cultural capital including language spoken in the home as well as tax base, a means used to finance school districts. The first independent variable is “border.” The “border” is a unique location regionally located between two countries, Texas and Mexico; it incorporates cultural infusion from both the U.S. and Mexico. Location is dichotomized as either living in a border area school district or in a non-border school district. Only school districts located within the fourteen Texas Mexico border counties are classified as border districts. School districts located in the 14 border counties are coded at 1, while all other school districts are coded 0.

Economic deprivation is a known factor that impacts educational outcomes both in social capital as financial capital and in political resources as fiscal resources. Economic deprivation decreases the resources communities and school districts have at their disposal to foster educational success. Economic deprivation is measured based on the percent of students eligible for free or reduced lunch or other public assistance programs. AEIS measures economically disadvantaged as a percent. It is calculated by the sum of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch and other public assistance,

divided by the total number of students (Texas Education Agency 2006-2007). This variable will be included to measure political resources and social capital as an independent, or predictor, variable that influences the school district educational outcomes (Polinard et al. 1995).

Revenue is a factor from social capital and political resource theories. Within social capital theory revenue is a form of financial capital that school districts have to fund educational incentives. Revenue is diminished for school districts in areas of low tax brackets. Political resource theory applies revenue as necessary for resource allocation and determining what programs are available in schools. The third independent variable, “school revenue” is measured by the total revenue per pupil in each district for 2005-2006 including all fund sources (Texas Education Agency 2006-2007).

Social capital theory is broken down into human, financial, and cultural capitals. Language proficiency is an aspect of cultural capital. The fourth variable is the count of Hispanic students who are English language learners in 2006. These students are classified as having limited English language proficiency (Texas Education Agency 2006-2007). To measure the percent of Hispanic students that are English language learners, calculate the number of Hispanic English learner students, divided by the number of total students, multiplied by one hundred.

The percent of students in special education programs and the percent of at-risk students are both measures of human capital. Students with learning disabilities and/or at-risk are more likely to drop out, diminishing their possibilities for skills attainment and

educational credentialism (Collins 1971). Districts with high percentages of students with learning disabilities or at-risk lose funding when these students drop out. The fifth independent variable is the percent of students enrolled in special education programs. The percent of students enrolled in special education programs is measured by the percent of students served by programs for students with disabilities (Texas Education Agency 2006-2007). The sixth independent variable is the percent of at-risk students. The percent of at-risk students is calculated as the sum of students coded as at risk divided by the total number of students (Texas Education Agency 2006-2007).

Political resource theory is concerned with resource allocation that provides assistance and promotes positive educational outcomes among school districts. Measure of school district resources include the percent of Hispanic teachers, Hispanic students taking advanced courses, Hispanic attendance rates, Hispanic dropout rates, and the percent of Hispanic students.

Resource allocation for minority staff to teach minority students contributes direct investment by providing students with positive role models. The percent of Hispanic teachers will be measured by the element percent of Hispanic teachers. Having teachers that reflect the students promotes engagement (Johnson et al. 2001). Teacher counts are measured by full time employees by major ethnic groups and by sex and given as both counts and as percents (Texas Education Agency 2006-2007). Greater percentages of Hispanic teacher should provide a positive impact on Hispanic students' pass rate.

Districts with higher achievement encourage higher academic standards for all students and allocate funding to programs that emphasize positive outcomes. The percent of Hispanic students taking advanced courses and in gifted and talented programs within each district will be used to measure minority gifted and talented. Both are also used to measure political resources. Based on the literature a greater percent of students in gifted and talented programs or advanced courses are an indication of political resources.

Resource allocation and funding are appointed based on the number of students attending. Districts are allocated funds when students attend classes, thus attendance rates impact the level of funding schools receive. Attendance rate is calculated by AEIS according to the total number of days students were present in 2005-2006 divided by the total number of days students were in membership during the 2005-2006 (Texas Education Agency 2006-2007). Attendance rates are based on student attendance for the entire school year. Students in grades 1-12 are included in the calculations (Texas Education Agency 2006-2007). Attendance rates are predicted to have a positive effect on TAKS exit pass rates of Hispanic students in Texas school districts.

High rates of absenteeism predict dropout rates for all students (Rumberger 1995). High dropout rates contribute to lower student performance (Polinard et al. 1995). Dropout rate will be measured for Hispanic student's grades 7th thru 12th in 2006. The dropout rate is calculated by the number of dropouts in grades 7th-12th divided by the number of grade students 7th-12th who were in attendance at any time during the 2005-2006 academic years (Texas Education Agency 2006-2007).

There are mixed reviews on the impact racial composition of the student body has on educational outcomes. While some studies find that the percentage of minorities in a school district decreases engagement, achievement, and graduation rates, other studies find that it increases attachment to their schools (Orfield et al. 2004; Johnson et al. 2001). Many border county school districts have a Hispanic majority student body, thus it is important to see if student body composition impacts pass rates. Schools with high proportions of minority students can be impacted by decreased revenue and greater proportion of disadvantage due to tax funding bases. The last variable included as a measure of the amount of political resources and allocation within a school district is the percent of Hispanic students in each district (Texas Education Agency 2006-2007). Figure 3 provides the analytical presentation of theoretical framework and the corresponding measures of each concept.

ANALYSIS

There are five statistical models that will be assessed in this dissertation. Ordinary least squares regression (OLSR) will be applied to analyze each of the theoretical and analytical models. The first statistical model looks at the significance of “border” location on cumulative pass rates. The second statistical model analyzes combined measures of social capital and political resource by measuring economic deprivation and district revenues effects on cumulative pass rates. The third model examines factors from social capital theory, including human and cultural capital, using language proficiency, special education and at-risk percentages. The fourth statistical model assesses the effects of

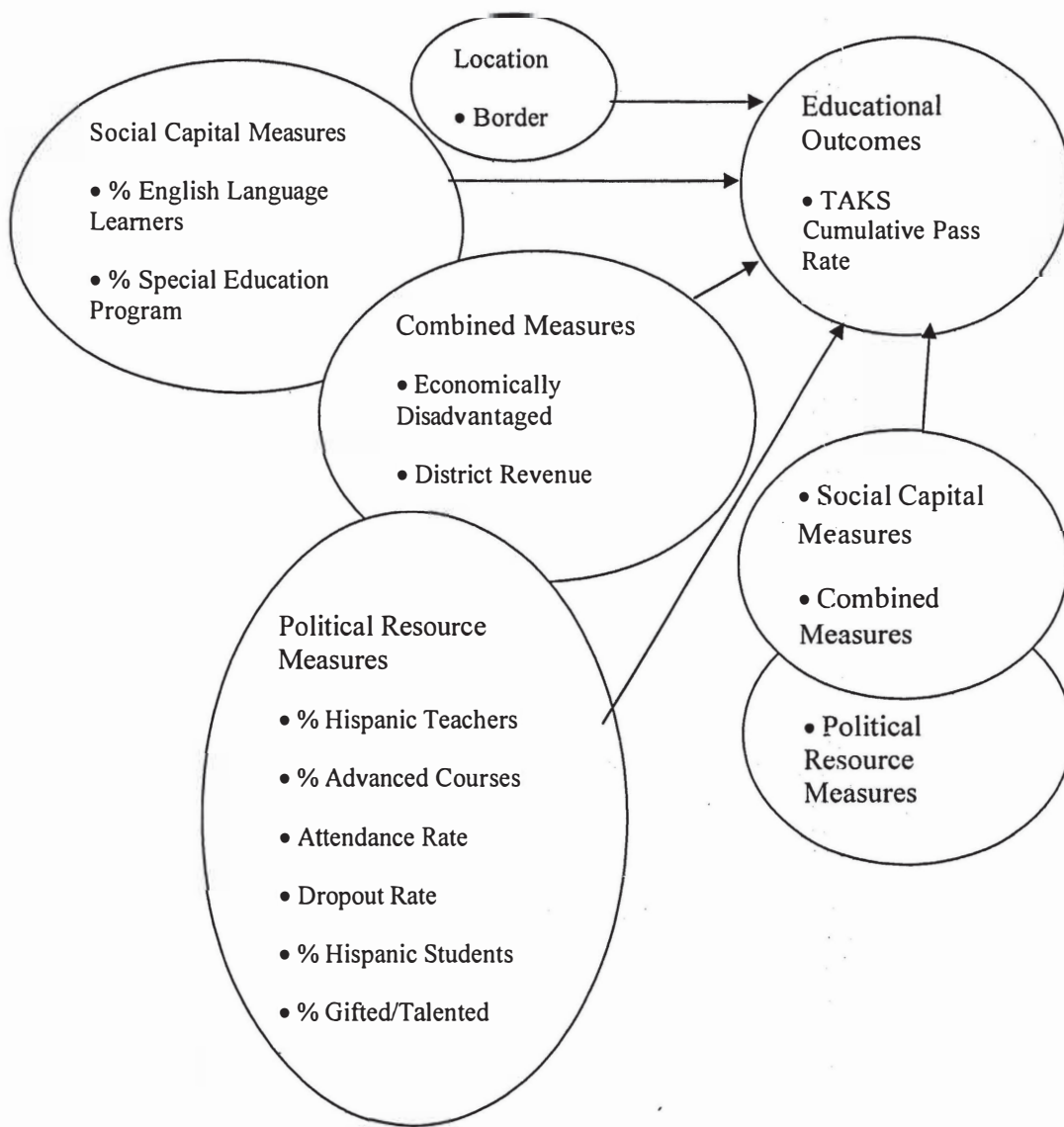


FIGURE 3. Analytical Models, Hispanic Educational Outcomes in Texas School Districts

political resources and allocation on cumulative pass rates of Hispanic students. The last statistical model is a full model combining all the previous models to test the comprehensive model of social capital and political resource theories as a way to better explain factors that influence Hispanic students cumulative pass rates. FIGURE 2 presents the statistical models that have been tested for this dissertation.

OLSR Assumptions and Diagnostics

Ordinary least squares regression (OLSR) is used to analyze the data from AEIS, as we are looking at linear relationships between the predictor variables and educational outcomes in Texas school districts. All of the variables are based on aggregate data at the district level and in an interval ratio scale, making OLSR the most appropriate method of analysis. There are several assumptions that must be addressed for OLSR. To ensure all assumptions are met, diagnostic tests are included to test for missing data, outliers, normality, linearity, homoscedasticity, and collinearity.

Missing data was identified based on the explanation of masking codes in AEIS provided by the TEA. Masking codes are used to meet Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act guidelines. Special symbols are included to mask performance results when very few students in a group are assessed and when all students pass or fail (TEA 2007). Missing values are identified to include districts without valid Hispanic TAKS rates, and are reported in the AEIS as a period (.) or with a (-1). A period is designated when data reporting is not applicable. A -1 is used as a masking code when the denominator is between zero and four. Missing values are not due to error, and will be excluded from

analysis. A filter was created to select cases based on valid responses of the dependent variable removing all missing values. The filter variable was created to select cases, if condition was satisfied, where the dependent variable TAKS cumulative pass rate for Hispanic Students, 2006, is greater than zero ($DHCTA06R > 0$).

Outliers, or extreme cases, have been identified using the Mahalanobis distance. The outliers are not due to error in data entry or instrumentation. The outlying cases are legitimate values that impact the overall distribution. Removing the outliers did not result in any changes to normality of the distribution, thus the cases are not excluded from the analysis. Q-Q plots are presented in Appendix A to assess normality. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was also used to test normality in the distribution. The hypothesis used in testing data normality included the null (H_0) that the distribution of the data is normal and the (H_1) that the distribution of the data is not normal. The results of the TAKS cumulative pass rate for Hispanic students in Texas school districts for 2006, $D(705) = .143$, $p < .05$, were significantly non-normal. In large samples this test can be significant with small deviations from normality (Field 2009). The central limit theorem, which states that as samples get larger (> 40) the sampling distribution has a normal distribution, can be applied to meet this assumption (Field 2009). The data shows a slight negative skew (-1.544) and positive kurtosis (3.00). These estimates are within a reasonable range thus do not require data transformations. Natural log transformation and square root transformations were completed to see if they improved the model, but both

transformations increased skewness and kurtosis. As a result, non-parametric correlations are conducted and reported in the findings.

After eliminating cases based on valid responses of the dependent variable a sample size of $N = 705$ school districts remains. Descriptive statistics of all of the variables indicate that the predictor variable Hispanic English language learners had the smallest number of valid cases at $N = 696$. The remaining sample size is large enough to meet requirements for analysis. There are 12 predictor variables, so applying estimates of the 15 cases per predictor rule plus a minimum of 50 cases indicates that a sample size of greater than 230 is sufficient for regression analysis (Field 2009).

An evaluation of the linear relationships between Hispanic TAKS cumulative pass rates and each of the predictor variables was measured using Pearson's correlation coefficients. Pearson's correlation coefficient is used to measure the strength of a linear relationship between two variables. Coefficients range from -1 to 1 and provide information on strength and direction of linear relationships. The null hypothesis tests that there is no linear relationship between two variables, while the hypothesis states that a linear relationship exists (Elliott and Woodward 2007).

An evaluation of the Spearman's Rho correlation was also conducted to determine if extreme differences in outcomes existed as non-normality with this data. Spearman's rho correlation is a non-parametric test commonly used instead of Pearson's correlation when normality cannot be assumed (Elliott and Woodward 2007; Field 2009). Rho measures the strength of a relationship between two variables based on ranked data,

whose values range from -1 to 1. The null hypothesis tests that there is no monotonic relationship between the two variables while the hypothesis tests that a monotonic relationship exists.

Homoscedasticity, collinearity, and independence are also assumptions that must be assessed. Homoscedasticity was evaluated through the examination of bivariate scatter plots, results provided in Appendix A. Collinearity of the variables was examined using the Pearson's correlation matrix. A stricter cutoff of correlations above 0.7 is used and considered high since the data is aggregated. A tolerance cutoff of .1 and the variance inflation factors (VIF) cutoff of 5 are also evaluated to determine multicollinearity between predictor variables. Variables that are highly correlated were assessed and added into the statistical regression models individually to measure accurate effects of the predictor variables. Each district is a case and can be assumed to be independent of each other district or case.

CONCLUSION

This chapter presents the methods and data used in this dissertation project. The AEIS data for 2006-2007, obtained from the Texas Education Agency, is analyzed in this project. A standardized test (the TAKS) will be used to measure educational outcomes, while several predictor variables will measure location, social capital, and political resources. Twelve hypotheses are presented to address the three motivating research questions. Five statistical models are provided to be able to assess what theory best explains factors that contribute to positive educational outcomes. OLSR is used to test the

hypotheses based on the level of measurement of the data. The next chapter will provide the results of the diagnostic tests and results for each statistical model.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of descriptive statistics, correlation coefficients, and Ordinary Least Squares regression models. Descriptive statistics includes means and standard deviations for the variables used in the analysis are provided. A matrix of the Pearson's correlation coefficients is reported and includes Spearman's Rho non-linear matrix coefficients. OLS regression models results are reported for each model.

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Descriptive statistics for the variables used in this analysis are provided in Table 1. The TAKS average cumulative pass rate for Hispanic students in Texas school districts in 2006 was 79.79 with a standard deviation (SD) of 15.798. There are 60 school districts located in Border counties that are used in this analysis, which make up 9 percent of the school districts in Texas. The average total revenue for Texas school districts in 2006 was \$9,545.92 with a SD of \$2,238.923; revenue for individual districts ranged from \$1,717 and \$24,159. On average, 56.52 percent (SD = 19.815) of students in Texas school districts were economically disadvantaged students. On average 5.65 percent (SD = 8.85) of Hispanics students were English language learners in Texas school districts in 2006. About 12 percent (SD = 4.19) of Hispanic students were in special education programs in Texas districts during this time. On average, almost 50 percent of Hispanic students were

classified “at-risk” (SD = 16.945). The percent of Hispanic teachers averaged 16.21 percent (SD = 23.638) in Texas districts during 2006. About 14 percent of Hispanic students were enrolled in advanced courses (SD = 8.868) in Texas districts. These districts averaged a 95.20 percent attendance rates for 2006 (SD = 2.858) and dropout rates of 2.78 (SD = 3.828) percent. On average there were 43.97 percent (SD = 27.125) of Hispanic students in Texas school districts in 2006. On average 6.36 percent (SD = 3.358) of gifted and talented students in Texas school districts during 2006 were Hispanic students.

TABLE 1. Descriptive Statistics of Variables in Analysis, Hispanic Educational Outcomes in Texas School Districts, 2006-2007 TEA-AEIS

Variables	Percent/Mean	Standard Deviation
<i>Dependent Variable</i>		
TAKS Cumulative Pass Rate, 2006, Hispanic Students	79.79	15.798
<i>Independent Variables</i>		
Border District (Dummy Variable)	.09	.279
District 2006 Finance: Revenue-Total Per Pupil, All Funds	9545.92	
Economically Disadvantaged, Percent	56.52	19.815
English Language Learners, 2006, Percent	5.65	8.850
Students in Special Education Programs, Percent	11.86	4.190
At Risk Students, Percent	47.70	16.945
Hispanic Teachers, Percent	16.21	23.630
Advanced Courses, 2006, Percent	13.53	8.868
Attendance Rate, 2006, Hispanic Students	95.20	2.858
Dropout Rate (Gr 7-12), 2006, Hispanic Students	2.78	3.828
Hispanic Students, Percent	43.97	27.125
Students in Gifted/Talented Programs, Percent*	6.36	3.358

The Pearson's correlation coefficient matrix is presented in Table 2. The coefficients range from a low of 0.000 indicating no relationship, to a high of 0.810

indicating a strong relationship. Of the predictor variables two have no significant linear relationship, three indicate a significant strong linear relationship, and six have moderate to weak linear relationships with the dependent variable.

TABLE 2. Pearson Correlation Matrix of Variables, Hispanic Educational Outcomes in Texas School Districts, 2006-2007 TEA-AEIS

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. TAKS Pass Rate	1.00	-.041	.257**	-.268**	-.049	-.530**	-.125**	-.126**
2. Border District		1.00	.051	.392**	-.196**	.316**	.022	.743**
3. Revenue Per-Pupil			1.00	.075*	.230**	-.121**	.211**	.053
4. Economic Disadvantage				1.00	.041	.686**	.166**	.552**
5. Special Ed. Programs					1.00	.084*	-.003	-.177**
6. At-Risk						1.00	.094*	.435**
7. Eng. Lang. Learners							1.00	.000
8. Hispanic Teachers								1.00

Note: *p < .05 (two-tailed tests); **p < .01 (two-tailed tests)

TABLE 2. Pearson Correlation Matrix of Variables, Hispanic Educational Outcomes in Texas School Districts, 2006-2007 TEA-AEIS - Continued

Variables	9	10	11	12	13
1. TAKS Pass Rate	-.145**	.419**	-.590**	.585**	.242**
2. Border District	.552**	.052	.077*	-.027	.137**
3. Revenue Per-Pupil	.126**	.165**	-.235**	.263**	.117**
4. Economic Disadvantage	.724**	-.190**	.250**	-.201**	-.103**
5. Special Ed. Programs	-.164**	-.114**	.048	.049	-.195**
6. At-Risk	.544**	-.386**	.508**	-.539**	-.242**
7. Eng. Lang. Learners	.170**	-.140**	-.028	-.072	-.084*
8. Hispanic Teachers	.810**	-.017	.198**	-.168**	.122**
9. Hispanic Students	1.00	-.069	.222**	-.202**	.031
10. Gifted/ Talented		1.00	-.376**	.381**	.322**
11. Dropout			1.00	-.700**	-.243**
12. Attendance				1.00	.262**
13. Advanced Courses					1.00

Note *p < .05 (two-tailed tests); **p < .01 (two-tailed tests)

Two of the variables included in the analysis, Border district ($r = .04$) and the percent of Hispanic students in special education programs ($r = .05$), do not have a significant linear relationship with Hispanic students' TAKS cumulative pass rate in

2006. Three predictor variables, the percent of Hispanic students at-risk, dropout rate, and attendance rate, have an $r \geq 0.50$, $p < 0.001$, indicate significant strong linear relationships with the Hispanic TAKS cumulative pass rate. Of these three predictor variables, dropout rate of Hispanic students is the strongest indicator ($r = -0.59$), followed by attendance rate ($r = 0.585$) and percent of Hispanic students at-risk ($r = -0.53$). Both dropout rates and at-risk students have a negative association with TAKS pass rates, while attendance rates have a positive association. The percent of Hispanic students in gifted and talented programs ($r = 0.42$) also has a significant strong positive linear relationship to Hispanic TAKS pass rates. The remaining six predictor variables each have a weak to moderate significant linear relationship, ranging from $r = -0.126$ to -0.268 , with TAKS Hispanic pass rate. District revenue ($r = 0.257$) and the percent of Hispanic students that are economically disadvantaged ($r = -0.268$) has a moderately significant negative linear relationship. The percent of Hispanic students who are English language learners ($r = -0.125$), percent of Hispanic students ($r = -0.145$), and Hispanic teachers ($r = -0.126$) in a district each have a significant weak negative linear relationship to Hispanic students TAKS cumulative pass rates.

Correlations were evaluated to determine multicollinearity between the predictor variables. Using a guideline of $r \geq 0.7$ to determine collinearity, four potential associations were assessed. Location, border district, was highly correlated with Hispanic teachers ($r = 0.743$). This indicates that the percentage of Hispanic teachers and border location has a significant strong linear relationship. Two predictors were highly

correlated with percent of Hispanic students, the percent of economic disadvantage ($r = 0.724$) and the percent of Hispanic teachers ($r = 0.81$). Dropout rate and attendance rate were also highly correlated ($r = -0.70$), indicating a significant strong negative linear relationship. Highly correlated variables are assessed individually as predictors of Hispanic TAKS cumulative pass rate to accurately measure linear effects.

The Spearman's Rho non-linear correlation coefficient matrix is presented in TABLE 3. Non-normality may exist with this data based on diagnostics, thus Spearman's Rho is calculated to determine strength and direction of associations of predictor variables with the dependent variable. The coefficients range from a low of 0.012 indicating no relationship, to a high of 0.781 indicating a strong relationship. Testing the null hypothesis that there is no monotonic relationship between the variables, location Border County ($\rho = -0.023$) and the percent of Hispanic students in special education programs ($\rho = -0.040$) do not have a significant relationship with Hispanic TAKS cumulative pass rate. Similar to Pearson's correlations, three predictor variables, the percent of Hispanic students at-risk, dropout rate, and attendance rate, have a $\rho \geq 0.30$ and indicate significant strong relationships with Hispanic TAKS cumulative pass rate. Of these three predictor variables dropout rate of Hispanic students has the strongest relationship ($\rho = -0.402$), followed by attendance rate ($\rho = 0.336$) and percent of Hispanic students at-risk ($\rho = -0.386$). Both dropout rates and at-risk students have a negative relationship with TAKS pass rates, while attendance rates have a positive relationship. Four of the predictor variables have moderate significant relationships to

Hispanic TAKS pass rates including revenue per pupil ($\rho = 0.212$), the percent of economically disadvantage ($\rho = -0.251$), the percent of Hispanic students in gifted and talented programs ($\rho = 0.248$), and the percent of Hispanic students taking advanced courses ($\rho = 0.269$). District revenue, the percent of Hispanic students in gifted and talented programs and taking advanced courses each have a moderately significant positive relationship with TAKS pass rates for Hispanic students, while the percent of Hispanic students that are economically disadvantaged has a moderately significant negative relationship. The percent of Hispanic students who are English language learners ($\rho = 0.102$), percent of Hispanic students ($\rho = -0.115$), and Hispanic teachers ($\rho = -0.099$) in a district each have a significant weak relationship to Hispanic students TAKS cumulative pass rates. One main difference from the Pearson's correlations is that the ρ for English language learners has a positive relationship with the TAKS pass rate, yet both relationships are weak.

TABLE 3. Spearman's Rho Correlation Matrix of Variables, Hispanic Educational Outcomes in Texas School Districts, 2006-2007 TEA-AEIS

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. TAKS Pass Rate	1.00	-.023	.212**	-.251**	.040	-.386**	.102**	-.099**
2. Border District		1.00	.067	.375**	-.259**	.334**	-.038	.453**
3. Revenue Per-Pupil			1.00	.149*	.151**	-.050**	.317**	.074
4. Economic Disadvantage				1.00	-.012	.728**	.128**	.493**
5. Special Ed. Programs					1.00	-.065	.179**	-.254**
6. At-Risk						1.00	-.018	.446**
7. Eng. Lang. Learners							1.00	-.176**
8. Hispanic Teachers								1.00

*p < .05 (two-tailed tests); **p < .01 (two-tailed tests)

TABLE 3. Continued

Variables	9	10	11	12	13
1. TAKS Pass Rate	-.115**	.248**	-.402**	.336**	.269**
2. Border District	.458**	.070	.087*	-.036	.137**
3. Revenue Per-Pupil	.173**	.205**	-.176**	.171**	.154**
4. Economic Disadvantage	.720**	-.131**	.311**	-.285**	-.115**
5. Special Ed. Programs	-.194**	-.017	-.029	.032	-.146**
6. At-Risk	.594**	-.199**	.376**	-.367**	-.234**
7. Eng. Lang. Learners	.103**	-.048	-.226**	.153**	-.105**
8. Hispanic Teachers	.781**	.015	.297**	-.340**	.099**
9. Hispanic Students	1.00	-.023	.257**	-.287**	-.028
10. Gifted/Talented		1.00	-.148**	.140**	.263**
11. Dropout			1.00	-.453**	-.144**
12. Attendance				1.00	.182**
13. Advanced Courses					1.00

*p < .05 (two-tailed tests); **p < .01 (two-tailed tests)

The Spearman's rho correlation matrix was also evaluated to determine relationships between the predictor variables. Using a guideline of $\rho \geq 0.7$ to determine strong relationships, three potential associations were assessed. The percent of economic

disadvantage and percent of at-risk students was highly correlated ($\rho = 0.728$). This suggests that as the percentage of economic disadvantaged students increases the percent of at-risk students also increases. Two predictors were highly correlated with percent of Hispanic students - the percent of economically disadvantaged students ($\rho = 0.720$), and the percent of Hispanic teachers ($r = 0.781$). These results were similar to the Pearson's correlation coefficients. Highly correlated variables are assessed individually as predictors of Hispanic TAKS cumulative pass rate to accurately measure linear effects. Spearman's Rho and Pearson's correlation coefficients were very similar thus identifying possible issues with strong relationships among predictor variables under both parametric and non-parametric distributions. As a result, regression estimates must be evaluated individually for each predictor prior to including all of the predictors in the full model.

Another measure of collinearity assessed was the tolerance and variance inflation factors. Evaluating the regression output and collinearity statistics for tolerance, results indicate none of the predictor variables had low values, less than 0.1, to suggest possible problems with multicollinearity. Further assessment of the variance inflation factors indicate that the percent of Hispanic teachers ($VIF = 5.065$) and the percent of Hispanic students ($VIF = 5.040$) could be potentially problematic as each have a $VIF > 5.00$. The average VIF is greater than 1 indicating there may be a potential problem in the full model (Field 2009). These variables will only be reported together in the full model after being assessed individually as predictors of Hispanic TAKS cumulative pass rate.

Location

Simple linear regression was conducted to test the first hypothesis, whether attending a border school district affect the TAKS cumulative pass rate of Hispanics students in Texas school districts. Results for Model 1 are provided in Table 4.

The regression equation is: y (TAKS pass rate) = a (79.986) – b_1x_1 (2.303 border) + ϵ_1 .

The results are not significant thus there is no linear relationship between border location and Hispanic TAKS pass rate. This conclusion supports the Pearson's R and Spearman's Rho of no relationship. The R^2 of .002 suggests that less than one percent of the variation in Hispanic TAKS pass rate is accounted for by its linear relationship to border location. The average Hispanic TAKS pass rate is 79.986 for a district not in a border county. The Hispanic TAKS pass rate decreases by two percent for a district located in a border county.

Combined Measures

The results of multiple OLS regressions conducted to test the second and third hypotheses are provided in Model 2, presented in Table 5. The second hypothesis tests if the percent of economic disadvantaged students in a district negatively affects the TAKS cumulative pass rate for Hispanics students in Texas school districts. The third hypothesis tests whether if the amount of school revenue per pupil positively affects the TAKS cumulative pass rate for Hispanics students in Texas school districts.

TABLE 4. OLS Bivariate Regression Results Predicting Hispanic TAKS Pass Rate in Texas School Districts (Model 1)

Independent Variable	b	β
Border County (location)	-2.303	-0.041
Constant	79.986	----
R ²	.002	
N	703	

Note: * $p \leq 0.05$. ** $p \leq 0.01$. *** $p \leq 0.001$. (one-tailed test)

The regression equation is: y (Hispanic TAKS rate) = a (74.084) + b_2x_2 (0.002 revenue) – b_3x_3 (0.231disadvantage).

The results for both predictors are significant thus there are linear relationships between both revenue and disadvantage with Hispanic TAKS pass rate. This conclusion supports the Pearson's R and Spearman's Rho relationships. The R² of .149 suggests that almost 15 percent of the variation in Hispanic TAKS pass rate is accounted for by its linear relationship to revenue and economic deprivation. For every dollar increase in district revenue, Hispanic TAKS pass rate increases by .002, holding economic disadvantage constant. For every percent increase of economic disadvantage, Hispanic TAKS pass rate decreases by 0.231, holding revenue constant. Based on the β , the percent of economically disadvantaged (-0.289) has a stronger effect on Hispanic TAKS pass rate

than revenue per pupil (0.278). Both predictors are statistically significant at a $p < .01$ for a one-tailed directional test.

TABLE 5. OLS Regression Results of Combined Measures Predicting Hispanic TAKS Pass Rate in Texas School Districts (Model 2)

Independent Variable	b	β
District Revenue	.002***	.278***
Percent Economically Disadvantaged	-.231***	-.289***
Constant	74.084	---
R ²	.149	
N	704	

Note: * $p \leq 0.05$. ** $p \leq 0.01$. *** $p \leq 0.001$. (one-tailed test)

Social Capital

Model 3 includes factors of social capital effects on educational outcomes and results are presented in Table 6. Social capital measures are percent English language proficiency, percent of students in special education programs, and percent at-risk. English language proficiency is predicted to have a negative effect on educational outcomes of Hispanic students in Texas school districts. The percent of Hispanic students in special education programs is predicted to have a negative effect on Hispanic student's TAKS exit pass rates. The percent of at-risk Hispanic students in a district is predicted to have a negative effect on the TASK exit pass rates of Hispanic students in Texas school

districts. Both students in special education programs and at-risk students are an indication of diminished social capital available to the district.

The regression equation is y (Hispanic TAKS rate) = a (103.53) – b_4x_4 (.133English) + b_5x_5 (.018 special education) – b_6x_6 (.483 at-risk).

The results for two predictors, the percent of Hispanic students who were English language learners and the percent of Hispanic students who were at-risk, were significant thus there are linear relationships between both and Hispanic TAKS pass rate. The percent of Hispanic students who were in special education programs did not have a significant linear relationship with Hispanic TAKS pass rate. This conclusion supports the Pearson's R and Spearman's Rho relationships. The R^2 of .284 suggests that almost 30 percent of the variation in Hispanic TAKS pass rate is accounted for by its linear relationship to English proficiency and at-risk. For every percent increase in the percent of Hispanic students who were English language learners, Hispanic TAKS pass rate decreases by .133, holding all else constant. For every percent increase in at-risk Hispanic students, Hispanic TAKS pass rate decreases by 0.483, holding all else constant. Based on the β , the percent of at-risk Hispanic students (-.521) has a stronger effect on Hispanic TAKS pass rate than the percent of Hispanic English language learners (-.076). Both predictors are statistically significant at a $p < .01$ or smaller for a one-tailed directional test.

TABLE 6. OLS Regression Results of Social Capital Measures Predicting Hispanic TAKS Pass Rate in Texas School Districts (Model 3)

Independent Variable	b	β
English	-.133**	-.076**
Special Education Programs	.018	.005
At-Risk Students	-.483***	-.521***
Constant	103.533	----
R ²	.284	
N	695	

Note: * $p \leq 0.05$. ** $p \leq 0.01$. *** $p \leq 0.001$. (one-tailed test)

Political Resources

Measures of political resources are included in Model 4. Model 4 is subdivided into eight partial models. Model 4 includes six hypotheses used to test the effects of political resources available to school districts on educational outcomes. Results are provided in Tables 7.1, 7.2, and 7.3. The variables are presented and tested individually in cases where collinearity between predictor variables exists. Table 7.1 presents three partial models 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3. Table 7.2 includes Models 4.4, 4.5, and 4.6 partial models. Table 7.3 contains the last two models 4.7 and 4.8 is a full model of political resource measures.

The percent of Hispanic teachers is predicted to have a positive effect on the TAKS pass rate of Hispanic students in Texas school districts. The percent of students in gifted and talented programs is predicted to increase the political resources available to the school district. The percentage of Hispanic students taking advanced courses is predicted to have a positive effect on the TAKS pass rate of Hispanic student in Texas school districts. Another indicator of academic performance in districts is student attendance rate in 2006. Dropout rates are predicted have a negative effect on TAKS pass rates for Hispanic students in Texas school districts. The twelfth hypothesis tests if the percent of Hispanic students positively affects the TAKS pass rate for Hispanics students in Texas school districts.

High correlation between percent of Hispanic students and percent of Hispanic teachers, as well as attendance and dropout rates, require these predictors be evaluated individually to assess which predictors should remain in the final model. Tables 7, 8, and 9 provide results for several partial models of the political resource effects on Hispanic TAKS pass rate. Comparing the results of Hispanic students and Hispanic teachers, Model 4.1 and 4.2, shown in Table 7, independently each has significant effects on TAKS pass rate. Both have the same impact, so for every one percent increase in Hispanic students or teachers in a Texas school district, Hispanic TAKS pass rate decreases .085. Based on the β , Hispanic students (-.145) has stronger importance on Hispanic TAKS pass rates than the percent of Hispanic teachers (-.126).

Model 4.3, presented in Table 7, provides results of the analysis including the percent of Hispanic students in gifted and talented and advanced courses in the OLS regression model. Hispanic students in gifted and talented and advanced courses were not highly correlated thus were evaluated together.

The Model 4.3 regression equation is y (Hispanic TAKS rate) = a (65.67) + b_9x_9 (1.77gifted) + $b_{12}x_{12}$ (.215 advanced).

TABLE 7. OLS Regression Results of Political Resources Measures Predicting Hispanic TAKS Pass Rate in Texas School Districts (Model 4.1, 4.2, & 4.3)

	Model 4.1		Model 4.2		Model 4.3	
Independent Variable	b	β	b	β	b	β
Hispanic Teachers	-.085***	-.126***				
Hispanic Students			-.085***	-.145***		
Gifted and Talented					1.768***	.377***
Dropout						
Attendance						
Advanced Courses					.215***	.121***
Constant	81.160		83.516		65.668	
R ²	.016		.021		.186	
N	704		704		702	

Note * $p \leq 0.05$. ** $p \leq 0.01$. *** $p \leq 0.001$. (one-tailed test)

For every one percent increase in Hispanic students taking gifted and talented courses, Hispanic TAKS pass rate increases 1.77, holding advanced courses constant. For every one percent increase in Hispanic students taking advanced courses, Hispanic TAKS pass rate increases .22, holding percent of gifted and talented constant. Based on the β , the percent of Hispanic students in gifted and talented courses (.38) has stronger importance on Hispanic TAKS pass rates than the percent of Hispanic students taking advanced courses (.12). Both gifted and talented and advanced courses are statistically significant at a $p < .001$ for a one-tailed directional test. The R^2 of .186 suggests that almost 19 percent of the variation in Hispanic TAKS pass rate is accounted for by its linear relationship to Hispanic students taking gifted and talented and advanced courses.

Attendance and dropout rates also show high correlation and require these predictors be evaluated individually to assess which should remain in the final model. Table 8 provide results for Models 4.4, 4.5 and 4.6 and include variations of the political resource predictor effects on Hispanic TAKS pass rate. Comparing the results of Hispanic attendance and Hispanic dropout, in Models 4.4 and 4.5, independently each has significant effects on TAKS pass rate. Hispanic attendance rates had a positive impact on TAKS pass rate, while dropout rates had a negative impact as expected. For every percent increase in Hispanic student's attendance rate Hispanic TAKS pass rate increases 3.23. For every percent increase in Hispanic student's dropout rate Hispanic TAKS pass rate decreases 2.44. Based on the β , Hispanic students dropout (-.59) has stronger importance on Hispanic TAKS pass rates than the percent of Hispanic students attendance (-.585).

TABLE 8. OLS Regression Results of Political Resources Measures Predicting Hispanic TAKS Pass Rate in Texas School Districts (Models 4.4, 4.5, and 4.6)

Independent Variable	Model 4.4		Model 4.5		Model 4.6	
	b	β	b	β	b	β
Hispanic Teachers						
Hispanic Students					-.013	-.023
Gifted and Talented					1.014***	.216***
Dropout			-2.436***	-.590***	-2.024***	-.486***
Attendance	3.232***	.585***				
Advanced Courses					.098*	.055*
Constant	-227.904		86.560		78.220	
R ²	.342		.348		.390	
N	704		704		702	

Note * $p \leq 0.05$. ** $p \leq 0.01$. *** $p \leq 0.001$. (one-tailed test)

Combining predictors of most importance, Model 4.6 in Table 8, focusing on the percent of Hispanic students, gifted and talented, dropout rates, and advanced courses the significance of Hispanic students and advanced courses disappears. The R² of .39

suggests that almost 40 percent of the variation in Hispanic TAKS pass rate is accounted for by its linear relationship to Hispanic students, gifted, dropout, and advanced courses. Of the significant predictors in this model based on the β , dropout (-.486) has the most importance in predicting Hispanic TAKS pass rate. For every percent increase in dropout rate, TAKS pass rate decreases by 2.024. For every percent increase of students in gifted and talented courses, TAKS pass rate increases by 1.01. For every percent increase in advanced courses, TAKS pass rate increases by .098. Gifted and talented and dropout predictors are statistically significant at a $p < .001$, while advanced courses is statistically significant at a $p < .05$ for a one-tailed directional test.

Table 9 presents Models 4.7 and the full Model 4.8. Model 4.7 includes the percent of Hispanic teachers, gifted and talented, dropout rates, and advanced courses. An R^2 of .39 in Model 4.7 suggests that almost 40 percent of the variation in Hispanic TAKS pass rate is accounted for by its linear relationship to Hispanic teachers, gifted, dropout, and advanced courses. Based on the β , dropout (-.483) has the most importance in predicting Hispanic TAKS pass rate. For every percent increase in dropout rate, TAKS pass rate decreases by 2.013. For every percent increase of students in gifted and talented courses, TAKS pass rate increases by 1.02. For every percent increase in Hispanic teachers, TAKS pass rate decreases by .022. For every percent increase in advanced courses, TAKS pass rate increases by .105. Both gifted and talented and dropout predictors are statistically significant at a $p < .001$ while Hispanic teachers and advanced courses are significant at a $p < .05$ for a one-tailed directional test.

Table 9. OLS Regression Results of Political Resources Measures Predicting Hispanic TAKS Pass Rate in Texas School Districts (Models 4.7 and 4.8)

Independent Variable	Model 4.7		Model 4.8	
	b	β	b	β
Hispanic Teachers	-.022*	-.033*	-.023	-.034
Hispanic Students			.012	.021
Gifted and Talented	1.019***	.155***	.856***	.182***
Dropout	-2.013***	-.483***	-1.250***	-.30***
Attendance			1.609***	.292***
Advanced Courses	.105*	.059*	.067	.038
Constant	77.846		-76.426	
R ²	.391		.432	
N	702		702	

Note * $p \leq 0.05$. ** $p \leq 0.01$. *** $p \leq 0.001$. (one-tailed test)

All of the predictors that measure political resources are presented in Model 4.8, in Table 9. These should be interpreted with caution as some of the variables are highly correlated with each other as mentioned previously and assessed individually. The predictors of most importance, as shown in Model 4.8, include the percent gifted and talented, dropout rates, and attendance. The R² of .43 suggests that about 40 percent of the variation in Hispanic TAKS pass rate is accounted for by its linear relationship to

Hispanic teachers, students, gifted, dropout, attendance, and advanced courses. Of the significant predictors in this model based on the β , dropout (-.30) has the most importance in predicting Hispanic TAKS pass rate followed by attendance (.292) then percent of Hispanic students in gifted and talented courses (.182). For every percent increase in dropout rate, TAKS pass rate decreases by 1.250 percent. For every percent increase in attendance rate, TAKS pass rate increases 1.61 percent. For every percent increase of students in gifted and talented courses, TAKS pass rate increases by 0.86 percent. Each of the three predictors is statistically significant at a $p < .001$ for a one-tailed directional test.

Integrated Model

A full model, presented in Table 10, includes all of the predictor variables for location, combined measures, social capital measures, and political resource measures. All of the political resource variables were included in the final model. Based on the results in Model 4.7, the percent of Hispanic teachers becomes insignificant just as does the percent of Hispanic students seen in Model 4.6, when accounting for the percent of Hispanic gifted and talented students and dropout rate. Similarly taking advanced courses also becomes insignificant when accounting for gifted and talented and dropout rates. Based on these findings we should expect the percent of gifted and talented, dropout, and attendance rates should remain significant in the full model. Results should be interpreted with caution due to collinearity between predictor variables, however the previous findings should be considered. The R^2 of .48 indicates that almost 50 percent of the

variation in Hispanic TAKS pass rate is accounted for by its linear relationship with the predictor measures included in the model. Location, percent of Hispanic students economically disadvantaged, in special education programs, percent of Hispanic teachers, and percent of Hispanic student in advanced courses do not have significant linear relationships with Hispanic TAKS pass rate when taking other factors into consideration. District revenue, the percent of Hispanic students that are English language learners, at-risk, Hispanic students, and enrolled in gifted and talented courses combined with dropout and attendance rates have statistically significant linear relationships with TAKS Hispanic pass rates. The percent of Hispanic students who were English language learners, at-risk, and dropouts each have negative effects of Hispanic TAKS pass rates, while district revenue, percent of Hispanic students, gifted and talented, and attendance each have positive effects. Based on the β , the percent of Hispanic students at-risk (.28) has the most influence on Hispanic TAKS pass rate, followed by dropout rates (.26) and percent of Hispanic students (.23). Attendance rates (.17) and percent of English language learners (.13) have less significant importance, while district revenue (.11) and percent of gifted and talented have least importance on Hispanic TAKS pass rates. District revenue, English language learners, at-risk, Hispanic students, gifted and talented, dropout and attendance rates are all significant at a $p < .001$ for a one-tailed directional test. For every one percent increase in at-risk Hispanic students, the TAKS pass rate decreases by .261, holding all else constant. Every one percent increase in Hispanic dropout rate, decreases TAKS pass rate by 1.12 percent, all else equal. Each

percent increase in percent of Hispanic students, increase Hispanic TAKS pass rate by .13 percent, holding all else constant. For every one percent increase in attendance rate, Hispanic TAKS pass rate increase by .96 percent, all else being equal. For every one percent increase in Hispanic students who are English language learners, Hispanic TAKS pass rate decreases by .23 percent, holding all other factors constant. For every one percent increase in Hispanic students enrolled in gifted and talented courses, Hispanic TAKS pass rate increases by .48 percent. District revenue has the least effect on Hispanic TAKS pass rate and only increases by .001 for each percent increase, holding all other factors constant.

TABLE 10. OLS Regression Results of Full Model Predicting Hispanic TAKS Pass Rate in Texas School Districts (Model 5)

Independent Variable	b	β
Border district (location)	2.42	.04
District revenue	.001***	.11***
Economically disadvantaged	-.055	-.07
English Lang. Learners	-.227***	-.131***
Special Education Programs	-.002	.000
At-Risk Students	-.261***	-.282***
Hispanic Teachers	-.065	-.10
Hispanic Students	.132***	.232***
Gifted and Talented	.479***	.103***
Dropout	-1.123***	-.264***
Attendance	.955***	.174***
Advanced Courses	.001	.001
Constant	-6.38	
R²	.48	
N	702	

Note * $p \leq 0.05$. ** $p \leq 0.01$. *** $p \leq 0.001$. (one-tailed test)

CONCLUSION

This chapter includes the descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation matrix, Spearman's Rho correlation matrix, and summaries of findings for the hypotheses testing and OLS regression models. Although multicollinearity exists between some of the predictor variables, individual assessments are provided to understand the effect of each predictor. OLS regression findings for location, combined measures, social capital, and political resources along with a full model have been presented and described. The next chapter will include a discussion and conclusion to assess the practical application and significance of these findings.

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

SUMMARY

Social structures, such as public school districts, provide society the foundation of knowledge and designate appropriate means to achieve goals. Identifying the aspects of the school districts that promote positive educational outcomes benefits all groups. By understanding the social capital and political resources available, administrators can more concisely develop policy to achieve goals fostering positive educational outcomes for all students.

Inequality of educational outcomes due to socioeconomic background will continue throughout the 21st century (Gamoran 2001). Therefore it is crucial to identify structural factors that can improve educational success for minorities, specifically Hispanics. As the largest minority, it is important that educational outcomes improve for Hispanics to increase human capital and labor market outcomes. Positive educational outcomes foster greater social capital and supports political mobilization of resources to further expand investments.

Location

Despite the fact that both social capital and political resources are more limited on the border due to high levels of poverty and the large number of bilingual and bicultural

residents, this does not have a significant impact on Hispanic students TAKS pass rates or educational success in Texas school districts. Attending a border school district alone has no significant relationship with Hispanic pass rates. Hispanic students in Texas school districts are equally as likely to pass their TAKS exams regardless if they live in the border area or not. Poverty and the percent of families that are economically disadvantaged in the border school districts impact other factors that affect educational success. Location alone, in this case attending border school districts, in Texas does not account for any meaningful effect on pass rates for Hispanic students.

Local programs, community assistance, and social networks that promote positive educational outcomes may be a factor in the Texas Mexico border region. Similar to ethnic enclaves, the border region provides social and networking affiliations to help support success. One explanation is the predominance of Hispanic students provides social support, increases cohesion, and fosters engagement among all Hispanic students in the school district increasing overall educational outcomes.

Combined Measures

Poverty, limited income, and low levels of education in the community are more likely to impact district revenue and the percent of economic disadvantage in school districts. Access to social capital and political resources effects both revenue and the percentage of disadvantage in the district. Opportunities to mobilize resources impact status attainment, such as educational success, thus limited resources and access to resources including capital diminish Hispanic student's ability to have positive

educational outcomes. School funding based on local tax revenue can limit access to resources for communities with high rates of poverty. Organizational factors including revenue and level of disadvantage impact test scores and overall achievement.

Consistent with previous research findings, revenue and the percentage of economic disadvantaged in a school district impact the social capital and political resources that school districts have available to promote positive outcomes. Fiscal resources allow administrators to allocate funding to programs, equipment, direct instruction, and instructional training. The percent of disadvantaged in a school district places limitations on the revenue local taxes provide.

Social Capital

Forms of social capital including financial, human, and cultural capital each have significant effects on successful educational outcomes. Social capital factors including the percentage of Hispanic students with limited English language proficiency and the percent of at-risk students in a district impact successful educational outcomes. Interestingly the percent of Hispanic students in special education programs had no significant effect on Hispanic students pass rates in Texas school districts. The percent of Hispanic students at-risk in a district has the most significance on educational outcomes. Social capital accounts for about a third of the variation in educational outcomes.

In contrary to literature and research presented, the percent of student in special education programs has no significant impact on educational outcomes. Similar to location, it is possible the percent of Hispanic students fosters inclusion and engagement

among all Hispanic students promoting positive educational outcomes. Another explanation for the results is that Hispanic students in special education programs are limited in numbers, thus not impacting the overall social capital available to the school district.

Political Resources

Resource allocation is an assets school districts utilize to fund student programs. The percent of economically disadvantaged students impacts the allocation of resources within school districts. In areas where disadvantage is great, limitations on educational programs exist. Allocation of school district resources impacts student educational success and academic achievement. The percentage of Hispanic students, the percentage of Hispanic students in gifted and talented courses, dropout, and attendance rates in the school district all have significant effects on Hispanic students' TAKS cumulative pass rate. Of the six measures of resource allocation, two - the percentage of Hispanic teachers and the percent of Hispanic students taking advanced courses, are not statistically significant predictors of Hispanic students' TAKS cumulative pass rate in Texas school districts.

Based on the literature, Hispanic teachers should provide increased resources to students of the same ethnicity. Cultural and language similarities between teachers and students, according to literature, provide Hispanic students with positive role models. Yet, according to the findings presented student body similarity is more likely to promote positive outcomes as opposed to teacher-student likeness. Attendance and dropout rates

are more significant predictors of student academic outcomes than racial makeup of the school district.

IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS

Using a synthesis of social capital and political resource theories improves understanding and estimates of factors that impact Hispanic students' TAKS cumulative pass rates in Texas school districts, and provides a better fit model than the two theories individually. Attending a "border" school district has no significant impact on Hispanic students TAKS cumulative pass rate. Overlapping constructs - district revenue and percent economically disadvantaged, of both social and political resource theories account for 15 percent of the variation when predicting Hispanic students TAKS cumulative pass rate in Texas school districts. Social capital measures of human, financial, and cultural capital account for 28 percent of the variation when predicting Hispanic students' TAKS cumulative pass rate in Texas school districts. Political resources of school districts account for 43 percent of the variation in Hispanic students' TAKS cumulative pass rate in Texas school districts. The factors combined together account for almost 50 percent of the variation in Hispanic student TAKS cumulative pass rate in Texas school districts.

Understanding the factors that impact educational success allows administrators and politicians that are directly involved with allocation of funding and resources to strategize how best to distribute those resources to benefit the entire student body. Combining social capital and political resource models provides a blueprint to isolating

what factors promote and discourage positive educational outcomes for Hispanic students. The next step is to create policy to address all factors, increasing the likelihood of positive outcomes.

LIMITATIONS

The conclusions are specific to studies looking at an aggregate level. It is important to identify and study the structural factors independently from individual factors to fully understand the complexity of educational attainment. As a result the theoretical applications are focused on a macro level analysis and interpretation. Individual factors are not considered in this study. Factors such as home environment, family background and other micro or individual differences are not included in this study. This study is further limited to a specific minority group, Hispanics. Analysis is also restricted to a particular location, Texas, and those districts located in the border area of Texas and Mexico. Lastly, the conceptualization of both social capital and political resources is restricted by the measurements of variables provided in the data set. The measure of educational success is limited based on the dependent variable, Hispanic students' cumulative TAKS pass rate.

FUTURE RESEARCH

The possibilities for future research in determining structural factors that impact educational outcomes are vast. Research replicating the application of social capital and political resource theories to the analysis of school districts in other U.S. Mexico border states would allow for comparisons from state to state. Applying a synthesized model to

other racial and ethnic groups in Texas school districts would also allow for a comparison to determine if factors fostering successful outcomes vary between groups. Longitudinal research should also be considered as the AEIS is collected annually by the TEA in Texas. Longitudinal comparisons can determine if the factors that impact educational success vary from year to year. Future studies can also incorporate organizational theories to look at the impact of additional factors such as teacher qualifications and experience.

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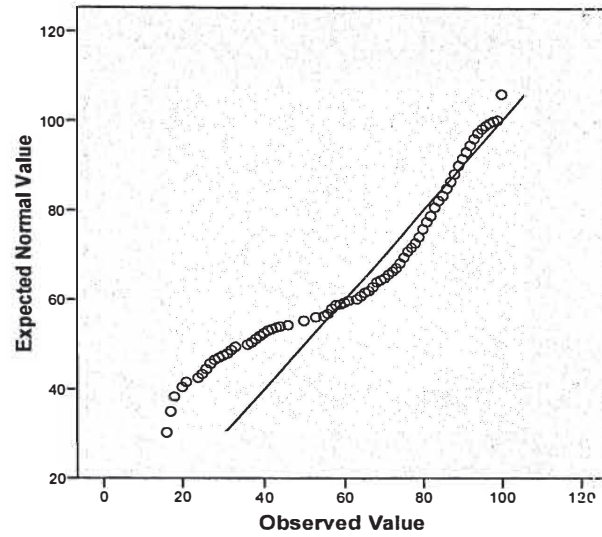
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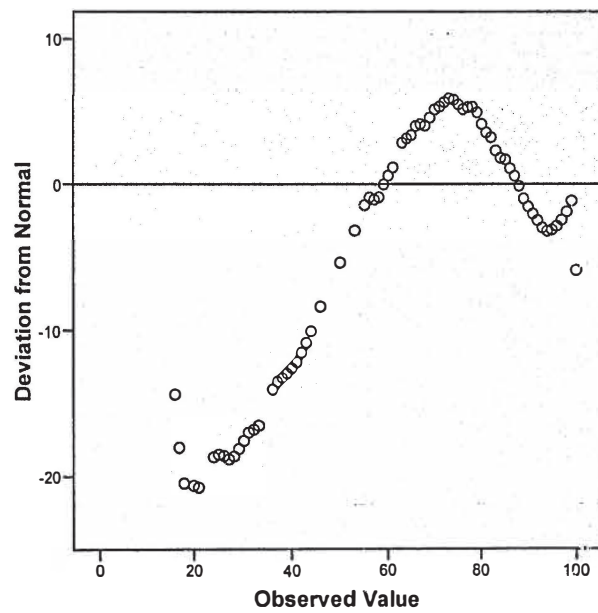
APPENDIX A

Normal Probability Plots

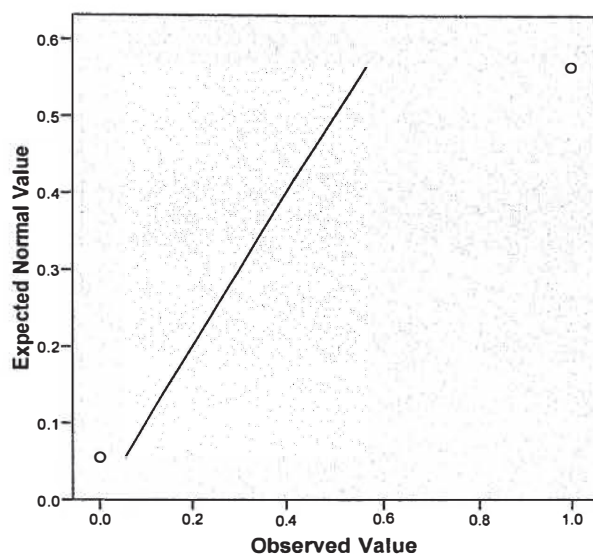
Normal Q-Q Plot of TAKS Cumul pass 2006 His stud



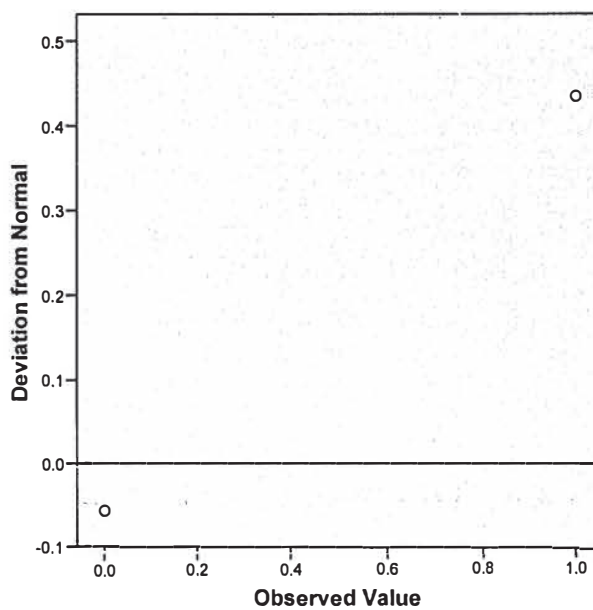
Detrended Normal Q-Q Plot of TAKS Cumul pass 2006 His stud



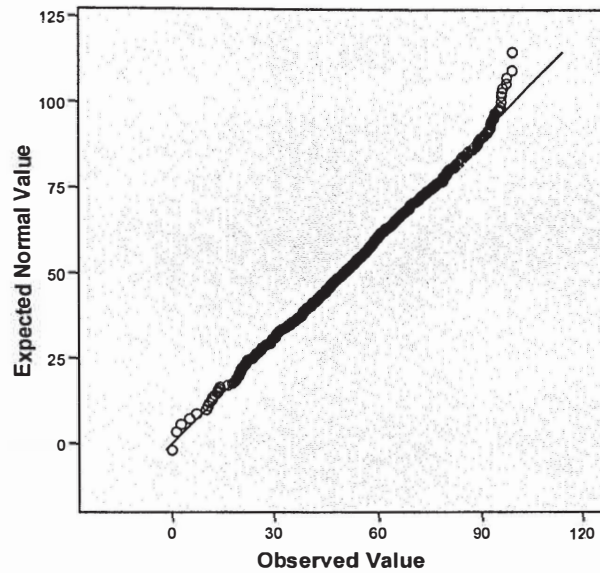
Normal Q-Q Plot of Border County



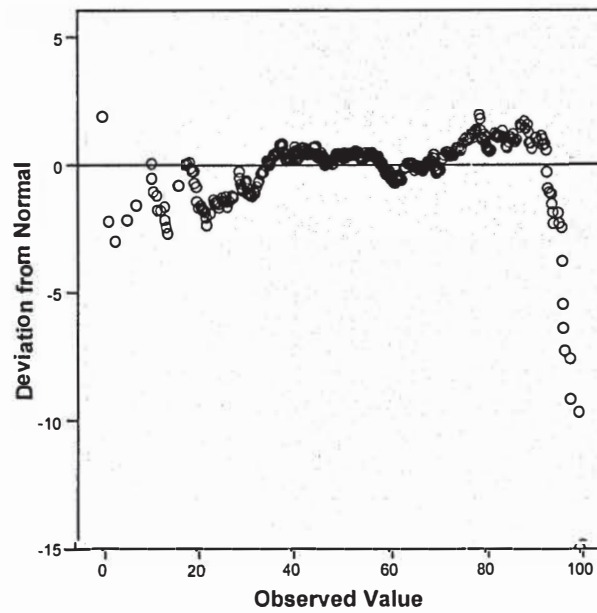
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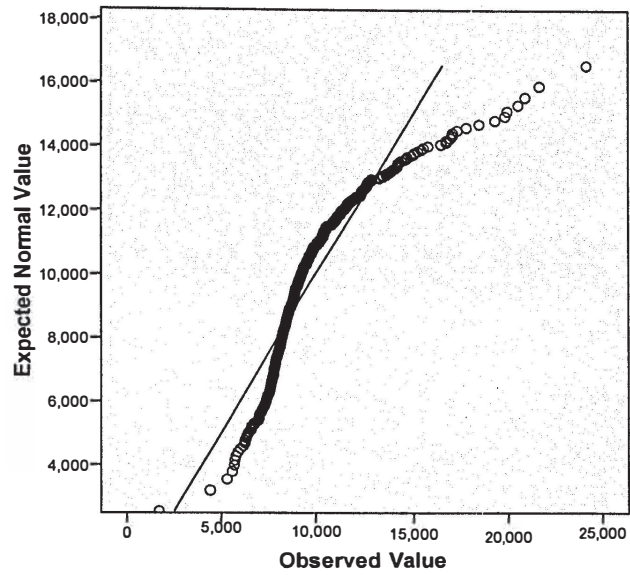
Normal Q-Q Plot of Economically disadvantages stud percent



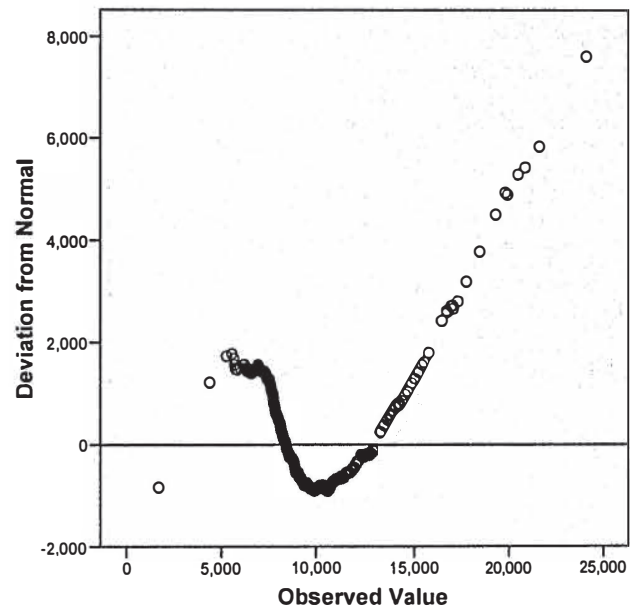
Detrended Normal Q-Q Plot of Economically disadvantages stud percent



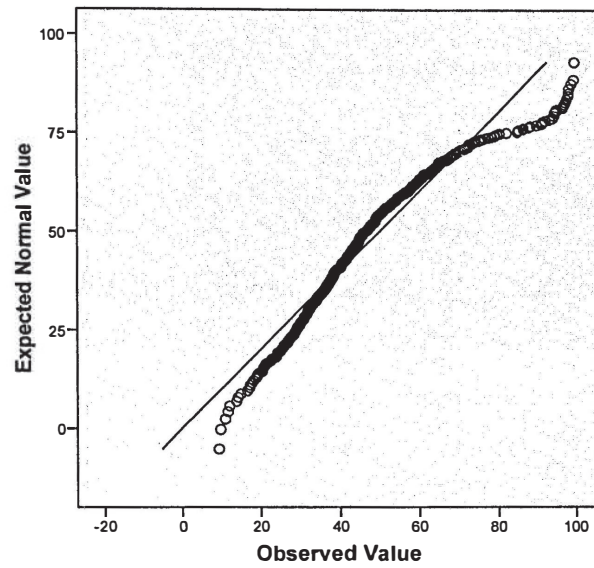
Normal Q-Q Plot of district 2006 finance:rev-total per pupil, all funds



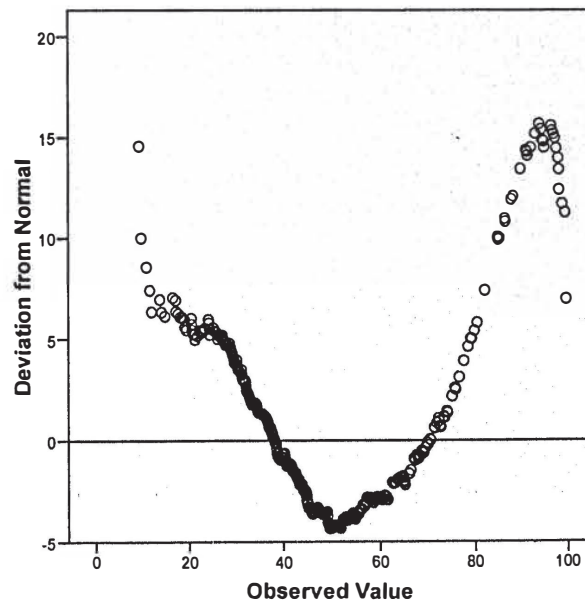
Detrended Normal Q-Q Plot of district 2006 finance:rev-total per pupil, all funds



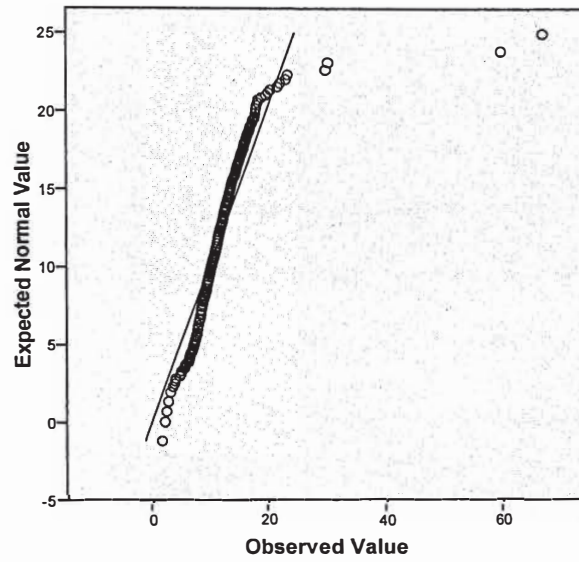
Normal Q-Q Plot of At risk stud percent



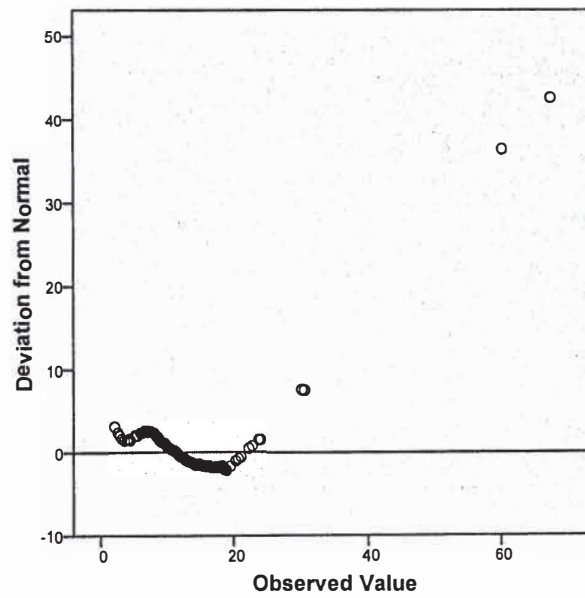
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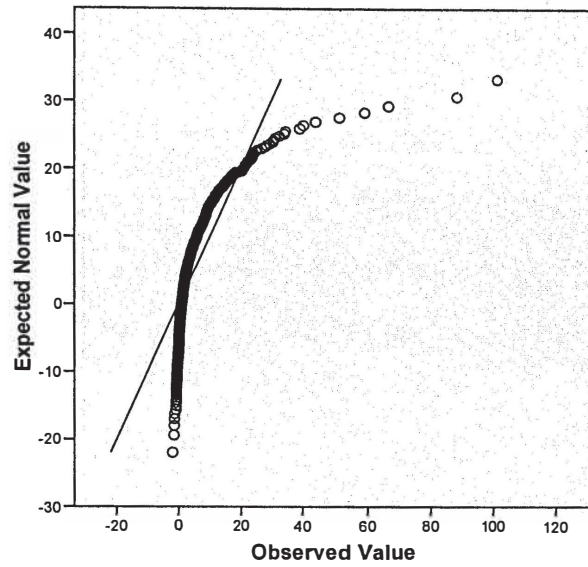
Normal Q-Q Plot of Stud in Sp Ed. Progm. Percent



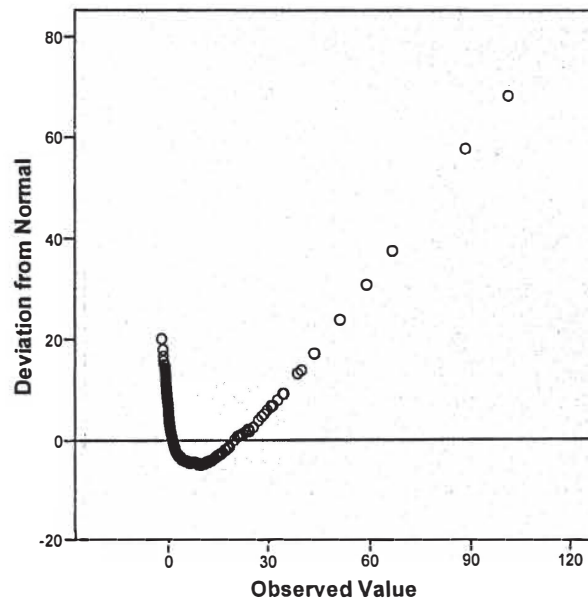
Detrended Normal Q-Q Plot of Stud in Sp Ed. Progm. Percent



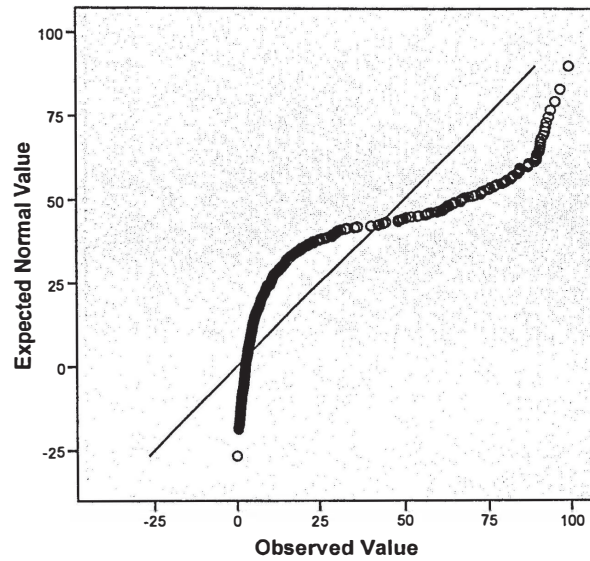
Normal Q-Q Plot of HispEngLL



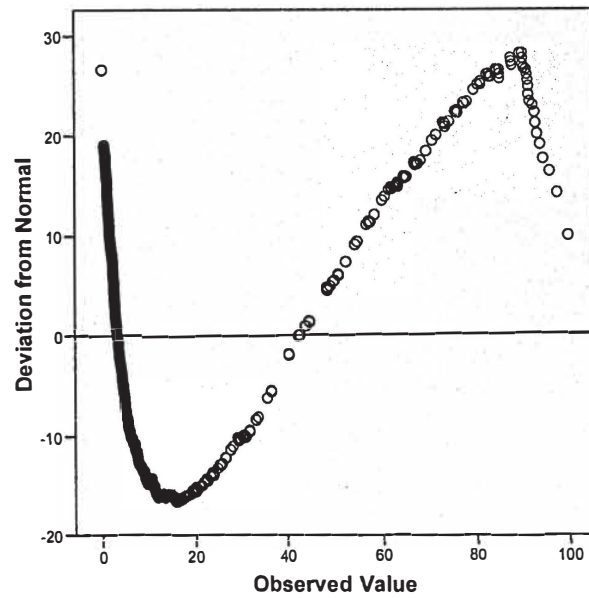
Detrended Normal Q-Q Plot of HispEngLL



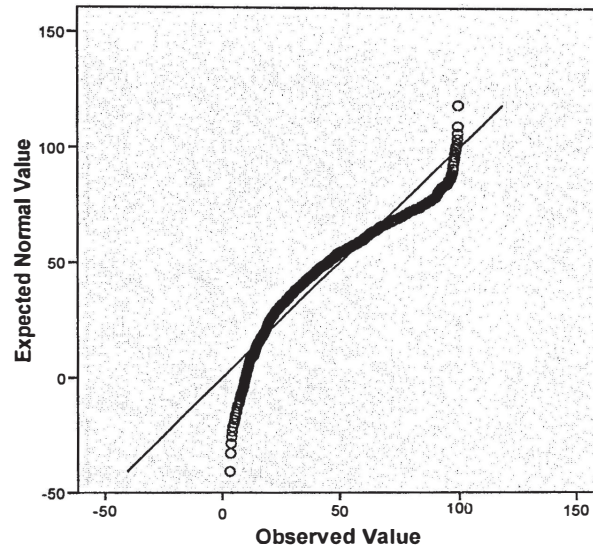
Normal Q-Q Plot of Percent of His. Teachers



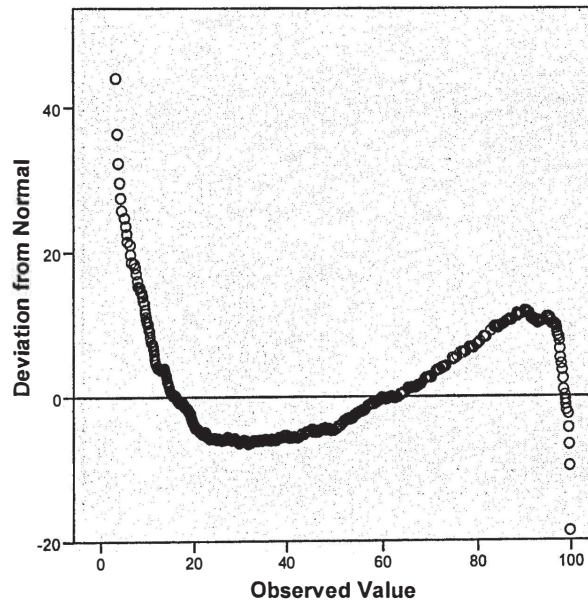
Detrended Normal Q-Q Plot of Percent of His. Teachers



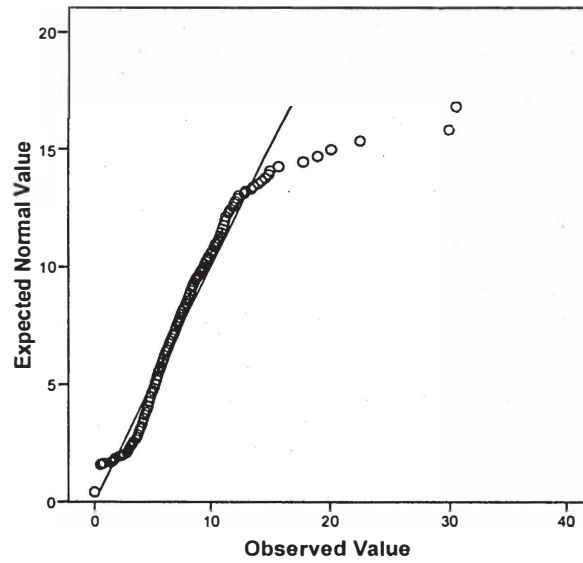
Normal Q-Q Plot of Hispanic students percent



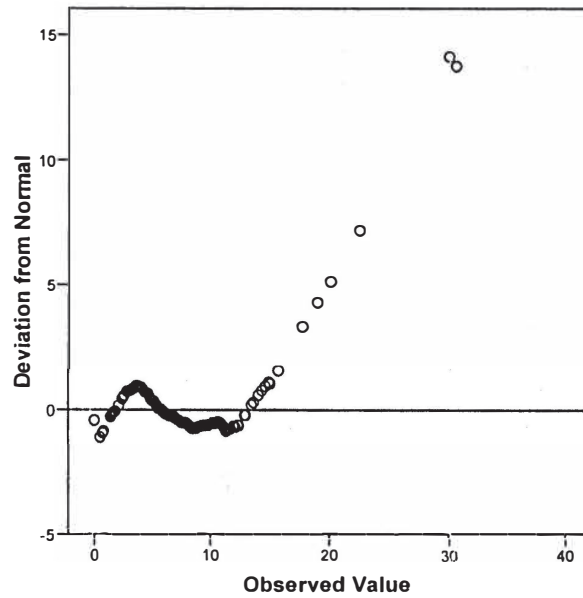
Detrended Normal Q-Q Plot of Hispanic students percent



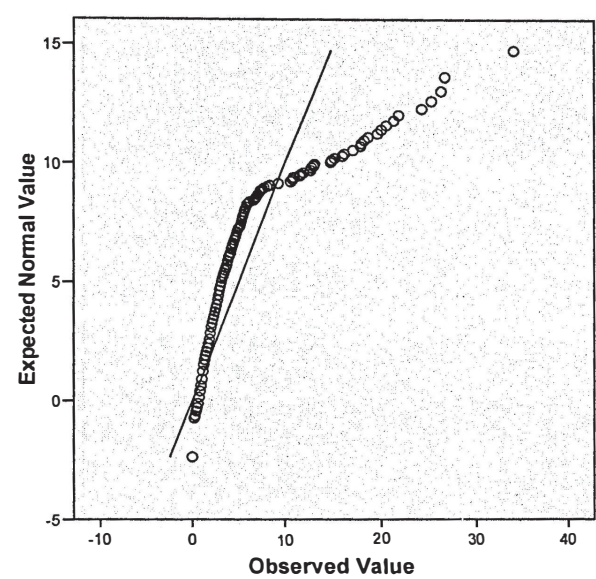
Normal Q-Q Plot of Stud, in Gifted/talented prg percent



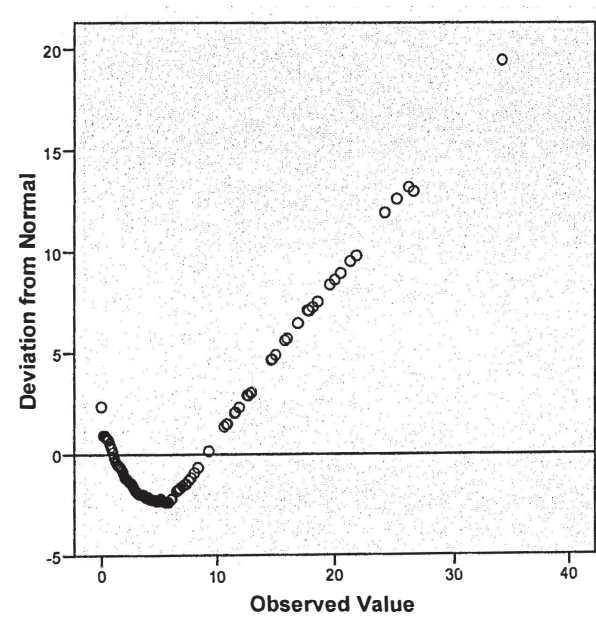
Detrended Normal Q-Q Plot of Stud, in Gifted/talented prg percent



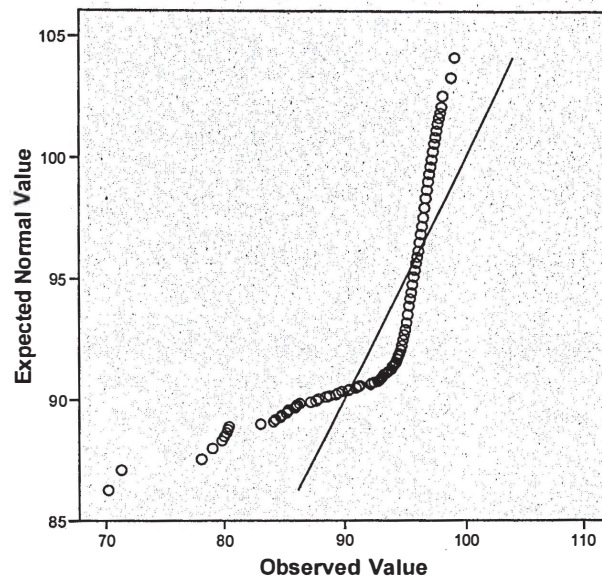
Normal Q-Q Plot of Dropout rate gr7-12 2006 His Stud



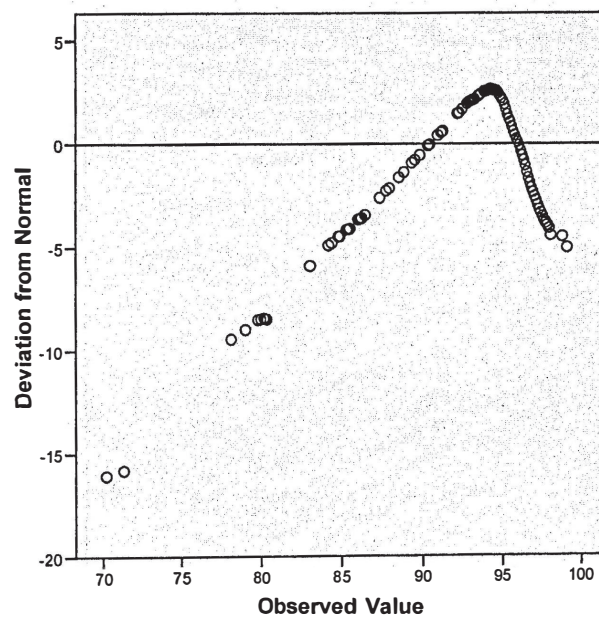
Detrended Normal Q-Q Plot of Dropout rate gr7-12 2006 His Stud



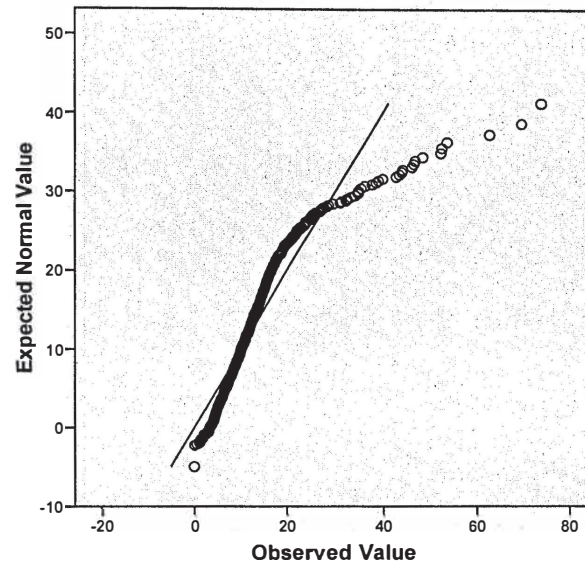
Normal Q-Q Plot of Attendance rate 2006 His Stud



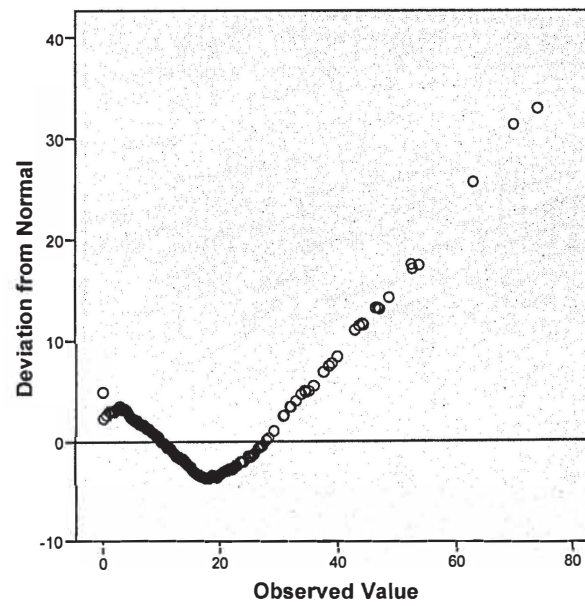
Detrended Normal Q-Q Plot of Attendance rate 2006 His Stud



Normal Q-Q Plot of Advanced courses percent taking 2006 His stud



Detrended Normal Q-Q Plot of Advanced courses percent taking 2006 His stud



APPENDIX B

Bivariate Scatterplots

