

# Viewing Generativity and Social Capital as Underlying Factors of Parent Involvement

*Sharon Stevens and Nimisha Patel*

## Abstract

Parent involvement in education is a multifaceted support that has many well-documented benefits for students of all ages. Parent involvement is also a common expression of generativity as defined in Erik Erikson's theory of psychosocial development. The activities parents engage in during their children's educational pursuits, as well as their behaviors that reflect generativity, correspond to, in total, the creation of social capital. This article uses structural equation modeling to illustrate the relationship between the characteristics of generativity and social capital as underlying factors of parent involvement. The parent involvement factors are measured using the *School and Family Partnership Survey* (Epstein & Salinas, 1993). The results suggest a three-factor model, in which generativity serves as one factor and in which social capital is distinguished into two factors: individual-level and community-level. At the individual level, social capital reflects interactions between two individuals such as the teacher and the parent. Community-level social capital addresses opportunities created by the school for parents to participate.

Key Words: parent involvement, generativity, social capital, schools, teachers, families, structural equation modeling

## Introduction

The inclusion of parents in the American education system is widely accepted in educational theory as a critical factor in the long-term success of students

(Hill & Tyson, 2009; Jeynes, 2007, 2012). Yet educators often still struggle to obtain the participation of parents and to use parents as a resource to best meet students' needs. Many reasons for parents' involvement or lack thereof have been documented, such as financial opportunities or barriers, parents' personal values and role construction towards education, and the opportunities or barriers presented by the schools. This last category has prompted a quickly growing base of literature on social capital in education, which we will discuss shortly; however, a review of educational and psychological literature reveals little information on how adults' psychosocial development (particularly that of generativity; Erikson, 1963) promotes their involvement in schools or if involvement in schools aides their development. Social capital and psychosocial development are both latent factors, meaning not directly observable, and can be difficult to measure. Nonetheless, exploring these factors may have merit as schools seek to facilitate parent involvement (Brice, 2014; Ferlazzo, 2011).

This current study sought to measure parent involvement with a widely used and validated measure of parent involvement constructed by Joyce Epstein of the Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships at Johns Hopkins University (Epstein & Salinas, 1993). According to Epstein, there are six types of involvement: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community. These aspects of parent involvement are also aspects of the constructs of social capital and generativity (McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992; McAdams, Hart, & Maruna, 1998; Saguaro Seminar, 2012; World Bank Group, 2011). Therefore, in this exploratory analysis, we examine whether the items in the parent involvement survey could be statistically modeled as the separate yet correlated factors of social capital and generativity, thereby suggesting that parent involvement could also be understood as an expression of an adult's social resources and psychosocial development.

## Literature Review

### Social Capital

Social capital refers to the nontangible resources such as social networks for the exchange of information, behavioral norms, and trust (Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 1995, 2000). The value of social resources exchanged is determined by those who make up the ties within given social networks and what their actual interests are for being involved with each other (Coleman, 1994). Although traditionally a sociological concept (Bourdieu, 1986), the reach of social capital as a framework for examining human behavior has extended into areas such as economics (Durlauf, 2002) and education (Dika & Singh, 2002; Forsyth

& Adams, 2004; Kilpatrick, Johns, & Mulford, 2010). The social capital of schools may be represented by the quantity, quality, and consistency of educationally focused relationships that exist among parents, children, and schools.

Dika and Singh (2002) synthesized “journal articles, book chapters, conference papers, and electronic publications between 1986 and 2001” (p. 32) to critically review the link between social capital and educational outcomes. They found evidence of a positive association with both educational attainment (completing a certain level of schooling) and with educational achievement (test scores and grades). Their recommendation for further research and stronger “theoretical and empirical support” (p. 41) has not gone unheeded, with recent studies continuing to show support for social capital as a means of improving outcomes for school-aged children and adolescents within many demographic categories (see as examples of the most recent literature: Chesters & Smith, 2015; Dufur, Hoffmann, Braudt, Parcel, & Spence, 2015; Tang, 2015). To briefly summarize, social capital is often manifested in efforts to improve student achievement (Perna & Titus, 2005; Putnam, 1995; Sampson, 1999).

Researchers have also bridged what is known about the relation between social capital and positive student outcomes with the significant body of literature on the benefits of parent involvement on student outcomes (Perna & Titus, 2005). Cumulating data on family and school partnerships continue to strongly suggest that parental involvement in their children’s formal education is vital to their academic success (Hill & Tyson, 2009; Jeynes, 2007, 2012). This is in part due to the connections between individuals, larger groups, and organizations that can be created to support the overall development of the students (Lareau, 1996). The resources existing in those social connections—mutual trust, norms of behavior, and reciprocal sharing of information—reflect social capital (Putnam, 1993) and provide us a means to analyze patterns of behavior, such as parent involvement, that are enabled by these collective social resources (Seligman, 1999).

Parent involvement as an expression of social capital is not a new idea, as the prominent and founding authors of social capital literature referenced the importance of parents and connections to social institutions (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1990; Dika & Singh, 2002; Lamont & Lareau, 1988). In more recent years, empirical research has continued developing support for this connection. Through the theoretical framework of social capital, McNeal’s (1999) work indicates parental involvement displayed through parent–child discussions and involvement in parent–teacher organizations provides the greatest support and explains behavioral outcomes. Internationally, Cruz (2009) also examines social capital by looking at the participation of parents in school associations, which he refers to as being an “essential form of social capital”

(p. 1). In a final example, Perna and Titus (2005) take the discussion of parent involvement into the final years of high school, during which most research indicates involvement declines. However, through the lens of social capital, older students still draw upon social resources from their parents to become educationally productive. They found that parent involvement through conveying norms and standards, trust, and social connections was shown to impact college enrollment.

Families can use social capital as leverage in the educational system to help reach higher levels of engagement and to foster greater scholastic attainment for their children, sometimes despite the limitations of the parents' socioeconomic status or level of education (Coleman, 1990; Griswold, 1994; Lareau, 2001). Parents' social capital can mediate how family background affects their involvement by shaping their opportunities, motivations, and abilities to actively participate in school in ways that have significant impacts on their children's educational success and their own adult psychosocial attainments (Bolivar & Chrispeels, 2011; Coleman, 1994; Leichter, 1974; Teachman, Paasch, & Carver, 1997).

On a more individual level, parents' role construction influences the frequency and ways in which parents are involved in their children's educational pursuits (Walker, Ice, Hoover-Dempsey, & Sandler, 2011; Whitaker & Hoover-Dempsey, 2013). Role construction includes both contextual motivators (parents' perceptions of school invitations for involvement) as well as life context variables (parents' knowledge about the school system and their familial cultural practices). Both the contextual motivators and life context variables are aspects of networks for information exchange and trust, providing more support for the role of social capital in parent involvement.

### **Generativity**

Parent involvement is also a well-documented expression of generativity, a developmental stage proposed by Erik Erikson (1950, 1959, 1964) referring to the primarily adult concern for establishing and guiding the next generation. In Erikson's theory, human development throughout the lifespan is characterized by eight stages in which we experience a conflict that could have two possible outcomes, one being negative. Complete mastery over a conflict is not necessary, but a positive resolution allows for the emergence of one's personal and social identity. An integral aspect of Erikson's theory is the interplay of an individual with the external social factors around them. During the stage of generativity, adults are faced with the struggle to give back to society and become something greater than themselves through their careers and/or families. A positive resolution is one in which adults care for the future generations.

Erikson originally suggested that generativity is a mid-life concern, a point in the lifespan that is often viewed between the ages of 40–60. Although full generative development may not be in “relative dominance” (Erikson, 1997, p. 66) until this age, generative thinking begins to emerge much earlier (Kroger, 2007; McAdams, 1993; Pratt, Lawford, & Allen, 2012) with a key component being the utilization of effective parenting skills. McAdams (1993), a prominent researcher in human development, notes that generativity is “prompted by social expectations. The demand is normative and age-graded. It is considered ‘on-time’ to assume generative social roles in one’s thirties, forties, and fifties” (p. 223).

In being generative, adults create resources of lasting value with intentions to benefit the future. Although there are many routes to generative development, it is most often associated with parenting (Erikson, 1963). Parents with high levels of generativity are more caring and effective in their parental roles, and they are often more invested in their children’s education. Parental role construction reflects parents’ ideas of what they are supposed to do in relation to their children’s academic experiences. Consequently, parental role construction predicts parents’ home and school involvement (Deslandes & Bertrand, 2005; Green, Walker, Hoover-Dempsey, & Sandler, 2007).

### **The Generativity–Social Capital Link**

The importance of examining social capital and generativity together as underlying aspects of parent involvement comes from the fact that they have overlapping areas of influence, and we propose that they have a bidirectional influence on each other. Generativity is dependent on our personal readiness and awareness to interact with society in both an individual and collective manner (Erikson, 1975). As adults become more ready for interactions and aware of others, of social institutions, and of public concerns, they become less preoccupied with themselves, creating a stronger personal identity (Erikson, 1963). This simultaneously benefits the individual and society, creating, among other things, social capital.

The generative development of adults is a central need and a critical resource for society and culture to be strong and interconnected. The beneficial results of generativity are seen in the strengthening of social institutions and the linking of individuals to cultural traditions and social change efforts focused on giving and caring (McAdams & Logan, 2004). Generativity is positively associated with volunteerism, community involvement, voting, larger networks of friends, and more satisfaction with social relationships (Bailey, 1994; Cole & Stewart, 1996; Hart, McAdams, Hirsch, & Bauer, 2001; Mahler, 2011; McAdams, 1997; McAdams & de Saint Aubin, 1992). Social institutions such as

schools, churches, and government agencies depend on the generative efforts of adults. In essence, the beneficial outcomes of generative development help create the resources that have been defined as social capital. This is bidirectional, staying consistent with the theory of social capital, as adults also depend on the social institutions for guidance, support, and affirmation in resolving the crises they face at each of their developmental stages (Erikson, 1963). Psychological findings indicate that support from social institutions is central to developing and maintaining a healthy identity for adults (Erikson, 1963).

### **Justification for the Current Study**

As the educational community seeks continual improvement in family engagement, it is important to understand the relationships among the underlying factors that affect the outcomes we seek from parents, which is increased involvement both at home and in the school. For this study, the authors extend their previous work (Patel & Stevens, 2010) by exploring if parent involvement can be understood as an expression of social capital and generativity. Given that generativity is a process integral to adult development, that social capital enhances individual opportunities throughout the lifespan, and that parent involvement plays a key role in students' academic success, understanding the relationship between these factors has the potential to promote simultaneous benefits for individuals who are at different points across the lifespan.

This study is limited to the statistical modeling of the factors as measured using the *School and Family Partnership Survey*, a widely used instrument developed by Epstein and Salinas (1993) for measuring parent involvement. The results of this study present a statistical model that illustrates that social networks along with psychological and sociological development do relate to parent involvement. Parent involvement is often viewed through the lens of different types of involvement (Epstein & Salinas, 1993). A model such as that presented by this study may help facilitate our development of a deeper understanding of the interrelationships among community structures, social resources, *and* the unique development of personal characteristics at an individual level, which would benefit the evaluation process of parent involvement initiatives.

In practice, demonstrating a positive relationship between the healthy psychosocial development of parents and their involvement in their children's education will provide an additional argument to the educational system for investing in the lives of parents and families as a whole. Policies and procedures of schools related to their parental base are reflective of the schools' values and beliefs towards the utility of parent and school partnerships.

## Methods

In the context of this research, the definitions and relationships of social capital and generativity are limited within the contextual frame of the educational system, and more specifically, within the frame of parent–teacher and parent–child interactions. For this study we selected a commonly used instrument, as it has been shown to be a valid and reliable measure of parent involvement as defined by Epstein and Salinas (1993). The items on this instrument are typically viewed as direct gauges of how involved parents are with their children’s education and how well schools solicit the involvement of parents. We hypothesize that the items can also be explored as indirect measures of generativity and social capital and that these two factors are correlated with each other, thus suggesting that generativity and social capital are underlying factors in parent involvement. With this in mind, social capital is operationalized as the actual or potential resources presented to parents by the school according to parent report. Generativity is operationalized as the activities a parent engages in or feels s/he can do on a one-on-one basis with his/her child.

### Participants

Participants from the families of students in the sixth, seventh, and eighth grade classes were recruited from two K–8 urban public schools in the Southwest, both of which serve students from ethnically diverse backgrounds. Of the 437 parents/guardians invited to participate, 45% agreed to do so ( $n = 197$ ). Approximately 40% of the participants chose to complete the Spanish version of the questionnaire ( $n = 79$ ). Frequency distributions by grade are represented in Table 1.

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Parents of Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth Grade Students

	Parents					
	6th		7th		8th	
Characteristic	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
Gender						
Female	46	23.35	65	33.00	41	20.81
Male	13	6.60	16	8.12	7	3.55
Language of Survey						
English	30	15.23	45	22.84	36	18.27
Spanish	29	14.72	37	18.78	13	6.60

\*Note: Some parents neglected to mark their gender and/or their child’s grade level.

## Measure

The *School and Family Partnerships: Survey of Parents in Elementary and Middle Grades* (SFPS), created by the Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships at John's Hopkins University (Epstein & Salinas, 1993), was utilized to obtain parents' reports of their involvement and their reports of school outreach provided, such as communication and invitations from the teachers, that facilitate their involvement. The survey consists of 10 sections, each examining a distinct aspect of school and family connections. Only two of these 10 sections pertained to this study, totaling 35 Likert-style items. These items addressed: (1) parent involvement, and (2) parents' reports of school programs. The sections that were not used in this study include, but are not limited to, adolescent development, parents' attitudes about the school and the community, as well as their reports of children's learning at home activities. Each survey section is shown to be a valid and reliable measure of the constructs included (Epstein & Salinas, 1993).

The authors' previous work analyzed SFPS data as a way to examine the influence of parent–teacher–student beliefs discrepancies regarding academic ability on parent involvement (Patel & Stevens, 2010). This current research, however, is a secondary analysis of the data after reviewing the SFPS items for similarities with items on measures of generativity and social capital to answer the research question of whether parent involvement is an expression of the underlying constructs of social capital and generativity. Included are items for assessing parent involvement that are similar to those used in assessing levels of generativity such as reading a story to a child, passing along information, and liking the work of a teacher (see Loyola Generativity Scale [McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992] and the Generative Behavior Checklist [McAdams et al., 1998]). Items serving as measures of social capital are represented by the reported interactions between parents and teachers and the reported involvement of parents in their children's education, which reflect items used on some measurement tools for social capital (Saguaro Seminar, 2012; World Bank Group, 2011).

## Procedures

Data were collected at the end of the first grading period in the academic year. Parents received the parent involvement survey at either parent–teacher conferences or at home via their children. Both an English and Spanish questionnaire was made available to participants. Parents were provided a cover letter explaining the research project and questionnaire and were asked to return the completed survey to the school office, sealed in the provided envelope, within a two-week time period.



## Analysis

We examined the structural relationship between social capital and generativity using structural equation modeling (SEM). This tested the proposition that social capital and generativity are distinct yet correlated phenomena involved in a broader process of parent involvement in K–12 education.

Due to the discrete nature of the *School and Family Partnership Survey* scores, data analyses were carried out with *Mplus* 7.2 (2012), which automatically employs options for dealing with such variables at both the observed and latent levels (Muthén & Muthén, 1998–2010). The *Mplus* maximum likelihood estimation feature was used for missing data to provide less biased parameter estimates (e.g., Little & Rubin, 1987). The data set was then examined for normality; no issues with non-normality were revealed. Lastly, a confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to develop a definitive factor structure underlying 35 items of the SFPS that pertained to behaviors related to measures of social capital and generativity. Model fit was evaluated and modifications were made through an iterative process. The best fit model was adopted and analyzed at the item level. Descriptive statistics on how parents actually responded to the survey items are presented at the end of the results section.

## Results

A confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to develop a definitive factor structure underlying 35 items of the *School and Family Partnership Survey*. The scree plot seemed to suggest the presence of a general factor as predicted from the inspection of the correlation matrix. A large first eigenvalue (8.01) and a much smaller second eigenvalue (3.02) suggest the presence of a dominant global factor. Stretching it, one might argue that a secondary elbow occurred at the third factor, with an eigenvalue value of 1.92, implying a three-factor solution. Only items loading on the first two factors were used in the initial step of the model fit and modification process. Items loading on the third factor were examined later.

### Model Fit and Modification

A measurement model of the two factors, social capital and generativity, was first tested. The goodness-of-fit indices for the two-factor model suggested that the constructs were measured satisfactorily but not adequately with  $\chi^2(43) = 77.95$ ,  $p < .0001$ , indicating that the two-factor model should be rejected. While the WRMR = 0.934 indicated that the model provided an acceptable level, the CFI = 0.966, TLI = 0.977, and RMSEA = 0.064 point estimate did

not approximate zero (Browne & Cudeck, 1993). This suggested that the two-factor model represents a possibility of close fit but does not represent a close or an exact fit to the survey. The two factors correlated fairly highly, 0.394. After examining the output, we decided there was a misspecification problem that was handled by adding an additional factor. In other words, this finding suggested that three or more factors underlie responses to the survey rather than only the two of social capital and generativity.

Based on these results, a three-factor model was then specified. First, items with low or secondary loadings were dropped from the factors. Then, social capital was distinguished into two levels: individual and community. This yielded eight, six, and six items for the factors of *individual-level social capital*, *generativity*, and *community-level social capital*, respectively. In each case, the retained items were deemed adequate to measure these constructs and appeared to maintain good face validity. The indicators of the *School and Family Partnership Survey* constructs are listed in Table 2. Also included in Table 2 are the unstandardized parameter estimates for the between-items and factors, which were all significant and of the expected direction.

The model achieved adequate to good fit when a third factor was added. The goodness-of-fit indices suggested that the three-factor model constructs were measured adequately and sufficiently with  $\chi^2(46) = 66.93$ ,  $p = 0.024$ . The CFI = 0.982, TLI = 0.990, RMSEA = 0.048 point estimate (Browne & Cudeck, 1993) and WRMR = 0.808 indicated that the model provided a reasonable and very close or exact fit to the survey. The three factors correlated fairly highly, with 0.334 for the factors *generativity* and *individual-level social capital*, 0.763 for *individual* and *community social capital* factors, and 0.330 for *generativity* and *community-level social capital*. The three-factor model was adopted as the best-fit model to the sample data.

### Parent Response to Survey

This study is a continuation of the authors' previously published work (Patel & Stevens, 2010). The purpose of the current study was to explore if parent involvement could be viewed, and statistically modelled, as a relationship among the factors of social capital and generativity. The results are dependent on the data from this particular sample, which does invite certain limitations and the need for replication and future research; for one, the parents are those of middle school students. Descriptive statistics are provided here for some additional context to this study based on the newly defined factors *individual social capital*, *community social capital*, and *generativity*. For more details on responses to specific items, items dropped from the current proposed model, an examination of the factors originally proposed by Epstein and Salinas (1993), and a

comparison of Spanish- versus English-speaking parents, please refer to Patel and Stevens (2010).

Table 2. Factor Indicators and Unstandardized Parameter Estimates

Items	Estimates
<b>Factor 1 Individual-Level Social Capital<sup>a</sup> (<math>\alpha = .86</math>)</b>	
Tell me how my child is doing in school	1.00
Tell me what skills my child needs to learn each year	1.50
Explain how to check my child's homework	1.84
Send home news about things happening at school	1.32
Give me information about how report card grades are earned	1.39
Assign homework that requires my child to talk with me about things learned in class	1.91
Send home clear notices that I can read easily	1.53
Contact me if my child does something well or improves	1.97
<b>Factor 2 Generativity<sup>b</sup> (<math>\alpha = .79</math>)</b>	
Talk to my child about school	1.00
Read to my child	2.10
Listen to my child read	2.34
Listen to a story my child wrote	1.95
Help my child with homework	1.86
Help my child plan time for homework and chores	1.37
<b>Factor 3 Community-Level Social Capital<sup>a</sup> (<math>\alpha = .89</math>)</b>	
Invite me to programs at the school	1.00
Ask me to volunteer at the school	1.69
Invite me to PTA/PTO meetings	1.60
Ask me to help with fundraising	1.68
Include parents on school committees such as curriculum, budgets, and school improvement	1.75
Provide information on community services that I may want to use	1.79

<sup>a</sup> Question stem: How well does the school do each of the following?

<sup>b</sup> Question stem: How often have you engaged in the following during this academic year?

The parents responded similarly on all three scales. On average, they did not respond significantly higher or lower on any one factor compared to another. Regarding the factor *generativity*, parents responded positively. The average was 3.12 ( $SD = .62$ ) on a scale of one to four (never, 1–2 times, a few times, many times). The activities reported as the most frequently engaged in were talking

with their child about school (many times = 68%) and helping their middle schooler plan time for homework (many times = 55%). The activity parents engaged in the least was reading to their child with 25% reporting they never do this.

Parents also responded with positive perceptions of both *individual-* and *community-level social capital* ( $M = 2.58$  and  $2.31$ ,  $SD = .44$  and  $.67$ , respectively). These were measured on a scale of one to three (does not do, could do better, does well). Within *individual-level social capital*, parents reported that the action the school does the best at is telling them how their middle school child is doing in school (does well = 81%) and how often they send home news about the school and information on grades (does well = 76% and 76%, respectively). The action that most parents reported the school not doing was explaining how to check their child's homework (does not do = 21%). Within *community-level social capital*, parents reported that the school does well at giving invitations to attend school programs (70%), while 31% reported that they are never asked to help with fundraising.

## Discussion

As the importance of family engagement continues to rise, examinations of the topic merit new perspectives and interdisciplinary approaches. This study examined the connection between parent involvement, the psychosocial development of generativity, and the sociological concept of social capital. Following the trend of recent research, the utility of social capital as a frame has an extended reach. As an extension of a previously published study (Patel & Stevens, 2010), this current work sought to examine how parent involvement can be viewed as an outcome of generativity and social capital. The original statistical model proposed these concepts as two global factors. However, analyses suggested that a better model for the data is a three-factor model in which social capital is viewed as two separate factors, one for social capital at the individual level and another for social capital at the community level. The final measures for the factor *individual-level social capital* are those survey items indicating the interactions between two individuals, the teacher and the parent. In this case, the participating parents reported the amount of communication and information shared between their child's teacher and the home. According to social capital theory, every time a line of communication is used positively, that relationship is strengthened and trust is increased. The final measures for the factor *community-level social capital* are those survey items indicating the opportunities created by the school for parents to participate in community functions. Again, according to social capital theory, schools that are closed to the idea of

including parents in school activities are said to provide low levels of social capital because trusting relationships are not nurtured due to a lack of communication and cooperation (Coleman, 1994; Kilpatrick et al., 2010). The factor *generativity* as proposed was a reliable construct to measure the activities parents are directly involved in with their children's education. In Erikson's theory of generativity, parenting is highlighted as an important part of the generative process. Parents have to have the desire and a belief in their capabilities in order to actively promote the well-being of the next generation (Erikson, 1963).

The fact that this research concluded that social capital was better defined as either an individual-level or community-level good confirms previous research that social capital is a versatile resource at all system levels (Coleman, 1988, 1994; Durlauf, 2002; Kilpatrick et al., 2010). Considering social capital as a single global factor as originally posited poses problematic issues of incorrect measurement and interpretation of the social phenomenon under study. Social networks are dynamic entities with reciprocating influences from surrounding environments. Their internal structures and their external ambitions may be ever changing depending on context, or as Erikson repeatedly noted, the workings of any social group or individual are dependent on the historical time and place.

The analysis also demonstrates that the three factors are correlated. As we proposed, social capital and generativity are not limited to separate areas of influence in one's life, but rather work together to create patterns of behaviors that we commonly observe. As prominent researchers on generativity have indicated, generative development is beneficial to social institutions, helping to strengthen them and to pass on cultural traditions (McAdams & Logan, 2004). Cause and effect cannot be assumed; however, from the theories of social capital and generativity, it is logical to suggest that they are the underlying factors providing the resources needed for behaviors to occur. In other words, the creation of social capital leads to increased opportunities through social networks, but this behavior may also serve in creating necessary resources for the successful development of an individual's psychological and social identity. In the same manner, the psychosocial development of generativity not only benefits the wellbeing of an individual, but is also an important characteristic that leads people to create and nurture social capital. Similarly, it is recognized that involvement in the family and community is seen as a productive and generative activity (Warburton, McLaughlin, & Pinsker, 2006).

The importance of considering these underlying factors before making premature assumptions about the reasons for parent involvement—or the lack thereof—is to prevent placing blame on parents, teachers, or students for what may be situations and consequences out of their control. For instance, teachers

may blame parents for students' academic failure; however, they must consider if the creation of social capital has been blocked through a lack of opportunities for parents to be involved in the schools. The importance of examining these two factors together also helps us understand the variability we will find in the motivation for parents to be engaged in their children's school. Motivation cannot be viewed as being derived from only one source; rather, motivation is best viewed as a more complex decision to personally invest one's self in a situation based on, for example, a parent's sense that she can be successful in helping her children, that being involved is a valuable use of her time and energy, and that the avenues for successful involvement exist and are open to her. Even looking only at these three limited examples demonstrates that parents' motivations to be engaged come from their own internal views of themselves (generativity) and their perceptions of having the means to accomplish what they desire to accomplish (social capital).

### **Future Research**

This study took the preliminary step of exploring the relationship between generativity and social capital within the context of education and as underlying factors of parent involvement by using an existing instrument due to its history as a valid and reliable measure of parent involvement. We cannot argue that this parent involvement instrument is the most appropriate measure of generativity or social capital; yet the analyses from the data do provide a strong support at the start of exploration of generativity and social capital as aspects of parent involvement. There are multiple other ways that generativity can be observed, as there are for social capital. Now that such a relationship between the factors has been presented, more rigorous work is needed in the area of measurement. Exploring the same questions asked in this study with different measures will further increase the reliability of the concept.

Future research should also examine the development of generativity over time. More specifically, it would be beneficial if researchers examined the influence of social capital on generative processes. A better understanding of how varying levels and types of social capital influence generativity in the context of parent involvement would provide school personnel with specific and focused recommendations related to the facilitation of social capital. Additionally, research should look into parents' perceptions of their social capital and how schools go about providing social capital as children progress through school. In what ways are schools addressing student achievement through the provision of social capital?

While this study provides the results of the first step in developing a statistical model revealing the interrelated nature of social capital and generativity,

replication is needed. Such replication should include various other forms of parent involvement and generativity measures in order to further increase the validity and reliability of the proposed framework. With a statistical model in place, researchers may be able to better evaluate schools' efforts to increase family engagement, which relies on the parents, school, and community working together. Finally, the investigation of social capital and generativity should focus on measures related to current ideas of family engagement (Ferlazzo, 2011) rather than parent involvement.

## References

- Bailey, W. (1994). Psychosocial development in women: Generativity. *Psychological Reports*, 74, 286.
- Bolivar, J. M., & Chrispeels, J. H. (2011). Enhancing parent leadership through building social capital and intellectual capital. *American Educational Research Journal*, 48(1), 4–38.
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education* (pp. 241–258). New York, NY: Greenwood Press.
- Brice, J. (2014, April). Department of education releases new parent and community engagement framework [Web log message]. ED Homeroom: The Official Blog of the U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from <http://www.ed.gov/blog/2014/04/departement-of-education-releases-new-parent-and-community-engagement-framework/>
- Browne, M. W., & Cudeck, R. (1993). Alternative ways to assessing model fit. In K. A. Bollen & J. S. Long (Eds.), *Testing structural equation models* (pp. 136–162). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Chesters, J., & Smith, J. (2015). Social capital and aspirations for educational attainment: A cross-national comparison of Australia and Germany. *Journal of Youth Studies*, (ahead-of-print), 1–18. doi:10.1080/13676261.2014.1001831
- Cole, E. R., & Stewart, A. J. (1996). Meanings of political participation among Black and White women: Political identity and social responsibility. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 71(1), 130–140.
- Coleman, J. (1988). Social capital in the creation of human capital. *American Journal of Sociology*, 94, S95–S120.
- Coleman, J. (1990). *Foundations of social theory*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Coleman, J. (1994). Social capital, human capital, and investment in youth. In A. Petersen & J. Mortimer (Eds.), *Youth unemployment and society* (pp. 34–50). Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.
- Cruz, J. (2009). Social capital in the Americas: Participation in parents' associations. *Americas Barometer Insights*, 24, 1–6.
- Deslandes, R., & Bertrand, R. (2005). Motivation of parent involvement in secondary-level schooling. *Journal of Educational Research*, 98, 164–175. doi:10.3200/JOER.98.3.164-175
- Dika, S. & Singh, K. (2002). Applications of social capital in educational literature: A critical synthesis. *Review of Educational Research*, 72, 31–60. doi:10.3102/00346543072001031
- Dufur, M. J., Hoffmann, J. P., Braudt, D. B., Parcel, T. L., & Spence, K. R. (2015). Examining the effects of family and school social capital on delinquent behavior. *Deviant Behavior*, (ahead-of-print), 1–16. doi:10.1080/01639625.2014.944069

- Durlauf, S. (2002). Symposium on social capital: Introduction. *The Economic Journal*, 112, F417–F418.
- Epstein, J. L., & Salinas, K. C. (1993). *School and family partnerships: Surveys and summaries. Questionnaires for teachers and parents in elementary and middle grades, and how to summarize your school's survey data*. Baltimore, MD: Center on Families, Communities, Schools, and Children's Learning.
- Erikson, E. H. (1950). *Childhood and society*. New York, NY: Norton.
- Erikson, E. H. (1959). *Identity and the life cycle: Selected papers*. New York, NY: International Universities Press.
- Erikson, E. H. (1963). *Childhood and society* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Norton.
- Erikson, E. H. (1964). *Insight and responsibility*. New York, NY: Norton.
- Erikson, E. H. (1975). *Life history and the historical moment* (1st ed.). New York, NY: Norton.
- Erikson, E. H. (1997). *The life cycle completed* (Extended version). New York, NY: Norton.
- Ferlazzo, L. (2011). Involvement or engagement? *Educational Leadership*, 68(8), 10–14.
- Forsyth, P., & Adams, C. (2004). Social capital in education: Taking stock of concept and measure. In W. Hoy & C. Miskel (Eds.), *Educational administration, policy, and reform: Research and measurement* (pp. 251–278). Charlotte, NC: Information Age.
- Green, C. L., Walker, J. M. T., Hoover-Dempsey, K. V., & Sandler, H. M. (2007). Parents' motivations for involvement in children's education: An empirical test of a theoretical model of parental involvement. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 99, 532–544. doi:10.1037/0022-0663.99.3.532
- Griswold, W. (1994). *Cultures and societies in a changing world*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Hart, H., McAdams, D. P., Hirsch, B. J., & Bauer, J. J. (2001). Generativity and social involvement among African Americans and White adults. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 35(2), 208–230.
- Hill, N. E., & Tyson, D. F. (2009). Parental involvement in middle school: A meta-analytic assessment of the strategies that promote achievement. *Developmental Psychology*, 45(3), 740–763. doi:10.1037/a0015362
- Jeynes, W. H. (2007). The relationship between parental involvement and urban secondary school student academic achievement. *Urban Education*, 42(1), 82–110.
- Jeynes, W. (2012). A meta-analysis of the efficacy of different types of parental involvement programs for urban students. *Urban Education*, 47(4), 706–742.
- Kilpatrick, S., Johns, S., & Mulford, B. (2010). Social capital, educational institutions, and leadership. In P. Peterson, E. Baker, & B. McGraw (Eds.), *The international encyclopedia of education* (3rd ed., pp. 113–119). New York, NY: Elsevier Science.
- Kroger, J. (2007). *Identity development: Adolescence through adulthood* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Lamont, M., & Lareau, A. (1988). Cultural capital: Allusions, gaps, and glissandos in recent theoretical developments. *Sociological Theory*, 6(2), 152–168.
- Lareau, A. (1996). Assessing parent involvement in schooling: A critical analysis. In A. Booth & J. F. Dunn (Eds.), *Family-school links: How do they affect educational outcomes?* (pp. 57–64). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Lareau, A. (2001). Linking Bourdieu's concept of capital to the broader field: The case of family-school relationships. In B. Biddle (Ed.), *Social class, poverty, and education: Policy and practice* (pp. 77–100). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Leichter, H. (1974). For the record: The family as educator. *Teachers College Record*, 76(2), 173–174.
- Little, R., & Rubin, D. (1987). *Statistical analysis with missing data*. New York, NY: Wiley.



- Mahler, E. (2011). Midlife work role transitions: Generativity and learning in 21st century careers. In C. Hoare (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of reciprocal adult development and learning* (2nd ed., pp. 186–214). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- McAdams, D. P. (1993). *The stories we live by: Personal myths and the making of the self*. New York, NY: Morrow.
- McAdams, D. P. (1997). Three voices of Erik Erikson. *Contemporary Psychology*, *42*, 575–578.
- McAdams, D. P., & de St. Aubin, E. (1992). A theory of generativity and its assessment through self-report, behavioral acts, and narrative themes in autobiography. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *62*, 1003–1015.
- McAdams, D. P., Hart, H. M., & Maruna, S. (1998). The anatomy of generativity. In D. P. McAdams & E. de St. Aubin (Eds.), *Generativity and adult development: How and why we care for the next generation* (pp. 7–43). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- McAdams, D. P., & Logan, R. L. (2004). What is generativity? In E. de St. Aubin, D. P. McAdams, & T. Kim (Eds.), *The generative society: Caring for future generations* (pp. 15–32). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- McNeal, J. (1999). Parental involvement as social capital: Differential effectiveness on science achievement, truancy, and dropping out. *Social Forces*, *78*(1), 117–144. doi:10.1093/sf/78.1.117
- MPlus (Version 7.2). [Computer Software]. (2012). Los Angeles, CA. Available from <http://www.statmodel.com/>
- Muthén, L. K., & Muthén, B. O. (1998–2010). *MPlus user's guide* (6th ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Muthén & Muthén.
- Patel, N., & Stevens, S. (2010). Parent–teacher–student discrepancies in academic ability beliefs: Influences on parent involvement. *School Community Journal*, *20*(2), 115–136. Retrieved from <http://www.schoolcommunitynetwork.org/SCJ.aspx>
- Perna, L. W., & Titus, M. A. (2005). The relationship between parental involvement as social capital and college enrollment: An examination of racial/ethnic group differences. *Journal of Higher Education*, *76*(5), 485–518.
- Pratt, M. W., Lawford, H. L., & Allen, J. W. (2012). Young fatherhood, generativity, and men's development: Travelling a two-way street to maturity. In J. Ball & K. Daly (Eds.), *Father involvement in Canada: Diversity, renewal, and transformation* (pp. 107–125). Vancouver, Canada: UBC Press.
- Putnam, R. (1993). *Making democracy work: Civic traditions in modern Italy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Putnam, R. D. (1995). Bowling alone: America's declining social capital. *Journal of Democracy*, *6*(1), 65–78.
- Putnam, R. D. (2000). *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.
- Saguaro Seminar. (2012). *Social capital measurement overview*. Retrieved from <http://www.hks.harvard.edu/saguaro/measurement/measurement.htm>
- Sampson, R. (1999). Beyond social capital: Spatial dynamics of collective efficacy for children. *American Sociological Review*, *64*(5), 633–660.
- Seligman, M. E. P. (1999). The president's address. *American Psychologist*, *54*, 559–562.
- Tang, S. (2015). Social capital and determinants of immigrant family educational involvement. *Journal of Educational Research*, *108*(1), 22–34.
- Teachman, J. D., Paasch, K., & Carver, K. (1997). Social capital and the generation of human capital. *Social Forces*, *75*(4), 1343–1359.

- Walker, J. M. T., Ice, C. L., Hoover-Dempsey, K. V., & Sandler, H. M. (2011). Latino parents' motivations for involvement in their children's schooling: An exploratory study. *The Elementary School Journal*, *111*(3), 409–429.
- Warburton, J., McLaughlin, D., & Pinsker, D. (2006). Generative acts: Family and community involvement of older Australians. *International Journal of Aging and Human Development*, *63*(2), 115–137. doi:10.2190/9TE3-T1G1-333V-3DT8.
- Whitaker, M., & Hoover-Dempsey, K. (2013). School influences on parents' role beliefs. *The Elementary School Journal*, *114*(1), 73–99.
- World Bank Group. (2011). *Measurement tools*. Retrieved from <http://go.worldbank.org/LHI-4AYZEF0>

Sharon Stevens is an associate professor of Educational Psychology at Western Illinois University. Her research interests focus on teaching and accreditation in higher education. Dr. Stevens can be contacted at Western Illinois University, Educational and Interdisciplinary Studies, 1 University Circle, Horrabin Hall 115p, Macomb, Illinois 61455, or email [sr-stevens2@wiu.edu](mailto:sr-stevens2@wiu.edu)

Nimisha Patel is professor of Educational Psychology at Wright State University. Her research interests include STEM Education, student engagement, and K–12 teaching practices.