

**Ethnic and Racial Difference  
in Higher Education Attainment:  
Effects of Family Resources or  
Effects of School Resources?**

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**INTRODUCTION**

- In the United States, earning a bachelor's degree is recognized as the most important factor for reducing economic inequality and increasing social mobility (Bowen, Chingos, & McPherson, 2009).
- - Estimated lifetime earnings in 2003 were 73 percent higher for those with a bachelor's degree than for those with only a high school diploma (Baum & Payea, 2004).
- - Estimated the average rate of economic return for an additional year of schooling resulted in a 6 to 10 percent increase in additional earning power (Card, 1999).

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**INTRODUCTION**

- The American education policy generally intends to promote all students to attain their highest level of achievement. One main approach has been to prepare a larger, more racially/ethnically diverse population of students for transitioning to college.
- Despite many years and multiple plans by educational policy makers and government to achieve educational equity, there is still a disparity in college enrollment rates across racial/ethnic groups.
- - Latino and African Americans are consistently under-represented in colleges as compared to Caucasians (Perna, 2007).

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## INTRODUCTION

- The present study was designed to examine this problem by focusing on the educational resources that might contribute to the persisting enrollment gap.
- Although there were some studies that linked inequality of access to postsecondary education to family and school resources, researcher have often focused too narrowly on the issue of college enrollment without sufficient attention to complex resource factors.

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## INTRODUCTION

- To examine these issues, thus, the present study conceptualized educational resources at family and school levels and examined the extent to which these resources differentially affect college enrollment by race/ethnicity.
- I designed a comprehensive conceptual model, in the forms of capital. The conceptual model assumes that students may draw on multiple forms of capital in the college enrollment process within the multiple home-school contexts and that paths to student college enrollment may vary across racial/ethnic groups.

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## THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

- The purpose of this study was, thus, to expand the existing research literature on post-secondary education attainment, and to test a more informed, comprehensive conceptual model for understanding the impact of educational resources (social and cultural capitals), as a form of family resource and school resource, on college enrollment.

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## LITERATURE REVIEW

- Reviewing the studies that examined factors that might influence ethnically diverse high school students' college enrollment.
- Family-level predictors: Many studies have confirmed that characteristics of students and families affect college enrollment (e.g., Alexander & Eckland, 1997; Coleman & Hoffer, 1987; Falsey & Heyns, 1984; Karen 2002; Espenshade, Hale, & Chung, 2005).
- School-level predictors: Some researchers concluded that school resources likely mattered for learning and class/racial disparities (Karen, 2002; Espenshade, Hale, & Chung, 2005; Perna & Titus, 2005).

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## LITERATURE REVIEW

- A Conceptual framework that would allow one to integrate the influential factors
- This study adapted Bourdieu's notion of capitals and developed a comprehensive conceptual model of relations among various factors consisting cultural and social capitals at family- and school- levels.
- Bourdieu's (1986) work provides the notion of resources perspectives as three factors: economic capital, social capital, and cultural capital.
- -> Bourdieu's work remains instrumental tools in understanding inequity.

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## LITERATURE REVIEW

- Researchers have recognized that family social and cultural capitals may be more directly responsible constructs than SES for student achievement (Lareau, 1987, Funkhouser & Gonzales, 1998; Lam, 1997).
- \*\*Social capital: is based on resources accessed through social networks
- \*\*Cultural capital: is the knowledge that elites value about process for securing higher education.  
-cultural capital can be produced through social relationships to expectation and norms, and obligation.

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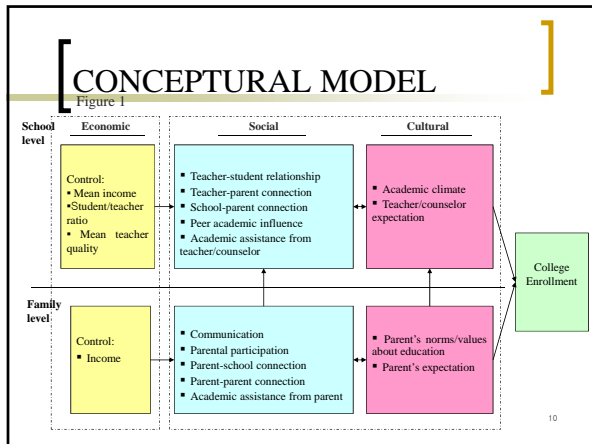
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- ## RESEARCH QUESTIONS
1. How large are differences in college attainment among racial/ethnic groups?
  2. To what extent do family and school variables mediate the effects of race on college attainment?
  3. Are there differences in effects of school and family variables on college attainment among racial/ethnic groups?

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## METHODS-data and sample

- This study used the Education Longitudinal Study (ELS) data. The ELS is a national survey of a representative sample of U.S. high school sophomores collected by the National Center for Educational Statistics in 2002.
- ELS data is most appropriate for this study: 1) the data is gathered from nationally representative sample of high school students. 2) includes information gathered from students' teachers, parents, and schools. 3) allows for modeling students' college attainment at the critical transition.

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## METHODS-data and sample

Summary of case deletion to final sample

Restriction	Cumulative Number of Cases And (Percentage of total)
Original number	16,197 (100.0)
F2 Panel	14,011 (86.5)
High school completion	13,178 (81.4)
White, Black, Hispanic, and Asian	11,906 (73.5)
Attended H.S. more than 5 students per each school	11,842 (73.1)
Final sample	11,842

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## METHODS-variables

- Dependent variable: the level of offering of first postsecondary institution (F2PS1LVL)  
-This variable is a three-category measure: (1) less-than 2-year school; (2) 2-year college/university; (3) 4-year college/university
- Independent variables: detailed description of the variables are provided in Table 3.2.
- Control variables: economic variables at each level were controlled.

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## METHODS-analytic strategy

- Because students in the ELS: 2002-06 data were collected with sampling designs that involved more than one level (i.e., sampling students from sampled schools), rather than a simple random design, multilevel modeling was used for this study.
- For this study, a two-level multinomial logistic regression model that estimates the effects of family resources, and school resources on college enrollment, specially, the level of offering of first postsecondary institution was employed.

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## RESULTS

- Look at page 7 in the handout

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## CONCLUSION-①

- This research demonstrated that social and cultural capitals are positively related to 4-year college enrollment regardless of the level of economic capital. Family resources had the powerful influence while schools had some effect on enrollment in higher education. This suggests that any intervention program must consider what can be added to family resources so that college enrollment can be increased among disadvantaged students.

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## CONCLUSION-②

- White students appear to be the most effective group at converting social and cultural capitals into college enrollment when compared to the other racial/ethnic groups. On the other hands, Blacks and Hispanics not only possess fewer types of capital that promote college enrollment, but also tended to attend schools with fewer resources that promote college enrollment. This suggests that the college preparation programs designed to promote the increase of college enrollment across racial/ethnic groups should recognize the ways in which the relation between capitals and college enrollment varies across racial/ethnic groups.

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## [ LIMITATIONS ]

- More comprehensive analyses of the college enrollment process and ethnic groups make understanding the ways students of different racial and ethnic groups make decisions about attending college. In this sense, the next step to further this study would be the inclusion of student academic and psychological variables at the student level and school composition variables at the school level.
- Because of the small numbers of Blacks, Hispanics, and Asians at each high school in the ELS data set, this research might not exactly examine the ways in which variations in the characteristics of individual high schools' resources contribute to racial/ethnic group differences in the likelihood of enrolling at a 2- or 4-year college.

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