

Factors Affecting On Time High School Graduation

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Introduction

An ample amount of research has been conducted on the national issue of late graduation rates in middle and high schools spanning several years. According to the research conducted, it is projected that the 2016 class cost the nation \$450 billion in taxes, lost wages and efficiency over the lifespans due to late graduation (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2009).

The common citizens of the nation suffer not just due to revenue loss but as a consequence of the level of education amongst the population as well. This research seeks to find out if variables exist that add up to the factors that affect the graduation of high and middle schools on time in the inner cities of Los Angeles. The study will utilize a research design containing qualitative methodology. The data will be gathered on the cohort of the students; interviews will be conducted with educators, families, and students. Thompson's (2008) four components for the success of the student say that for the success of the students the contribution of student, school, community, and family is significant.

By carefully looking at every element and achievement theory of Bandura (1993), the conclusions will be made founded on the collected data from the family, student, and educator participants in the inner cities of Los Angeles. The recommendations will be offered for further research and endeavors to help in discovering the answer to the late graduation of high school students which plagues the inner cities of Los Angeles. Previous studies show that socioeconomic status and social and emotional instability have a negative impact and frequently result in the late graduation of high school students. Educators at the district and school levels must try to involve parents in the process of education.

Background of the Study

As the focus of the nation rolls towards soaring education standards and creating quantifiable objectives for the improvement of middle and high school student accomplishment on an individual basis through the No Child Left Behind Act, which has been much debated over the years, it is significant to take into account that for the 2015-2016 class, only 75 percent of the inner cities' high school students graduated (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2016).

The problem of a lower rate of graduation at the state level also has a deep impact on the inner-city students of Los Angeles. The previous literature demonstrates that the graduation rate of high school

students is considerably low when compared to rural and national rates. In the state of California, the graduation rate of high school students in the inner cities of Los Angeles was 67% in 2014 and 77 percent in 2010.

There is wide-ranging literature from the past few decades of research based on education that highlights the success of students in dropping out of school and graduating. However, a very small amount of research focusing success of students for Los Angeles inner cities students exists. Even a lesser amount of research exists that provides solutions to the late graduation of high school students. The proposed solutions in the previous literature reviews for the issues of Los Angeles inner cities schools persist to be common, and also believed to be suitable for countryside settings too. Due to the shortage of research existing on this high school student population, this research will aim at the significance of the place that is the inner cities of Los Angeles. Though the classification of predictor variables will offer important information in itself, this research will further investigate by utilizing accessed information from the interviews with students and teachers in hopes of finding the problem source. This research will assist inner-city families, students, and educators in presenting insight into the dilemma of late graduation rates.

Problem Statement

The general target of the study was to explore factors influencing the late graduation of inner cities students of Los Angeles. The students, specifically in inner cities of Los Angeles, are not able to complete their high school graduation on time; the study seeks to find the reasons behind the late graduation among high school students in Los Angeles. The study will help the schools, students, and families in facilitating the predictors of late graduation.

Purpose of the Study

The research seeks to study a current group of high and middle school students, investigating the variables for late graduation amongst the students of inner-cities of Los Angeles and using a more inclusive theoretical framework based on four elements. Additionally, this research demonstrates the most suitable definition of late graduation amongst high school students. By utilizing a framework that is based on four elements related to late graduation, this research investigates the variables that can be huge factors in late graduation. Moreover, this research will examine the connection between socioeconomic conditions and patterns of late graduation.

Gap Statement

Since students in rural areas are graduating on time as compared to the inner-cities students, an opportunity arises to undertake a research study that is much required on inner-cities students of Los Angeles. Late graduation from high schools is an issue at the national and state levels that chiefly

influences students in Los Angeles. The review of several pieces of literature shows that the rates of late graduation amongst inner-city students of Los Angeles are lower than in other states. This study will focus on the reasons that affect late graduation, such as socioeconomic status, family involvement, and school participation.

Research Questions

1. Why some students do not graduate on time? What is the role of socioeconomic status, school status, and family?
2. How does student failure impact the student and the family?
3. What is the impression of school teachers about the accomplishment of students in rural Los Angeles?
4. What are the perspectives of instructors on the advancement of students in rural Los Angeles?

Theoretical Framework

The late graduation rate has been acknowledged as a silent issue and lately has been declared as a national crisis. The students who graduate late not only risk their futures but have a negative influence on the nation and communities as well because of the loss of dynamic workers, loss of billions of dollars in tax revenue, and the high costs linked with healthcare, social services, increased incarceration, and programs related to crime-prevention(Roderick, Kelley-Kemple, Johnson & Beechum, 2014).

Late graduation does not happen suddenly; it is a slow procedure of disengagement. The late graduation rate among high school students is not due to a single reason; there are different factors involved in this process. However, high school students are the individuals who can address the crisis of late graduation. They are the experts on what it is like to be a student.

Society must believe in its control of the availability of services, which include financial and social services, as it can help families and schools by functioning together to bring constructive change. Middle and high schools should recognize the power and significance they have in transforming society as it stands in the present and in the future. When the self-efficacy level of a person is high, the expectation level is even higher, and there is extra focus on the accomplishment of the goals (Bandura, 1993). As a result of this unified focus, the overall well-being and reality of the community must be taken into account by the stakeholders. Once stakeholders aren't certain about their capability to transform, they are expected to work in segregation and blame others when they fail to achieve goals, eventually, as a resulting probability of on-time graduation is decreased.



Figure 1: Four elements of student success

This study will aim at one inner-city Los Angeles school district. Educationalists must examine the society where the students live as significant in affecting the socio-economic and cultural dynamics that could also have an impact on the success of students and schools. These sectors propose a different challenge for the officials of inner-city high schools when they try to encourage on-time graduation in schools. The students who represent lower socioeconomic families have fundamental desires not being achieved within society. Therefore, they should be focused on the high school in combination with teaching the basic material and studies program compulsory by the educational system of the state. Inner city high schools in Los Angeles are not merely learning institutions but work as a source of light and knowledge for the communities in which middle and high school students live. Most of the time, it is observed in inner cities, high school students who live their lives in severe poverty have only one meal for the day.

What are the pathways and obstacles to the on-time graduation of high school students in the inner cities of Los Angeles? It could be debated that the factors that affect high school students from inner cities of Los Angeles graduating on time reflect the students in other states; nonetheless, in several ways, those factors are exceptional in different areas. Despite the fact that the student is located, the student success model based on four elements (Thompson, 2008) demonstrates that the success of the student is based on the participation of school, family, society, and the efforts of an individual student. Graduating from high school on time in the inner cities of Los Angeles probably happens when every element works together. Students deprived of any one of the four elements are anticipated to have problems in the quest of getting their diploma from high school on time. The focus of this research will be heavily based on the four elements regarding the success of the students (Figure 1) and shows that when all four elements work together and not individually, the probability of a high school student graduating on time increases.

Conversely, the deficiency or lack in one of the four elements boosts the probability that the student will not graduate on time. In the initial part of the research, reasons are going to be investigated to establish the level of influence different variables have on late graduation amongst a cohort of K-12 inner cities Los Angeles students.

Family Involvement

The first component includes family importance; for this research purpose, family is described as different individuals residing under one rooftop related by marriage, blood, social dependability or law. The families of the students work as the fundamental component for social standing, values, lifestyles, self-esteem, and cultures. Additionally, families are the principal caregivers and also financial support is provided by the family. An ample amount of literature can be found concerning the responsibility of the family of the student (Anderson & Limoncelli, 1982; Howard & Anderson,

1978; Mahan & Johnson, 1983).

This study underlines a direct connection between student success and the involvement of the family. The relationship with the family exists despite the educational level of the parents, ethnicity, and race. The family of such students can inspire the significance of graduating on time, offer fundamental emotional support and help high school students consider the hopes of teachers and schools while emphasizing those at home. Phelan (1992) suggested that the background of the family, personal issues, and problems linked with the school are among the several factors that relate to the late graduation of high school students in the inner cities of Los Angeles. This study investigated the family involvement variable and its effects on the educational results of the cohort student group. Some examples of questions that this study will reveal for the cohort involve: What impact does the educational result of the student have on the father? What effect do the family member(s), grandparents, and mother have on the academic results?

Community Involvement

The second component includes the significance of the society. During this study, the society will be described as a gathering of individuals sharing an area or environment with common values, ethnicity, beliefs, and social and educational class. Instances of such communities involve work atmospheres, co-curricular organizations, gang environments, schools, churches, and learning communities. Several scholars think that the superiority of the housing areas where the students are residing is linked to achievement at school; therefore, society is supposed as a complete place that can influence its residents' lives (Clampet Lundquist, 1998; Devine, 1996; Garner & Raudenbush, 1991). This thought is mainly applicable to high school students. The mobility inside their society is inadequate; a huge quantity of energy and time is exerted inside the environment of the community (Ensminger, Lamkin, & Jacobson, 1996; Furstenburg & Hughes, 1994). In contrast, the study will argue that the impacts of the community add up to the social class and background of the family (Mayer & Jencks, 1989; Solon, Page, & Duncan, 2000). Considering the context of the research undertaken, the impacts of social dynamics and family influence the whole society, therefore the residents of the society are going to perform at same levels (Fields & Smith, 1998).

Involvement of School

The third component is centered on the support of the school. Schools are well-known for their part in teaching high school students, yet every day, they get more than just education. Numerous students don't have a sound home environment. Schools are frequently in charge of family and group esteems, and numerous students supplant them with values that prompt student achievement (Roderick, Kelley-Kemple, Johnson & Beechum, 2014).

Involvement of Student

The fourth component alludes to the involvement of students. Numerous students did not succeed and considered a long and troublesome approach to complete school. Students who can prevail ought to effectively take part in the learning procedure, utilize accessible assets and take an interest in social association, participation and self-reflection (Renaud et al., 2015).

- Thornberg (2014) argues effectiveness in classroom-based cross-cultural communication needs an understanding of non-verbal communication. Indeed, interpersonal communication is always influenced by non-verbal cues; and the cues are important components of the participants' messages. Even though there are universal non-verbal messages, the interpretation of factors such as touch, appearance, space, time, and body language is mediated by the individual's culture (Finlayson, 2010). For instance, Mexican and Puerto Rican children tend to avoid eye contact with adults in case they are reprimanded (Meral & Turnbull, 2014; Saleh, 2012). In an American classroom situation, this would signal disrespect on the part of the students. Therefore, a miscommunication happens as a result. Similarly, several cultures, which are natively Middle Eastern, Native American, and Asian, consider it as being rude and disrespectful when a listener makes eye contact. This is attributed to the studies by Ralph V. Exline (1922-1993), Robert Rosenthal, and Clara Mayo (Jacob & Kuruvilla, 2012; Kapadia, 2013). Failure to look someone in the eye does not necessarily mean that the child is not paying attention. Cultural misapprehensions by the teachers as well as fellow students contribute by increasing the knowledge gap since entire groups of learners are pushed to the fringes. This is in line with the research work by psychologists and researchers like Janet Dean Fodor (born in 1942) and Michael Argyle (1925-2002) (Isik-Ercan, 2010; Krueger et al., 2015).

- The culture of the correct answer, as opposed to that of explanation, is another major issue, and this is according to Thornberg (2014) and Meral & Turnbull (2014). It ought to be appreciated that in many minority cultures, individuals are taught to conduct a situational analysis and make their inferences in the most appropriate manner possible. With the current education system, most schools emphasize memorizing. The goal of addressing this point is to establish how constructivist classrooms can be created or formulated, and this is where the students and their teachers perceive knowledge as being dynamic as opposed to being static and restricted to unexplained and possibly ambiguous answers (Kapadia, 2013). The approach taken by the proposed primary study is that instead of insisting that the students memorize unclear facts, it would be advantageous to help them come up with the ways and means of solving scenarios in an objective cycle of inductive and deductive reasoning. (Saleh, 2012).

- Bosworth, Ford, & Hernandez (2011) indicate that the issue of the critical mass has a significant effect. Being fewer in number means that several students from minority groups rarely master the courage to make contributions like everyone else. An appropriate reference to the issue of the critical mass is the evaluation of the Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin, a Supreme Court battle between the White students who had been denied admission to race. The Supreme Court has since argued that

the critical mass argument by the university is constitutional since it has met the three most important controlling principles. Even without going into the details of the arguments and the decision by the Supreme Court, it is evident that the university was justified in arguing that most students are derailed in their studies whenever they fail to be in the company of a sufficient number of individuals (students and teachers alike) who are from their backgrounds. Background, in this case, refers to religion, ethnicity, and even race (Meral & Turnbull, 2014; Thornberg, 2014; Worrell, 2014).

- Jamal et al. (2013) assert that perceived discrimination, together with the 'non-representative' common-core education system, are also part of the issues that need to be addressed if the levels of education amongst minorities are to improve. Discrimination and Common Core are hoped to place everyone at the same level, which is not the case in reality. In extreme cases, perceived discrimination tends to trigger depression. Becker (1971) presents a theory he refers to as a "taste for discrimination," and even if he was addressing work-related settings, the same applies to education. Regarding the "taste for discrimination," the primary study will address four types of discrimination. These include subtle, automatic discrimination, or unconscious discrimination; statistical discrimination, which is also known as profiling; discrimination by biased institutional-based processes; and intentional, explicit discrimination (Becker, 1971).

Research Questions

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Significance of the Project

This research is essential since it tends to comprehend the factors involving the late graduate amongst the inner cities high school students of Los Angeles. It is particularly intended to create research suggestions to design predictors regarding the late graduation rate amongst the inner cities high school students, a standout amongst the most proficient regions in the state.

Rationale for Methodology

The study is qualitative since the understanding of the cause-and-effect relationship between cultures

and academic knowledge gaps is best accomplished through the analysis of lived experiences. Qualitative research is flexible, and this is important since every respondent has a story to tell. In that case, phenomenology is the most appropriate approach, especially its flexibility, which comes in handy since the issue in question is difficult to address via structured methodologies. The inquiry is directed towards complex topics in contextual situations, and this means that sensitive personal issues need not be considered as part of a generalized phenomenon. Individuals are regarded as stand-alone entities which are not easily replaceable. Establishing the meanings that individual respondents ascribe to specific situations and experiences is to be anchored upon data gathered using in-depth interviews and detailed field notes describing the context. It follows that phenomenology is the best approach in this case. Phenomenology facilitates the addressing of lived experiences, which is the case with the proposed primary study.

Nature of the Research Design

The research will utilize the qualitative analysis to get the results. The research involved gathering statistical information through interviews with students and instructors. It has been observed that four components, namely family, group, school, and students, should cooperate with each other to accelerate student achievement. Based on the information provided by the students and teachers through interview questions, the effect of social, economic, and family factors will be observed.

Organization of the Study

The thesis will consist of five chapters. Chapter one (introduction) will provide the backdrop of the issue adjoining the timely graduation of inner cities high school students of Los Angeles, demonstrating the hypothetical framework for the research and also key terms utilized in the research will be defined.

The literature on the background of the problem will be presented in chapter two (literature review), an insight into the educational accomplishment in the state, country, region, and inner cities of Los Angeles pointed out in the research undertaken.

Chapter three of the study (research methodology) introduces the clinical/research questions defining the respondents, procedures, the design of the research, and the course of action. The results of the research will be included in chapter four. Lastly, chapter five is going to discuss the likely understanding of the findings and propositions for the inner cities of Los Angeles County and propose further research in this area.

The research utilized a blended strategy for the purpose of the research. The research involved gathering information through interviews with students and instructors. It has been observed that four components, namely family, group, school, and students, should cooperate with each other to accelerate student achievement. Because of the information assembled by the students, the

researcher will make conclusions and propose suggestions for future activities and research in this area.

Instrumentation or Sources of Data

The study will utilize interviews conducted with high school students and educators. Such materials will be available during fieldwork, and they will facilitate the understanding of the performance gaps between students from multiple backgrounds. The investigator preferred to use one-on-one interviews to discover responses to the research questions by utilizing extra questions as prompts. These prompt questions will serve as a system to further investigate the responses provided by the students and educators included in the study as participants. The research questions are mentioned above, and the interview questions will be created to look into the potential factors affecting high school graduation on time.

With the aim of selecting participants for the study, the researcher will begin by meeting with the principal and teachers of the school and will discuss the research, and then followed by visiting the school during nonclass time, like break time, to talk to high school students regarding their academics and personal life. After giving the visit to the school and talking regarding the research, the researcher will ask for volunteers for the research, note their names, and distribute approval forms to the students who will show interest in volunteering for the research. The reason for giving a consent form to the students is to give them a brief explanation of the research and its rationale. The participants of the research will be voluntary, and any participant can pull out from the research at any given time.

The participants of the study will be interviewed one-on-one so they can, without any hesitance, reflect on their individual experiences throughout middle and high school. Also, interview questions will be used to take an in-depth look at the role of the schools that will elaborate on reasons for late graduation. The researcher will strive to utilize the research questions to establish why the students graduate late and whether the school could have prevented them from quitting school.

Data Collection Procedures

This research will utilize face-to-face semi-structured interviews to gather insights and information required for the qualitative analysis. The interview practice will be utilized to gather knowledge regarding individual experiences, beliefs, thoughts, and prospects of a group of middle and high school. The semi-structured face-to-face interview will strive to answer the research questions, but supplementary interview questions will be utilized to get a deeper perceptive of the participants of the research. These protocols of the interview will be created while keeping the vulnerabilities of the participants in consideration. Several steps will be taken to guarantee privacy throughout the research. When the data are reported, the names of the participants will not be revealed; just

assumed names that will be given by the investigator of the study, and every collected data and document will be kept away and secured from the site of the interview.

Data Analysis Procedures

Since this is a qualitative research methodology; the data analysis techniques include coding and thematic analysis, social network analysis, comparative case analysis, as well as case summaries. With thematic coding, the researcher will be identifying the texts, which happen to be linked by common themes. These are also the ideas that enable one to index the texts into clear categories. By so doing, frameworks of thematic ideas are established (John & Stage, 2014). The lack of holistic orientation will be addressed using this procedure. Social network analysis will be utilized in the analysis of the connections that exist between institutions, groups, and individuals (i.e., people) (Dallavis, 2011; Terry et al., 2010). This procedure will be utilized in determining the derailments caused by the perceived discrimination of students. It is important in determining interrelationships.

Ethical Considerations

Studies involving human subjects are supposed to be completed under federal and institutional ethical guidelines. This is ascertained by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Even though this study may be exempted from the review by the IRB on the basis of the fact that it is within acceptable educational settings and normal educational practices are in place, it still falls under the domain that needs the Internal Research Review Board (i.e., IRRB) consent (Isik-Ercan, 2010; Thornberg, 2014; Worrell, 2014). The researcher will ensure that only anonymous and no-risk surveys and observations will be done. In case any identifying information is needed, this will be confidential and will not be included in the final report (Bosworth et al., 2011).

The researcher will ensure that they follow the ethical standards established by the American Psychological Association. There are six in total, and they include competence, integrity, scientific and professional responsibility, respect for the dignity and the rights of the participants, concern for their welfare, as well as having a social responsibility. Concerning competence, the researcher will attempt only the work that they are competent to undertake. On integrity, they will be honest and fair regarding their professional cooperation with others. There will be scientific and professional responsibility, and this is where high standards of professional behavior will be maintained. Respecting the dignity and rights of others involves the right to confidentiality. The concern for others will involve coming up with the work that facilitates the bridging of the gaps in research, and this is closely related to social responsibility, where the researcher will meet this code by using their skills to the benefit of society (Meral & Turnbull, 2014).

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