

Neighborhood Conditions, Exposure to Violence, and Community Involvement: Marginalized Youth and their Motivation to Succeed



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Abstract

- The current study is a secondary analysis study with data obtained from Pathways to Desistance (2004), which was a mixed-methods, longitudinal study that relied heavily on self-reported information through interviews.
- Statistical analysis was used to examine the relationship between neighborhood conditions, exposure to violence, level of community involvement, and youth's motivation to succeed.
- Poor neighborhood conditions had the strongest significant relationship with adolescent motivation to succeed.

Introduction

SIGNIFICANT OF THE STUDY

Youth living in low-income neighborhoods experience increased probability of exposure to adversities that negatively affect their likelihood of achieving positive future outcomes.

PURPOSE OF RESEARCH

The current study aims to understand how youth are affected by the characteristics of their community and what qualities within a neighborhood act as protective factors that could aid them in achieving success.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What is the relationship between neighborhood conditions and motivation to succeed?
- What is the relationship between exposure to violence and motivation to succeed?
- What is the relationship between community involvement and motivation to succeed?
- What is the relationship between the household size and motivation to succeed?
- What is the relationship between how far adolescents desire to go in their education and how far expect to go?

HYPOTHESIS

Adolescents growing up in poor neighborhood conditions and with frequent exposure to violence exhibit a higher motivation to succeed when involved in community programs.

Literature Review

NEIGHBORHOOD CONDITIONS/EXPOSURE TO VIOLENCE

- Social disorder is a chronic stressor that creates distress, distrust, and a lack of control for those residing in the area.
- Neighborly support systems with shared values are protective factors within low-resource communities that promote increased social capital and foster a presence of collective efficacy.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- An individual's ability to tap into resources is necessary to their success and plays an instrumental role in nurturing a sense of belonging
- Significant barriers to accessing resources include language, cost, transportation, limited space available, or limited knowledge of the program's existence.
- Existing programs may not adequately address the unique needs of the population

MOTIVATION TO SUCCEED

- Assets (strengths of the individual) and resources (socio-environmental influences) are two main components of motivation to succeed.

Methods

RESEARCH DESIGN AND DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

- Longitudinal, multi-site study conducted from 2000-2010
- Study relied primarily on self-reported information and data was collected via computer-assisted interviews

SAMPLE AND SAMPLING METHODS

- Sample size of 1,354 participants: between 14 and 18 years of age who had been involved in the juvenile and adult court system
 - Selected through convenience sampling
- Participants were ensured that the data collected would not be used for investigation of the individual or an organization.

MEASURES

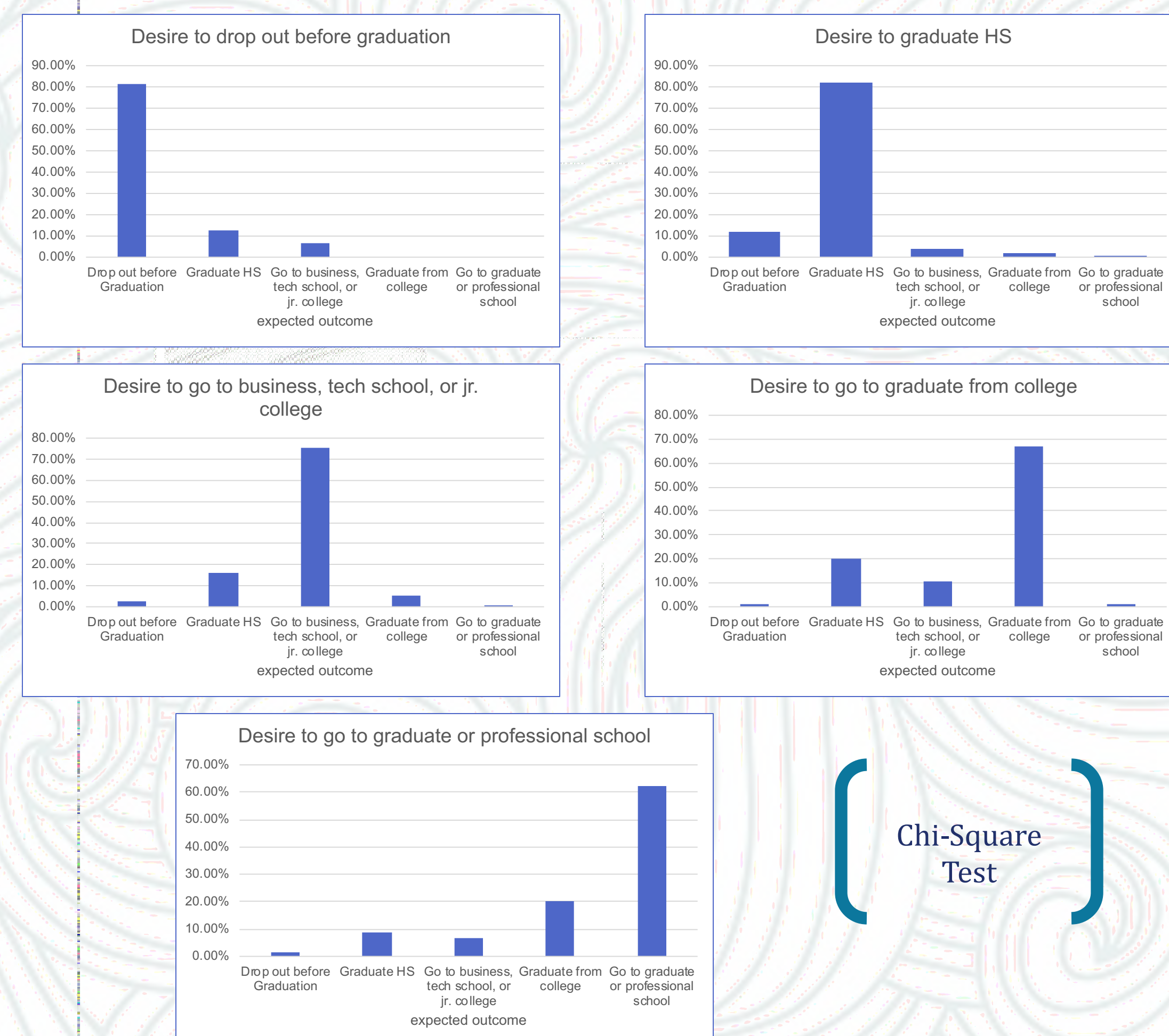
- Demographic variables included; age, ethnicity, country of origin, gender, number of people living in their household, whether they have a significant other in the household, and family structure

Independent Variable:

- Community Involvement** - measured by how the participant spends time in their neighborhood.
 - Community organizations included: sports teams, scouts, volunteer groups, and faith-based groups
- Neighborhood Conditions** - measured by the characteristics of the environment surrounding the participant's home
 - Physical disorder: graffiti, tagging, and cigarettes on the street.
 - Social disorder: loud arguments, adults fighting, and use of needles for drug intake.
- Exposure to Violence** - designed to encompass types of violence experienced and observed
 - Victim score
 - Witness score.
 - Total score

Dependent Variables:

- Motivation to Succeed** - assessed the participant's perception of opportunities at success in school or in the workplace, for youth in their neighborhood.
 - A mean of these items was calculated with higher scores indicating more optimism for having increased success in the future.



Chi-Square
Test

Results

SPEARMAN'S RHO

- Negative and statistically significant association between neighborhood conditions and motivation to succeed, $r_s(1351) = -.413, p < .01$. The strength of the correlation was weak.
- Negative and statistically significant association between exposure to violence and motivation to succeed, $r_s(1350) = -.270, p < .01$. The strength of the correlation was weak.
- Positive and statistically significant association between community involvement and motivation to succeed, $r_s(1349) = .101, p < .01$. The strength of the correlation was weak.
- Negative and statistically significant association between the number of people in the household and motivation to succeed, $r_s(1353) = -.060, p < .05$.

MANN-WHITNEY U

- Motivation to succeed scores for males ($M = 716$) were not significantly different from the social support scores of women ($M = 670.86; U = 114,724, p = .144$).

CHI-SQUARED

- A significant association was found between the desired and expected educational outcomes ($\chi^2(16) = 1979.079, p < 0.01$), while a Cramer's V statistic suggested a strong relationship (0.608)
- The most significant relationship existed between participants who both desired and expected they would drop out before graduation (81.3%) and those who both desired and expected they would graduate high school (81.8%)
- 19.8% of participants who wanted to graduate college, predicted that they would end their education after high school.
- In comparison to the total number of participants, only 7% thought they would go to graduate or professional school

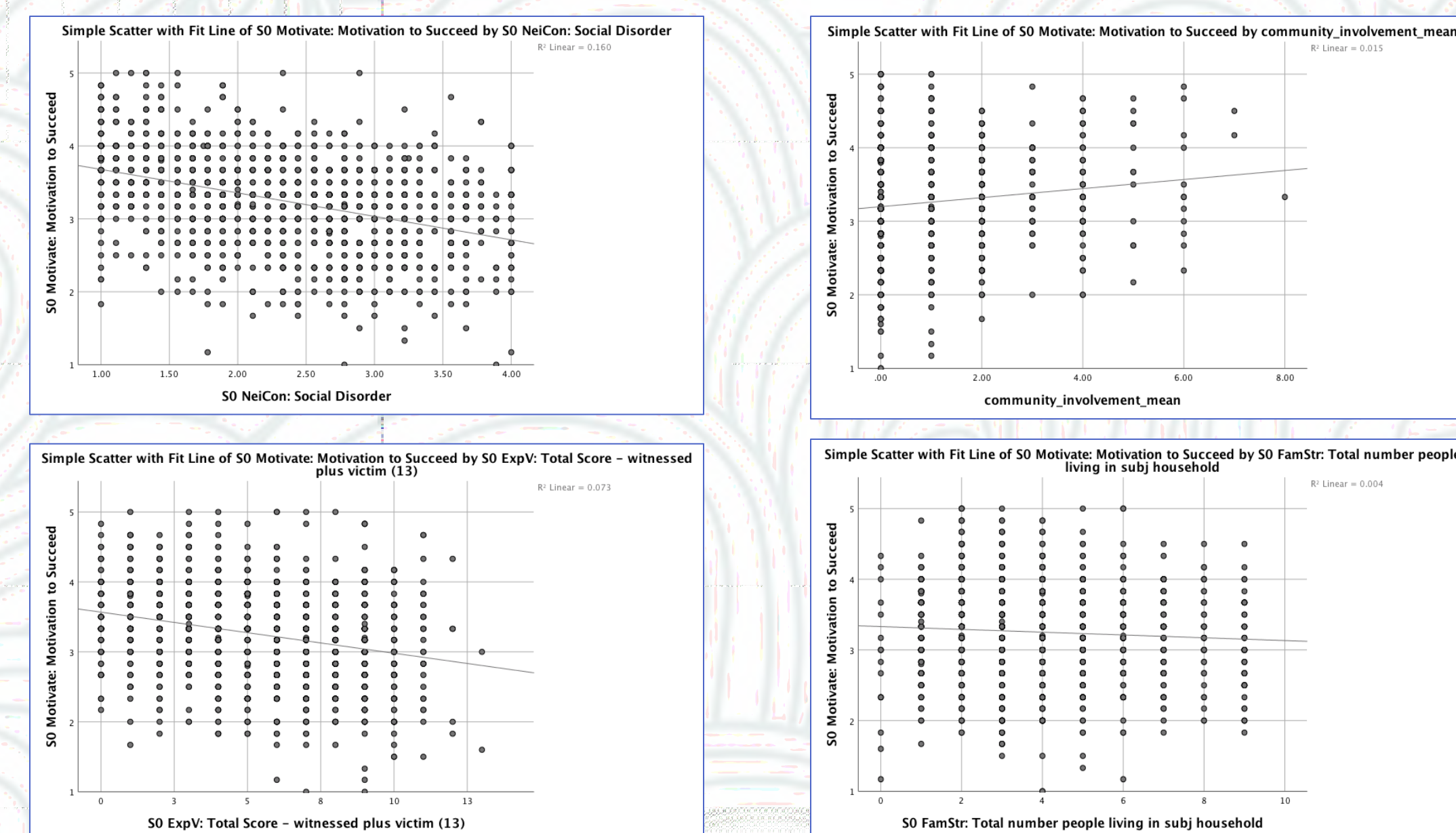


Figure 1. Relationship between Motivation Succeed and neighborhood conditions, community involvement, exposure to violence, and total number of people living in the household.



Discussion

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- There was a significant relationship between the independent variables (neighborhood conditions, exposure to violence, and community involvement) and the dependent variable (motivation to succeed).
- Risk factors (poor neighborhood conditions and higher exposure to violence) have a stronger relationship with motivation to succeed than protective factors (community involvement).
- An individual's ability to participate within their community may be impacted by the social and physical disorder of the community.
- It may take more positive protective factors to overcome the influence of a single negative risk factor within the community.
- Those who were motivated were more likely to expect themselves to achieve positive outcomes despite barriers and risk factors.

STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS

- The data collection method allowed for honest answers by maintaining privacy.
- Broadening the pool of participants may generate a better understanding of overall motivation to succeed amongst vulnerable youth
- It would be impactful to look at the role community as a network can play in a youth's motivation to succeed.

PRACTICE AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- Macro-level implications: policymakers, urban planners, and community organizers to target sustainable improvements in neighborhood conditions while protecting residents from displacement.
- Mezzo-level implications: program designers and facilitators should critically evaluate community programs and implement evidence-based practices to ensure they are effective and provide adequate support.
- Micro-level implications: continued exploration of the role of mental health intervention on motivation to succeed when socio-environmental barriers are present.

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