

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Social Capital of Left-Behind Children: Determinants and Association With School Performance

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Abstract: This study examined the influence of social capital on the school performance of left-behind children who were deprived of the physical presence of migrant parents. Social capital in the family, in school, and the community were examined through quantitative design. A survey was conducted among 384 left-behind children selected through multi-stage probability sampling. Results of regression analysis showed that higher levels of shared values and emotions in the family, social trust in the school, involvement in community life, and age of migrant parents determine a higher level of values learned. Higher levels of supportive relationship, social trust at school, and involvement in community life predict a higher level of right conduct. Higher levels of supportive relationship and supportive norms determine a higher average grade. Left-behind children with mother-present, father migrant draw more social capital in the family; while left-behind children with father-present, mother-migrant generate social capital in the school and the community. It is recommended that fathers should be involved in providing care and in the nurturing of left-behind children. Schools should cultivate an environment that invests in social capital especially for the left-behind children lacking in social capital at home. Government institutions serving for the welfare of migrant parents should educate and assist in the psycho-social needs of left-behind children and migrants' households.

Keywords: social capital, left-behind children, school performance

Social capital is a resource inhered in human relationships influencing productivity or benefits (Putnam, 2000; Coleman, 1988). Social networks, mutual obligations and trust, norms, and supportive relations are the foci of this social construct, which has been useful in human capital development. In educational sociology, social capital is “measured by

the family structure and the intensity of parent-child interactions, parents' contact with the school and in terms of the social networks of parents and pupils” (Roth, 2013, p. 335). Social capital is important in educational life because bonds with the family and the school agents can help provide information about education, reinforce norms and values, and negotiate

access to institutional resources that are beneficial to academic achievement and better psycho-social well-being.

One of the gaps in the existing literature is viewing the supportive and reciprocal relationships in a context of families affected by migration (Eckstein, 2010; Evergeti & Zontini, 2006; Zontini & Reynolds, 2007). This is a challenging context to examine social capital, education, and psycho-social learning outcome of left-behind children by migrant parents because it departs from the place-based strong bonds of Putnam's (2000) and Coleman's (1990) view of individual mobility as destructive to the structure. The "structural deficiency" (Coleman, 1988), such as transnational families, had been assumed to weaken the social capital in the families with only one parent (Vandewater & Lansford, 2005).

This research sought to fill the research gaps by determining the social capital and its association with the school performance of the left-behind children of migrant parents from the Philippines.

Social Capital

Bourdieu (1986) referred to social capital as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition – or in other words, to membership in a group – which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectivity-owned capital, a credential which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word" (pp. 248–249). Coleman (1988) emphasized the role of social capital in the creation of human capital, which he referred to as supportive social relationships both within and outside the family. It focuses specifically on the social support and norms that are transmitted through social ties, resources that children learn about and internalize appropriate behavior (Portes, 1998). Hence, in this study, social capital is explored in three settings – family, school, and community. The level of social capital was determined based on the mean score of responses on the following indicators using 5-point Likert item questions.

Family Social Capital

Parents invest social capital in their children and their children's social structure through their relations with them. Specifically, it refers to "the bonds between parents and children useful in promoting child socialization, and as such include the time and attention parents spend in interaction with children and in monitoring their activities and promoting child well-being" (Dufur et al.; Hoffman; Kim & Schneider; Parcel & Dufur, as cited in Parcel, Dufur, & Zito, 2010, p. 830). This is measured using indicators of parent-child interaction, supportive relationship, and shared values and emotions. Moreover, remittance, in the forms of money and symbolic exchange, is included to contextualize the left-behind children's experience of social capital (Eckstein, 2010; Parreñas, 2005).

School Social Capital

This "refers to investment between students and schools that can facilitate positive outcome... Typically refer to the relationships that parents and children form with school teachers and personnel" (Dufur, Parcel, & McKune, 2008, p. 147). Parcel et al., (2010, p. 831) also defined social capital as "the bonds between parents, children, and schools that support educational attainment and should have implications for social adjustment." In general, this study adopted the social capital scale items of Goddard (2003), which reflected the indicators of the structure of relations, social trust, and supportive norms with few modifications based on the studies of Hasan and Bagde (2013), Parcel and Dufur (2001), and Crosnoe (2004).

Community Social Capital

Indicators of community social capital in this study include contact with neighbors, social trust, and involvement in community life. Contact with neighbors refers to groups such neighbors, close relatives, and friends that the left-behind children consider as sources of support in times of need. Social trust is the cognitive dimension of social capital (Yip et al., 2007). In the study of Kim (2016), greater general trust was associated with better mental health outcome among the Korean adult population. Generalized trust was assessed by the question, "Generally, speaking, would

you say that most people can be trusted, or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?" (Giordano, Bjork, & Lindstorm, 2012). The trust of the left-behind children to specific people in the community was measured by a question about the feeling of safety in their neighborhood. Individuals may benefit in community social capital through their involvement in community-based organizations and activities such as churches, organized sports, and recreational activities (Sun, 1999). In this study, involvement in community life refers to the frequency of interaction the left-behind child has through these community-organized activities.

Left-Behind Children

This study focuses on the children who were left in the home country, Philippines, while their overseas Filipino worker (OFW) parents work abroad. These are the children who were left to the care of one parent or adults in their own or kin's household.

In China, the left-behind children are considered the social price of migration and economic boom (Jingzhong, 2011). Chunyu (2011) observed that the left-behind children in China usually suffer from a lack of self-control and they easily get depressed. Reproductive functions, socialization, and nurturing are aspects that undergo reconfiguration due to the displaced parental roles among the transnational families. The children of migrant Filipino mothers are socialized and cared by grandmothers, aunts, and elder daughters (Añonuevo & Guerra, 2002); family relatives or by women too poor to go abroad and work (Parreñas 2002). Despite these changes in caring arrangements, the mother's absence influences the pre-school children's indifference and withdrawal of affection; while, confusion, indifference, and ambivalence were felt by school-aged children (Melgar & Borromeo, 2002).

The massive demand for global labor migration means that many Filipino families are living with the consequences of migration, pressing the issue about the left-behind children who grow without their parents (Asis, 2006). The left-behind children due to labor migration of parents—of mothers, especially—are among the vulnerable populations;

and the consequences of migration to them must be addressed in ensuring the healthy well-being and positive educational outcome.

Given the relevant role played by social capital in the educational outcome (Coleman, 1988) and social adjustment of children (Dufur et al., 2008), their social capital must be explored.

Methods

Participants

The respondents of this study have the following characteristics: left-behind children of migrant parents, their parent/s have been working abroad at least one year during the conduct of the study, 12–17 years old, and currently enrolled in selected secondary schools. Using the multi-stage area probability sampling, a total of 384 left-behind children were randomly selected as survey respondents. We secured parental consent forms for the participants before the data collection was undertaken.

Data Collection

A letter of permission was presented to the Schools Division Superintendent in San Jose City, Nueva Ecija and the school heads of selected secondary schools for approval. Upon approval of the school heads, the data collection plan was made that included dates, time, and process of the survey. We coordinated with the class advisers and school counselor in the conduct of pre-selection of all the students who have migrant parents. The subject teachers consulted their respective classes, determined the OFW children, and made a list of their names, grade level, and section. These lists of OFW children were given to us. From the student population who fit the descriptions, random sampling was done then a list of survey respondents was created. We gathered the respondents and the class advisers to explain the study and the survey. A consent form was distributed among the respondents; and upon securing their guardian's or parent's approval, they were gathered by groups to answer the survey questionnaire. Survey questionnaires were placed in brown envelopes, which were marked with the respondents' names, questionnaire control number,

grade level, and section. This technique helped both the teachers and us to easily trace the respondents and systematic recording. The labeled brown envelopes containing the survey questionnaires were given to the selected Values Education teachers and school counselor. Answering of the survey questionnaires was conducted in the most convenient time of the students and was administered with our guidance or by the Values Education teachers. For the survey administered by the school guidance counselor, survey respondents were called in the guidance office during their break time, and they were asked to complete the survey questionnaires. Retrieval of the questionnaire, which we and the teacher facilitated, was done right after each batch of respondents complete the survey questionnaire. Students who were not able to answer some questions on the survey questionnaire were asked to leave the questionnaire to the teacher then complete it the following day. This gave the students a chance to consult their care-providers on questions about income and employment of their migrant parents. Answered questionnaires were double-checked for missing items before being collated for data processing.

Data Analysis

The personal and family-related characteristics of left-behind children are described using frequency and standard deviation. Pearson correlation analysis was performed to describe the variables that have an association with the forms of social capital in the family, school, and the community. Meanwhile, the influence of social capital on school performance was examined using multiple regression analysis. All the significant correlates of school performance were tested as predictors. Using a step-wise method, specific forms of social capital were identified to have an influence on the level of school performance—values learned, right conduct, and average grade.

Results

Characteristics of Left-Behind Children

The left-behind children were described according to their personal characteristics, their migrant parents, and their care-providers (see Tables 1, 2, and 3).

Majority, 56%, of the left-behind children are young adolescents aging 12 to 14 years old. On the other hand, almost half are middle adolescents aging 15 to 17 years old. More than half of the left-behind children are female (55.5%). In terms of their number of siblings and sibling position, most of them (78.9%) had small sibling size (0–3) and almost half of them (44.8%) was the eldest. Comprising the great majority of the respondents belonged to households with four to six members (64.3%). Meanwhile, most (70.1%) of the left-behind children in this study have migrant mothers, some (24.5%) have migrant fathers, and very few (5.5%) have both migrant mother and father.

Almost half of the left-behind children are residing outside the city (44.3%) followed by 37.8% of the respondents who are residing near the city. In religion, a great majority are Catholics (62.8%) while many are non-Roman Catholic such as Born-again Christians, Iglesia ni Cristo, and Muslims.

The left-behind children considered in this study are from junior high school curriculum from grades 7 to 10 and from senior high school curriculum grade 11. The left-behind children were asked about their access to communication technologies at home such as mobile phone, landline phone, computer with internet connection and others; a great majority of them have only one (66.7%) and some (30.2%) have two or more.

There are 115 (28.4%) migrant fathers and 290 (71.6%) migrant mothers of the left-behind children in this study. Most (69.4%) of the migrant parents are middle aged or within the age range of 36 to 59 years old.

The lowest educational attainment of migrant parents is high school graduate and the highest is college graduate. Among the migrant mothers of the left-behind children, majority (53.5%) are high school graduates and some (29.3%) are college and technical-vocational graduates. Among the migrant fathers of the respondents, a great majority (55.7%) are college and technical-vocational graduates and some (26.9%) are high school graduates.

Concerning the work status of the migrant parents, most of them are unskilled workers (54.8%) followed by machine and technical workers (20.0%) and service workers (19.8%). Related to these data was the income of migrant parents. A great majority of

Table 1
Personal Characteristics of Left-Behind Children of Migrant Parents

Personal Characteristics		Frequency (n=384)	Percentage (%)
Age			
	Young Adolescents	215	56.0
	Middle Adolescents	169	44.0
Sex			
	Female	213	55.5
	Male	171	44.5
No. of Siblings			
	Small (0 – 3)	303	78.9
	Big (4-9)	81	21.1
Siblings Position			
	Eldest	172	44.8
	Middle	105	27.3
	Youngest	107	27.9
Migrant Parent			
	Father	94	24.5
	Mother	269	70.1
	Both	21	5.5
No. of Household Members			
	1-3	64	16.67
	4-6	247	64.32
	7-9	60	15.63
	10 and above	13	3.39
Residential Location			
	City Center	69	18.0
	Near the City Center	145	37.8
	Outside the City	170	44.3
Religion			
	Roman Catholic	241	62.8
	Non-Roman Catholic	143	37.2
Grade Level			
	Grade 7	89	23.2
	Grade 8	113	29.4
	Grade 9	55	14.3
	Grade 10	72	18.8
	Grade 11	55	14.3
Number of communication technologies at home			
	None	12	3.1
	One only	256	66.7
	More than one	116	30.2

them have monthly income range within Php20,000 to Php30,000 (52.8%) followed by those earning within an income range of Php30,001 to Php40,000 (17.3%) and Php40,001 to Php50,000 (16.1%). Meanwhile, with few migrant parents who are professionals and possess highly skilled works (13.5%) have an income within the range of Php50,001 and above.

The youngest age of the care providers is 18 years old while the eldest is 86 years old. Most (68.2%) of the care-providers are middle-aged or within the age range of 36 to 59 years old. A great majority of the care-providers are female (54.9%).

In terms of the care-providers' relationship to the left-behind children, a great majority of them are either

Table 2
Characteristics of Migrant Parents

	Characteristics	Frequency (n=405)	Percentage
Migrant Parent			
	Father	115	28.4
	Mother	290	71.6
Age			
	Young (< 36 yrs old)	102	25.2
	Middle (36-59 yrs old)	281	69.4
	Senior/Old (60 >)	22	5.4
Educational Level			
Migrant Mother	College and Tech/Voc Course Graduate	85	29.3
	College undergraduate	50	17.2
	High school graduate	155	53.5
Migrant Father	College and Tech/Voc Course Graduate	64	55.7
	College undergraduate	20	17.4
	High school graduate	31	26.9
Work of Migrant Parent			
	Machine/Technical Workers	81	20
	Supervisor/Professional Workers	22	5.4
	Service workers	80	19.8
	Unskilled Workers	222	54.8
Income			
	20,000-30,000	214	52.8
	30,001-40,000	71	17.5
	40,001-50,000	65	16.1
	50,001-60,000	17	4.2
	60,001 and above	38	9.4

parent or older sibling (65.1%) followed by someone (33.1%) who is part of the child's extended family (22.7%) such as aunt or grandparents.

The education of care-providers is described from no formal education to a post-graduate degree. Almost half of them (46.9%) have high school level of education. Many (37.5%) of the care-providers

have technical-vocational and college levels of education.

Almost half of the care-providers are unemployed (45.3%) while some are employed (29.2%) and self-employed (25.3%). Correspondingly, almost half of them do not have income (45.3%) and with the income range of PhP1,000 to PhP10,000 (46.4%).

Table 3
Characteristics of Care-Providers

Characteristics	Frequency (n=384)	Percentage
Age		
Young (<35 yrs. old)	54	14.1
Middle (36-59 yrs. old)	262	68.2
Senior (60 > yrs. old)	68	17.7
Gender		
Female	211	54.9
Male	173	45.1
Relationship of care-provider to the left-behind child		
Part of Nuclear Family	250	65.1
Extended Family	127	33.1
Others	7	1.8
Education		
College and Above/Tech/Voc Level	144	37.5
High School Level	180	46.9
Elementary Level	53	13.8
No Formal Education	7	1.8
Work Status		
Employed	112	29.2
Self-Employed	97	25.3
Unemployed	174	45.3
Retiree	1	0.3
Income		
1,000 - 10,000	178	46.4
10,001-20,000	19	4.9
20,001-30,000	6	1.6
30,001-40,000	5	1.3
above 40,001	2	0.5
None	174	45.3

Level of Social Capital

Among the three areas where left-behind children generate high levels of social capital, family has the highest mean of 2.61 (SD = 0.24), followed by school with a mean of 2.51 (SD = 0.24), and community with a mean score of 2.39 (SD = 0.24). Overall, the level of social capital of left-behind children is high, which has a mean of 2.50 and standard deviation of 0.44 (see Table 4).

In the family social capital, the high level of shared values and emotion indicate that the left-behind children of migrant parents very strongly feel positive about themselves and connected to their family. This shows that even if they are left-behind children of migrant parents, they are highly conscious of the bond that they share with their family. The high level of parent-child interactions implies a high level of meaningful and frequent socialization of left-behind

children with their migrant parents. They share personal matters with their migrant parents during their frequent conversations. The high level of supportive relationship is measured based on indicators that include perceived parental support, supportive gestures of parents, shared interest, and activities as a family. Even if their parents seldom help in school assignments, they strongly feel the parental support.

Remittance in forms of money and symbolic exchange is moderately perceived as a form of social capital. Receiving material gifts gives them satisfaction; although, gestures of love between migrant parents and left-behind children are low. These results show that their high level of family social capital is the sum of their experiences of bonding through emotional connection and meaningful and quality interaction but less on the aspect of remittances.

Table 4
Level of Social Capital of Left-Behind Children of Migrant Parents

Social Capital	Forms	Mean	SD	Qualitative
Family	Shared Values and Emotion	2.85	0.26	High
	Parent-Child Interaction	2.78	0.39	High
	Supportive Relationship	2.59	0.34	High
	Remittance	2.20	0.34	Moderate
School		2.51	0.24	High
	Supportive Norms	2.70	0.31	High
	Social Trust	2.57	0.27	High
	Structure of Relationship	2.26	0.40	High
Community		2.39	0.37	High
	Contact with Neighbors	2.48	0.44	High
	Social Trust	2.36	0.53	High
	Involvement in Community Life	2.33	0.47	Moderate
Overall		2.5	0.44	High

Legend: 1.00 – 1.66 Low; 1.67 – 2.33 Moderate; 2.34 – 3.00 High

In school social capital, the high level of supportive norms implies that left-behind children perceive enforced discipline at school and encouraging the students to achieve highly as part of their school social capital. Parents or care providers monitoring their child's activities at school also contribute to the high level of supportive norms in school. Moreover, social trust in school is built through perceived trust between teacher and parents, and trust between teacher and students. The high level of structure of relationships is manifested by having diligent friends who accompany them during free time and study time, and care-provider's attendance at school meetings. Meanwhile, interactions between student and teacher, teacher and parent, and teacher and care-provider concerning constructive or corrective communication are moderate. This implies that networks available for left-behind children where they can draw resources for their schooling contribute the least to the level of their school social capital.

In community social capital, contact with neighbors of left-behind children is high, which implies a strong sense of belongingness in their neighborhood. Also, their high level of social trust in the community is manifested through their feeling of safety in the neighborhood and general trust in the community. Lastly, their moderate involvement in community life implies moderate engagement in the community and observation of community life. Even if they have high participation in community church activities, their participation in community festivities is low.

Overall, the level of social capital of left-behind children of migrant parents is high. This is despite the structural deficiency in the families due to the absence of migrant parents.

Determinants of Social Capital of Left-Behind Children

Age of left-behind children and their social trust in the community have the strongest association with $p = .000$. Their age is significantly associated with contact with neighbors ($p = .002$) and social trust in school ($p = .002$); least significantly associated with supportive norms ($p = .015$) and structure of relationships ($p = .035$). The grade level of left-behind children is negatively associated with both contact

with neighbors and social trust in the community with strong significance at the level of $p = .004$ and very strong significance at the level of $p = .000$, respectively. Additionally, it is negatively moderately associated with structure of relationships ($p = .027$), social trust in school ($p = .022$), and supportive norms ($p = .022$). It can be gleaned that age and grade level are associated with either increase or decrease of the level of non-familial ties.

The number of siblings of left-behind children and supportive relationship in the family are negatively related variables with strong significance ($p = .003$). Involvement in community life is another form of social capital that has a significant negative relationship to the number of siblings at the level of $p = .044$. Meanwhile, their sibling size is associated with either the increase or decrease of the level of their experienced support in the family and involvement in community-based activities.

In terms of family-related characteristics of the left-behind children, income, migrant parents' number of years abroad, education of migrant parents, and age of care-provider are the variables that have an association with certain forms of social capital. Income of migrant parents and contact with neighbors have a negative strong relationship with a level of significance at $p = .010$. The number of years of work of migrant parents and contact with neighbors of left-behind children in this study have a negative association with strong significance level ($p = .005$). It conveys that longer years abroad and higher income are associated with lower level of contact with neighbors among left-behind children. Education of migrant parent ($p = .021$) is significantly moderately associated with a supportive relationship in families of the left-behind children. Lastly, the age of care-provider and involvement in the community life of the left-behind children are negatively moderately related ($p = .013$).

Relationship Between Social Capital and School Performance

Shared values and emotions in the family ($p = .001$) and involvement in the community ($p = .000$) have very strong significance in predicting the level of values learned of left-behind children. This indicates that an increase in shared values and emotions in the

Table 5
Correlation of Personal and Family-Related Characteristics of Left-Behind Children and Social Capital

	Parent-Child Interaction	Supportive Relationship	Remittance	Shared Values and emotion	Structure of Relationships	Social Trust	Supportive Norms	Contact with Neighbors	Social Trust	Involvement in Community
Age of left-behind child	.021	-.089	.051	-.100	-.108*	-.141**	-.124*	-.158**	-.194**	-.097
	.677	.082	.315	.050	.035	.005	.015	.002	.000	.057
No. of siblings	-.078	-.154**	.023	-.081	-.052	-.001	-.039	-.036	.026	-.103*
	.126	.003	.650	.114	.312	.987	.443	.488	.610	.044
Grade level	.099	-.036	.099	-.058	-.113*	-.117*	-.117*	-.146**	-.189**	-.081
	.051	.483	.053	.254	.027	.022	.022	.004	.000	.113
Income of migrant parent	.003	-.002	-.032	-.065	-.022	-.083	.020	-.131*	-.065	-.054
	.954	.964	.527	.206	.673	.104	.698	.010	.202	.293
No. of years abroad	-.024	.010	.019	-.025	-.053	-.014	.007	-.143**	-.014	-.091
	.645	.852	.708	.624	.301	.791	.895	.005	.788	.073
Education of migrant parent	.035	.118*	.065	-.018	.003	-.039	.043	-.007	.031	-.009
	.496	.021	.203	.720	.951	.448	.398	.891	.541	.867
Age of care-provider	.017	-.087	-.020	-.081	-.070	-.055	-.067	-.093	-.068	-.126*
	.735	.087	.697	.113	.171	.283	.189	.069	.185	.013
Income of care-provider	-.051	-.017	-.093	-.033	-.052	-.104*	-.082	-.068	-.065	-.096
	.320	.743	.069	.522	.308	.041	.109	.186	.205	.059

Legend: * $p < 0.05$ level; ** $p < 0.01$ level; *** $p < 0.001$

family leads to higher level values learned by 0.193 points. Contact with neighbors ($p = 0.009$) and age of migrant parents ($p = 0.005$) have a strong significance in predicting the level of values learned by all left-behind children. An increase of age of migrant parent implies higher level values learned by 0.143 points. On the other hand, a denser contact with the neighbors may lead to a decrease in the level of values learned by 0.108 points. In the same way, an increase in involvement in the community among left-behind children can predict a higher level of values learned by 0.132 points. Social trust in school ($p = 0.020$) also has moderate significance in predicting the level of values learned by left-behind children. An increase in social trust leads to higher level of values learned by 0.100 points. This result explains only 34% of the variation in values learned of all left-behind children in the study ($R^2 = .368$; Adjusted $R^2 = .335$; see Table 6).

Social trust in school ($p = 0.001$) and involvement in the community ($p = .000$) have a very strong significance in predicting the level of right conduct of all left-behind children. This indicates that an increase in social trust in school leads to a higher level of right conduct by 0.163 points. Also, an increase in the involvement in community life predicts a higher level of right conduct by 0.201 points. Supportive

relationship in the family ($p = 0.021$) and contact with neighbors ($p = 0.017$) have moderate significance in predicting the level of right conduct of left-behind children. An increase in supportive relationship in the family implies a higher level of right conduct by 0.143 points. On the other hand, a denser contact with the neighbors may lead to a decrease in the level of right conduct by 0.112 points. This result explains only 30% of the variation in right conduct of all left-behind children in the study ($R^2 = 0.312$; Adjusted $R^2 = 0.296$; see Table 7).

Forms of social capital in the family, in school, in the community perceived by left-behind children, and their age predict their average grade. Contact with neighbors has a very strong significance ($p=.000$) but negative association with the average grade. This means that an increase in contact with the neighbors among left-behind children leads to a decrease in the average grade by 1.78 points. Another variable that has a negative association with the average grade is age ($p = 0.044$). This indicates that as children move towards the later part of adolescence, their average grade declines by 0.38 points. Meanwhile, supportive relationship ($p = 0.006$) and supportive norms (0.050) are moderately significant predictors of average grade. This means that higher levels of supportive relationship

Table 6
Regression Analysis of Social Capital and Values Learned

Variables	B	Std. Error	β	t	Sig.	R ²	Adjusted R ²
						0.368	0.335
Shared values and emotions	0.193	0.057	0.187	3.394	0.001***		
Social trust in school	0.100	0.043	0.125	2.338	0.020*		
Contact with neighbors	-0.108	0.041	-0.159	-2.627	0.009**		
Involvement in community life	0.132	0.032	0.239	4.151	0.000***		
Age of migrant parent	0.143	0.051	0.135	2.802	0.005**		

$N = 384$

Legend: * $p < 0.05$ level; ** $p < 0.01$ level; *** $p < 0.001$

Table 7
Regression Analysis of Social Capital and Right Conduct

Variables	B	Std. Error	β	t	Sig.	R ²	Adjusted R ²
						0.312	0.296
Supportive relationship	0.121	0.052	0.123	2.320	0.021*		
Social trust in school	0.163	0.050	0.172	3.269	0.001***		
Contact with neighbors	-0.112	0.047	-0.140	-2.394	0.017*		
Involvement in community life	0.201	0.037	0.308	5.382	0.000***		

N=384

Legend: * $p < 0.05$ level; ** $p < 0.01$ level; *** $p < 0.001$

Table 8
Regression Analysis of Social Capital and Average Grade

Variables	B	Std. Error	β	t	Sig.	R ²	Adjusted R ²
Supportive relationship	1.55	0.56	0.156	2.779	0.006**	0.224	0.212
Supportive norms	1.49	0.79	0.104	1.886	0.050*		
Contact with neighbors	-1.78	0.48	-0.212	-3.709	0.000***		
Age of left-behind children	-0.38	0.18	-0.101	-2.017	0.044*		

N=384

Legend: * $p < 0.05$ level; ** $p < 0.01$ level; *** $p < 0.001$

and supportive norms increase the average grade by 1.55 and 1.49 points, respectively. This result explains only 21% of the variation in the average grade of all left-behind children in the study ($R^2=0.224$; Adjusted $R^2=0.212$; see Table 8).

Discussion

Social Capital Bends

It was determined in this study that the level of perceived social capital in the family of left-behind children is high. This means that, despite being left-

behind, they feel and experience emotional closeness, supportive relationship, and meaningful parent-child interaction. Modern communication of transnational families plays a vital role in continuing the ties between left-behind children and migrant parents. Remittance also contributes to the generation of social capital of left-behind children. Gifts, greetings cards, and frequent money remittances become symbolisms of migrant parents' care and love. This contextualizes the idea of Bourdieu (1986) about symbolic exchanges—remittance is not a mere financial asset but a signifier of migrant parents' involvement in the lives of left-

behind children. Moreover, this study conveyed that left-behind children are active in mobilizing their perceived social capital in school to help themselves cope in school and life, in general.

It can be gleaned through this study that the variables indicative of bonding social capital in the family are highly experienced by left-behind children despite the physical absence of their migrant parents. Left-behind children receive the instrumental assistance from parents and care-providers by imparting information, establishing, and reinforcing norms and values that support the child's navigation in school (Carbonaro, 1998).

This can be attributed to the ability of the family as a system of emotional interconnectedness and shared values and practices (Vandewater & Lansford, 2005), which are aided by communication using modern technology. Parental support and emotional closeness are generated through constant communication using modern technology. The high availability of communication technologies at their homes entails frequent communication with their migrant parents. Hence, left-behind children, although they are often perceived as vulnerable due to the absence of migrant parents, feel connected and benefit from the resources that parent-child relationship entails as mediated by modern communication. This negates the idea of Coleman (1988) that migration of individuals threatens social capital due to the structural deficiency in the family or is threatened by individual mobility. Moreover, given that the level of perceived social capital in the family of left-behind children is high, this study conjectures that social capital is not place-based strong bond as opposed to the idea of Putnam (2000). Rather, this study confirms that social capital among transnational families "do not end but bend" (Hochschild, 2000, p.134). It has fluidity as it takes other forms such as symbolic exchange in remittances where the acts of gift giving, saving, and sending money of migrant parents to left-behind children becomes a language of love—an invaluable family resource inherited in the relationship.

The perceived social capital in school of left-behind children is also high. Left-behind children are able to invest in school through relationships or networks with teachers and school-based peers that give them

beneficial outcomes (Dufur et al., 2008). Supportive norms such as clear enforcement of discipline and encouragement from teachers, social trust, and positive bonding with friends and teachers all contribute to their educational outcomes (Crosnoe, 2004). Moreover, the bond between left-behind children and teachers influences not only the academic outcome but also the psycho-social being of the children as their teacher-friends become their guidance counselors.

Lastly, the perceived social capital in the community is also high among left-behind children of migrant parents. Their contact with neighbors and social trust in the community are specifically high, while their involvement in community life is moderate. It can be gleaned that they have an experience of trust and perceive norms and networks in the community that is beneficial to them in certain ways (Putnam, 1993). Nonetheless, it is important to note that the time they spend in their communities is limited as most of their times of the week are spent in school. Furthermore, the presence of close relatives instigates frequent involvement in community activities.

Determinants of Social Capital

Literature on the individual level of social capital posited that socio-demographic and cultural factors influence the generation of social capital. Most of those studies describe the social capital of individuals within the age range of 16 and above in different countries or regions. However, the literature on personal characteristics as determinants of social capital among the younger individuals, 12 to 17 years old, in the Philippines is dearth. In this study, certain socio-demographic variables of left-behind children as well as of their migrant parents' and care-providers' have statistically significant association with social capital. Personal characteristics of left-behind children associated with social capital include: age, number of siblings, grade level, income of migrant parent, number of years abroad of migrant parent, education of migrant parent, age of care-provider, and income of care-provider.

In this study, age was negatively correlated with social capital in school such as the structure of relationships, social trust, and supportive norms. It was also negatively correlated with social capital in

the community such as contact with neighbors, social trust, and involvement in community life. Even the grade level was inversely associated with both social capital in the school and community. This may be about the social development during adolescence. The age of left-behind children in this study ranges from 12 to 17 years old or the stage of adolescence. Commonly, adolescents shift their attention from family to their peer group or to their seeking freedom. School becomes a prominent aspect of adolescent life and neighborhood characteristics are either positively or negatively associated with their development. Moreover, their sibblingship size has a statistically negative association with a supportive relationship in the family and involvement in community life, which is similar to the study of Kaasa and Parts (2008). The number of children is linked to dilution of parental resources, such as time spent on play-time and mentoring, among children (Downey, Sun, & Li, as cited in Parcel et al., 2010).

Other personal characteristics of left-behind children, including the financial, social, and human capital of parents, are relevant to understanding how social capital is invested or diffused (Parcel et al., 2010). Results also show that some characteristics of migrant parents are associated with social capital of left-behind children. Although individual income is a positive determinant of social capital (Christoforou, 2011), this association is not the same for social capital of left-behind children and their migrant parent's income. The utility of migrant parent's financial capital is not transferred in building the children's contact in the neighborhood. Majority of the left-behind children are from lower middle-income families, yet they have a high level of contact with their neighbors. This implies that increased income of migrant parents leads to a downturn of their children's contact with neighbors. The number of years abroad of the migrant parent is negatively correlated with the left-behind children's contact with neighbors as the bridging role of parents between their children and community weakens in their years of absence. It is worth mentioning that the education of migrant parent is significantly correlated with a supportive relationship in the family. The migrant parents have educational levels of at least high school graduate, vocational, and college graduates;

and the study shows that left-behind children have a high level of supportive relationship in the family. The social background of parents that include education influences parenting practices such as quality time with children, sharing of interests, and monitoring (Roksa & Potter, 2011). Parenting practices of migrant parents that promote supportive relationship are mediated by constant communication through modern technologies (Pertierra, 2006). Moreover, migrant parents who have better educational background have certain advantages in terms of the type of employment, which is also a significant predictor of their ability to keep ties with left-behind children (Hoang & Yeoh, 2012). Regarding the characteristics of care-providers, age had a negative association with the left-behind children's involvement in community life. Majority of the care-providers of left-behind children are 46 years old and above, and in Filipino setting, they also are household managers of four to six household members. The involvement of left-behind children in community life lessens as they take some household chores from aging care-provider such as taking care of younger siblings.

Social Capital as Determinant of School Performance

Social capital perceived by the left-behind children in the contexts of family, school, and community determine higher a level of school performance. This supports the idea of Coleman (1988) and the study of Marjoribanks (2012) on the role of social capital—drawn in the family and non-familial networks, in determining the educational experiences and academic achievement of children and youth. Nevertheless, this study enriched Coleman's and Bourdieu's concept of social capital through these following points: first, left-behind children mobilize only certain forms of social capital that benefit their level of school performance; second, age of migrant parent and age of the left-behind children are linked to social capital in determining the school performance; third, higher level of contact with neighbors negatively influence the school performance of left-behind children; and lastly, remittance is mobilized as social capital that determines school performance only for left-behind children with both parents are migrants.

The cultural capital of parents becomes relevant in shaping the children's education by building a connection with their lives. Despite being part of transnational families, left-behind children possess an important aspect of social capital in the family, which is the shared system of values and norms (Vandewater & Lansford, 2005). In this study, the intergenerational transmission of values is implied based on high level of shared values and emotion of left-behind children with their families and outstanding level of values learned that emphasize education, religious faith, understanding, and valuing migrant parents' hard work. Left-behind children get more supportive relationship in the family through open and frequent sharing of interests and activities with parents, quality time, and monitoring. A higher level of supportive relationship in the family results in a higher level of right conduct—more diligent in performing class requirements, socially-approved behaviors, and active participation in school activities. According to Croll (2004), support from the family in forms of parental monitoring, parent-child communication, and parental involvement leads to favorable education experience among children.

Social trust in school is another positive predictor of values learned among left-behind children. This finding is supported by Goddard (2003) that a trusting relationship is one of the key indicators of school social capital. As school becomes a center stage in adolescent life, social trust is essential in making the students feel cohesive even outside their families (Reid, 2011). School, next to family, is a social institution that inculcates and transmits socially acceptable values. Hence, the positive influence of social trust at school on the values learned by students is expected. This also provides leverage on the structure of relationships of students at school in developing school-based friendships. Moreover, the more they perceive that people, in general, and specific individuals at school can be trusted, they become more diligent in practicing positive behaviors in class. Left-behind children possess a trusting relationship with teachers in the form of friendship, which serves as inspiration for them to behave well in class. This supports the study of Parcel and Dufur (2001) that social capital, especially at home and at school, have prevalent effects on child

social adjustment. Variables indicative of social capital in those contexts reduce child behavior problems, especially among the adolescents (Buehler, 2006; Barnes, Hoffman, Welte, Farrel, & Dintcheff, 2006). On the same note, social capital in the family, school, and neighborhood serve as important resources in moderating violent behaviors (Wright & Fitzpatrick, 2006). Socially approved behaviors or right conduct is an important aspect of school performance as it reflects social behaviors that are instrumental in achieving a well-adjusted adolescent life.

A higher level of involvement in community life among left-behind children will also definitely elevate their level of values learned. Involvement in community life involves socialization that promotes religious activities, community festivities, communication, and civic-oriented actions. This form of social capital utilizes the influence of neighborhood adults serving as role models; thereby, promotes positive values and behaviors in the young people (Pong & Hao, 2007). Involvement in community life among left-behind children has a very strongly significant influence on the increase of the level of their right conduct. This means that their involvement in positive collective activities helps them to practice socially approved behaviors, which help them to better cope with school life. Involvement in community church activities and festivities serve as a platform for adults to become role models of positive behaviors to the left-behind children. Contact with the neighbors consistently makes a negative association to the school performance. According to Leventhal and Brooks-Gunn (as cited in American Psychological Association, 2002), the aggregate socio-economic status of the neighborhood is associated with the adolescents' academic achievement especially if youth activities are not monitored due to lack of community institutions.

Perceived social capital invested in school and community are external resources embedded in the interpersonal relationships between family and institutional agents, including the teachers and counselors who possess and negotiate children's access to valuable institutional resources such as academic help and guidance (Sun, 1999). Neighborhood social capital is identified as resources that help in pursuing various outcomes, which have the characteristics

of social support, social leverage, informal social control, and neighborhood organization participation (Carpiano & Kimbro, 2012). However, in this study, contact with neighbors negatively influence the school performance of left-behind children. It is determined based on left-behind children's frequency of meeting close kin, feeling of belongingness with the neighbors, and a sense of community. Studies that have shown a positive association between neighborhood social capital and children academic performance have taken into consideration the socio-economic status of the neighborhood (Sun, 1999). The socio-economic status of the neighborhood can provide a background of factors to which left-behind children are exposed to and could further explain the negative form of social capital generated in this study.

An increase in the age of migrant parent also leads to a better level of values learned by the left-behind children. Again, this can be explained by the psychological advantage of parenting in older age especially among adolescents because it brings emotional stability, psychological strength, and financial stability (Patrizio, as cited in Mascarella, n.d.). Age gives more experiences, knowledge, and social skills that can be shared with the children. Moreover, the age of left-behind children also negatively predicts the average grade, which is consistent with studies that adolescents experience declines in academics as they move from young to middle adolescent age (American Psychological Association, 2002).

Conclusion

This study sheds light on the role of social capital, communication through new technologies, and remittance in the positive outcomes of their psycho-social well-being and academic performance of left-behind children of migrant parents from the Philippines. In the absence of migrant parents, left-behind children can actively shape and use their social capital according to their needs, specifically in dealing with their studies. Even if they lack the structural social capital of their parents' physical presence, they have an active role in creating a social network with peers and adults whom they trust and feel comfortable. This is done by forming a friendship with teachers and scholastically engaged

students for access to information, support, guidance, and inspiration.

For future studies, the use of the blended method of quantitative and qualitative designs is recommended to both measures and examine the quality of social capital of left-behind children in different contexts. School-based and community-based case studies are also encouraged to explore deeper the social and economic conditions that help left-behind children and other vulnerable groups to generate and to make use of the social capital.

For the purpose of social policy and program, female-centered care-providing needs to be reevaluated. Non-migrant fathers need to decide and make time to communicate, monitor, and nurture their children, which is essential in bonding social capital in the family. Although, culturally, the mothers are given the primary role of taking care and nurturing the children, this needs a change in the mindset and practice among transnational families. Schools need to invest in an environment where there is trust, supportive norms, and structural relationships that are friendly and accommodating not only for academic growth but also a psycho-social development of left-behind children.

Children's education is both a private and public good. If their education is important, then they should not suffer for not getting enough social and emotional care that they need as their parents join the massive global labor market. The government may address this issue by providing more and better employment opportunities for Filipino parents to counter the demand of overseas employment. Moreover, the government should raise the bar in valuing the jobs that entail caring and loving by providing social and monetary incentives to the household members who assume the carer and nurturer of left-behind children.

Conflict of Interest:

None.

Ethical Clearance:

This study was approved by the institution.

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