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The present study examined the association between social support and youth hopefulness from the beginning of middle school (6th grade) through the end of middle school (8th grade). The study focuses on the unique effects of sources of social support for youth (i.e., parent, peer, teacher) and the accumulation of support across sources of support. This study is based on Call and Mortimer's (2001) *Arenas of Comfort Theory*, Lerner et al.'s, (2009) *Positive Youth Development Perspective*, and Snyder's (2000) *Hope Theory*. Participants included 416 youth in 6th grade at the beginning of the study (mean age = 11.86, *SD* = .69; 91% European American). Controlling for household income, gender, and race, the present study examined four hypotheses. The first hypothesis states that parental support during 6th grade is associated with increases in youth hopefulness from 6th through 8th grades. The second hypothesis states that peer support during 7th grade is associated with increases in youth hopefulness from 7th through 8th grades. The third hypothesis states that teacher support during 6th grade is associated with increases in youth hopefulness from 6th through 8th grades. The fourth hypothesis states that cumulative support is associated with increases in youth hopefulness from 6th through 8th grades. With the exception of teacher support in one of the analytic models, this study found evidence that each source of support uniquely and positively was associated with youth hopefulness over time. As such, the results from this study highlight the importance of social support from parents, peers, and teachers in fostering youths' hopefulness as they transition through the developmental period of early adolescence.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The opportunity to potentially receive positive social support from parents, peers and other supportive adults has widely contributed to adaptive outcomes in youth (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Warren et al., 2009). Social support is recognized to promote adaptive behavior and outcomes by providing the adolescent with emotional support, resources, or information that encourages positive coping processes (Thoits, 1986; Warren et al., 2009). Research in this area is continuing to understand the unique effects associated with the development of social support for adolescents. Youth who experience support and resulting comfort across life domains (e.g., parents, peers, teachers) can foster healthy relationships for their positive adjustment (Call & Mortimer 2001; Cavanaugh & Buehler, 2016).

Social support can be conceptualized by looking at specific sources of support. The main support sources that are addressed in this study are parent support, peer support, and teacher support. As discussed, social support can be beneficial to the adaptive outcomes for adolescents, but each form of support can create varied outcomes for the individual. Call and Mortimer (2001) recognize that each source can instill some sort of comfort in the person-context interaction. Comfort in a context is indicated by feelings of calmness, satisfaction, acceptance, and ease, as opposed to high arousal, stimulation and challenge, disapproval, and discontent (Call & Mortimer, 2001). Furthermore, social support or “comfort” looks different for the adolescent based upon contextual arenas and outcomes from the source of support.

Parent support focuses on the quality of the relationship between children and their parents. There has been consistent research that demonstrates the role that parents play in the healthy adjustment of adolescents (Rueger et al., 2008). Parental support has been highly

associated with better school adjustment, higher self-esteem, and lower depression (Rueger et al., 2008; Wang & Eccles, 2012). Indicators of parental support include closeness to parents, the openness of communication, the extent of availability for parental support, and quality time spent together (Call & Mortimer, 2001). According to Snyder et al. (1997), secure parental attachments and closer parental connectedness can potentially contribute to the installation of hope in children and youth.

Peer support concentrates on the quality of relationships between children and their peers. This aspect of support is crucial to the youth's development as they progressively extend themselves outside the family unit. Some research has shown that support from friends is related to lower depression and higher self-esteem (Rueger et al., 2008). Specifically focusing on the general peer group, support from peers has been strongly associated with positive youth outcomes, such as greater mental health, school adjustment and socially adaptive behaviors (Rueger et al., 2008) Indicators of peer support include closeness, intimate relationships, and supportive friendships (Call & Mortimer, 2001). Adolescents commonly rely on peer support as a form of social support, but the relationship between this source and hope has been understudied (Archer et al., 2019). It's important to recognize that peers can act as a resource to potentially provide support for the youth as they look toward the future to achieve their goals.

Teacher support orients the quality of the relationship between children and their teachers. Research has shown that teacher support has contributed to more adaptive youth emotional functioning, higher school achievement, lower depression, and higher self-esteem (Archer et al., 2019; Rueger et al., 2008; Wang & Eccles, 2012). Teacher support has also contributed to greater school satisfaction and engagement (Buehler et al., 2015). Teachers have been recognized for shaping the environments youth encounter at school and they provide

opportunities for personal care, instruction, and encouragement. Indicators of teacher support include willingness to listen, helpfulness in finding solutions, and availability to the student (Call & Mortimer, 2001). There's been a lack of literature to address the association between teacher support and hopefulness, but the contribution of emotional and instrumental support to youth may contribute to one's hopefulness.

As such, social support across parents, peers, and teachers is important because it contributes to various positive functions and promotes well-being (Çiçek, 2021). The current study aims to address the individual, unique impacts of each source of social support, as well as the impact of cumulative support on youth hopefulness during middle school. Cumulative support is consequential for adolescents' mental health. As the number of social support domains increases, positive psychological adjustment is enhanced, thereby improving the youth's capacity for coping and chances for future success (Call & Mortimer, 2001; Simmons et al., 1987). Call and Mortimer (2001) discuss how adolescents who reported more support across the "arenas of comfort" manifested a stronger sense of well-being, a more positive self-concept, and lower levels of depressed mood. Cumulative social support needs to be examined further to address the impact of having multiple sources of support on youth hopefulness during early adolescence.

Hopeful thinking has been recognized as an important, positive adaptable capability that contributes to youth development. (Berry et al., 2021; Çiçek, 2021; Esteves et al., 2013; Gerard & Booth, 2015; Gilman et al., 2006; Marques et al., 2009; Marques & Lopez, 2014; Schmid et al., 2011; Snyder, 2000). Hope is a positive motivational state that is derived from a sense of successful agency. Indicators of hopefulness include goals, pathways (plans to meet goals,) a sense of agency, and self-actualization (Snyder, 2000). Snyder (2000) measured hopefulness in several thousands of children and adolescents to find that their levels of hopefulness exceeded

the levels in adults by comparison. Recognizing the strength of hopefulness in youth indicates that this concept needs to be examined further to understand how social support can increase youth hopefulness during early adolescence.

Hopefulness has been found to contribute to various aspects of adolescent health and well-being. Youth who have higher levels of hope have shown significant academic success. Children and adults with higher hope scores have been shown to perform better on standard achievement measures such as grades and graduation rates (Edwards & McClintock, 2013). Hopefulness has also been shown to have positive health and medical outcomes for youth. The literature focused on hope in the context of health problems tends to focus on asthma, cancer, and even burn survivors. Hope was both a significant predictor of adherence to treatment and participants that had higher hope tended to relate to their caregivers more positively (Barnum et al., 1998; Berg et al, 2007; Edwards & McClintock, 2013). Hopefulness has been beneficial to youth psychological adjustment as well. Snyder et al. (1997) found that hope scores were positively correlated with children's perception of their athletic ability, physical appearance, social acceptance, and scholastic competence, and negatively correlated with depression (Berry et al., 2021; Edwards & McClintock, 2013). Youth who also reported higher scores of hopefulness reported higher scores on personal adjustment, global life satisfaction, and less emotional distress overall (Gilman et al., 2006). Furthermore, hope has been shown to deter youth from risky behaviors (e.g., substance abuse and behavioral problems), play a role in school connectedness acts to be a protective factor for youth when facing stressful situations (Edwards & McClintock, 2013; Hagen et al., 2005; You et al., 2008). Youth hopefulness can be beneficial to the overall well-being and development of youth.

Within the realm of positive psychology, there's a focus on the individualized human experience where happiness is at the core of the process. Snyder (2002) compares hope to the symbol of a rainbow in which it can spread over people in multiple ways or colors in various directions to lift our spirits and make us think about what is possible (p.269). Although this idea can be more of a whimsical plight, it infers that hopefulness must be connected to our ability to engage in the cognitive process to conceptualize our goals, follow through with our goals, and feel accomplished once completing the goal (Snyder, 1994). The concept of positive human health also looks at the holistic view of people which includes both the stressors and positive resources they have within them. Hopefulness has been recognized as one of those positive resources for youth when stressors challenge them (Fava & Ruini, 2014). There's been increasing recognition of topics in positive psychology, such as hopefulness, because of its contribution to levels of happiness, fulfillment, and well-being for human existence. Marques and Lopez (2014) describe hope as one of the most potent predictors of youth success.

Hope has also been recognized as an agent for personal change and growth, particularly in therapy (Edwards & McClintock, 2013). Lopez et al. (2004) identified several strategies to integrate hope into the change process and heighten hopefulness in individuals who already possess this quality. They primarily focus on the process of *hope finding*, *bonding*, *enhancing*, and *reminding* to support the process of hope therapy. *Hope finding* refers to the process of helping the individual connect with their goals and reinforcing their motivation to work toward their goals. *Hope bonding* is a part of the process to strengthen a person's hopefulness through mutually agreed upon strategies and encouragement from the therapist. The process of *hope enhancing* occurs when a client possesses hopefulness, but there needs to be more building upon and support for reframing obstacles, while encouraging positive decision making. Finally, *hope*

reminding is the encouragement of the daily use of hope, repetition, and daily practice of hopefulness cognitions. These formal and informal therapeutic strategies help in enhancing youth's hopefulness and give them the strength to become their change agent.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study is to understand the unique and cumulative effects of parental support, peer support, and teacher support on youth hopefulness over time. The present study examines the association between social support and youth hopefulness from the beginning of middle school (6th grade) through the end of middle school (8th grade). It focuses on the unique effects of three specific sources of social support for youth and the accumulation of support across these three support sources. The findings from this study will add to the literature surrounding hope and social support for adolescents in middle school.

Research Questions

This study aims to understand the effects of social support on youth hopefulness. There are four questions and four hypotheses that are addressed in this study:

Question 1: Does parental support have unique effects on youth hopefulness during early adolescence?

Hypothesis 1: Controlling for other sources of support and other covariates, parental support during 6th grade is associated with increases in youth hopefulness from 6th through 8th grades.

Question 2: Does peer support have unique effects on youth hopefulness during early adolescence?

Hypothesis 2: Controlling for other sources of support and other covariates, peer support during 7th grade is associated with increases in youth hopefulness.

Question 3: Does teacher support have unique effects on youth hopefulness during early adolescence?

Hypothesis 3: Controlling for other sources of support and other covariates, teacher support during 6th grade is associated with increases in youth hopefulness from 6th through 8th grades.

Question 4: Does cumulative support have an association with youth hopefulness?

Hypothesis 4: Cumulative support is associated with increases in youth hopefulness from 6th through 8th grades.

CHAPTER II: THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

The present study is guided by three theoretical frameworks. Call and Mortimer's (2001) *Arenas of Comfort Theory* suggests that social support across multiple areas (e.g., parents, peers, teachers) offers youth an opportunity to gain a sense of competence, self-esteem, and psychological well-being through these sources of protection (in their words "arenas of protection"). The *Positive Youth Development Framework* moves past the deficit view of youth that has influenced the various areas of research and instead strengthens the views on youth development, youth outcomes, and positive qualities/assets for adolescents (Lerner et al., 2009). Lastly, *Hope Theory* is a necessary conceptual framework that frames the understanding of youth hopefulness and helps in understanding the developmental process of hope (Snyder, 2000).

Arenas of Comfort Theory

Call and Mortimer's (2001) *Arenas of Comfort Theory* describes the accumulation of social support across multiple domains (e.g., parents, peers, school) that offer youth protection and strengthen youths' socioemotional well-being. The researchers defined the sources of support in the arena of comfort as soothing, accepting, and enduring qualities of youths' relationships (Call & Mortimer, 2001; Cavanaugh & Buehler, 2016). Their study on transitional adjustment through middle school truly encapsulated the concept of quality relationships. As such, these relationships mitigated the negative effects of stressors and provided social support as a coping resource for youth.

In conjunction with Snyder's (2000) conceptualization of hope, the adolescent must be an active agent in their socialization process. Hope requires one's capabilities to take control of their goals, manage those goals and feel a sense of self-actualization to take the initiative to complete the goals. Call and Mortimer (2001) recognized the connection between the personal

and contextual processes needed for youth to seek out environments that promote successful or even unsuccessful adaptation. The youth's capacity to create supportive relations with others is essential in the development of resilience as well. Accordingly, *Arenas of Comfort Theory* frames the present research by suggesting that sources of support act as promotive resources that direct the focus on the multifaceted contexts adolescents encounter that will potentially influence their hopefulness.

Positive Youth Development Framework

According to Lerner et al. (2009), more scholars have been focused on the individual strengths and roles that positive development can play in a youth's development and overall mental health. This perspective recognizes the dynamic development of youth and includes not only the plasticity of human development but also the relationship between individuals and their real-world settings (Lerner et al., 2009). Lerner et al. (2009) further described positive youth development as a process that promotes the Five C's: *competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring*. *Competence* is recognized as the positive view of one's actions in specific domains such as academic competence referring to school performance (e.g., getting good grades). *Confidence* refers to an internal sense of overall positive self-worth and self-efficacy. *Connection* focuses on the positive bonds a youth has within their contexts and with the people around them that cultivate an exchange between the individual and the other party to contribute to the relationship. *Character* is specifically looking at the respect a youth has for the societal and cultural norms in their context (e.g., morality and integrity). Lastly, *caring* is the sense of empathy and sympathy for others. The 5 Cs are important to positive youth development, and they were linked to more positive outcomes for youth (Lerner et al., 2009).

Benson et al. (2006) examined the individual strengths of youth by focusing on the developmental assets that an adolescent could potentially have. This approach emphasizes the talents, energies, strengths, and constructive interests that every young person possesses. Benson et al.'s (2006) efforts focused on sustaining the positive strengths a youth can have rather than eliminating risk behavior. This approach allows for all youth in or outside of adversity to be supported and examined in youth development research. In several studies, researchers found these assets to be predictive of seven behavioral indicators of thriving: school success, leadership, helping others, maintenance of physical health, delay of gratification, valuing diversity, and overcoming adversity. These personal and social assets can be beneficial for the positive development of adolescents. In accordance with social support and youth hopefulness, these assets are placed into two groups which include internal for hopefulness and social support for external. Although the present study will not be focused on the aspect of overcoming adversity, it's important to address the utility of this perspective when understanding youth development and how it has been examined from a broader perspective of developmental psychology in resilience as well (Lerner et al., 2009; Werner & Smith; 2001).

Similarly, to the concept of hopefulness, Lerner et al. (2009) considered the work of Larson (2006) that contributed to this idea of internalized motivation. Positive youth development is a process in which young people's capacity for being motivated by a challenge energizes their active engagement in their development (Larson, 2006). For positive development to take place, the youth must be actively engaged in their motivational process to navigate development and everyday real-life challenges. These aspects of positive youth development further contribute to the study by recognizing the strengths in an adolescent's

individualized assets and recognizing the active engagement of adolescents when looking to pursue their future.

Hope Theory

According to Snyder (2000), *hope theory* is rooted in one's desired outcomes for themselves and their prospective future. Indicators of hopefulness include the conceptualization of goals, strategies to reach those goals, and the capability to initiate and sustain the motivation to use the strategies. Indicators do not include optimism, self-efficacy, and self-esteem. Hope may coincide with these excluded indicators, but they are not the operational indicators of the construct of hopefulness. Hope is centered around future ideation, whereas optimism focuses on the negative outcomes as being essential to one's attributional explanations. Hope is related to self-efficacy through the goal-related outcomes; however, self-efficacy relates to one's beliefs in their capabilities, whereas hope concentrates on the "will do" and not the "can do." Hope does contribute to self-esteem, but not vice-versa according to Snyder (2000). Hope isn't emotional, whereas self-esteem lives in emotion. According to Shatte et al. (2000), the realms of hopefulness and hopelessness intersect in cognition. Hopelessness is the expectation that a highly desired outcome will not occur. On the other hand, hopefulness sets youth on a trajectory to believe that they have goals, pathways to goals, and mental energy. Hopefulness can be derived from hopelessness, but the adolescent must have the mindset to believe that their situations are changeable, their goals are clear, and their desirable outcomes can be accomplished (Shatte et al., p.217). These conceptualizations act as support for understanding what hopefulness means and will be further examined when specifically operationalizing youth hopefulness.

Emphasizing Youth Hopefulness

Hope is one of the most influential predictors of youth success (Marques & Lopez, 2014). Hopefulness may be especially important during adolescence due to the developmental transition in the sense of self and future aspirations (Berry et al., 2021). Hope has been described as a prerequisite to achieving fulfilling adulthood, so it's important to study the levels of hopefulness during adolescence and identify ways to strengthen hope (Smith et al., 2000). In the present study, youth hopefulness will be examined in association with the types of social support early adolescents receive.

CHAPTER III: LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of the present study is to consider the effects of social support on youth hopefulness in early adolescence. In the first conceptual model, there will be three independent variables that include parental support, peer support, and teacher support (plus potential covariates). Youth hopefulness will be the dependent variable. In the second conceptual model, cumulative support will be the primary independent variable (plus potential covariates) and youth hopefulness will be the dependent variable. Below includes the review of the literature regarding each source of support and how it's been associated with youth hopefulness or a related construct. Literature relating to youths' cumulative support is also reviewed.

Social Support

Global Social Support

Social support is believed to promote adaptive behaviors and outcomes by providing adolescents with needed resources, information, and emotional support (Thoits, 1986; Warren et al., 2009). Recognized as a multidimensional construct, social support has been categorized into the areas of emotional support, companionship, obtaining advice or guidance, and securing instrumental aid (Berndt, 1989; Cauce et al., 1990). This section addresses the role of the accumulation of support from multiple sources (i.e., cumulative support). Warren et al. (2009) examined differential predictors of adaptive outcomes in early adolescence. The researchers looked at the associations between negative life events, adaptive skills, hope, and grade point average (GPA) in a sample of 103 inner-city youth between the ages of 11 and 14. Results found that overall, there were no significant gender differences in the number of social support provisions reported, but results did support the notion that different social support provisions are related to different outcomes for boys and girls. Guidance and information were the strongest

predictors of adaptive skills and grade point average for boys. The association between support provisions and outcomes was less pronounced for girls. Similar to the boys, nurturance, and reassurance of worth were among the strongest predictors of hope in girls. In boys, the interactions between negative life events (NLE), and reassurance of worth and NLE variables were the strongest predictors of hope. These findings suggest that for hopefulness, the value of social support for both boys and girls may lie more in emotional support in comparison to shared activities and interests. Primarily, the association between support variables and adaptive outcomes was consistently stronger for boys than girls. This study further emphasizes the multidimensional nature of social support and the adaptive outcomes during adolescence.

Rueger et al. (2010) examined the association between multiple sources of perceived social support (parent, teacher, classmate, friend, school) for early adolescents and youths' psychological and academic adjustment. The study collected longitudinal data at two time points during the school year and the sample consisted of 636 (49% male) middle school students. Results showed that the independent, concurrent associations between social support sources and adjustment were significant for boys and girls with no gender differences. Over time, the individual sources emerged as significant predictors for specific outcomes and there was more variability by gender. The perception of parental support was consistent for boys and girls, but girls perceived more support from other sources in comparison to boys. They found that support from peers (general classmates) and parents was each a unique predictor for adolescent outcomes over time. This study recognizes the unique effects of each source of social support on adolescents and how they can each contribute to the youth's behavioral outcomes.

Yarcheski et al. (2001) examined the association between perceived social support and general well-being in early adolescents focused on two variables, hopefulness and, self-esteem.

The cross-sectional, correlational research design included a sample of 142 adolescents, ages 12-14 ($M = 13.1$, $SD = .46$), where 72 were girls and 70 were boys. The participants self-identified as 79% white and the remaining 21% self-identified as African American, Latino or Asian American. The results documented positive correlations between social support and youth well-being ($r = .75$, $p < .001$), social support and hopefulness ($r = .63$, $p < .001$), hopefulness and well-being ($r = .68$, $p < .001$), social support and self-esteem ($r = .60$, $p < .001$) and self-esteem and well-being ($r = .67$, $p < .001$). This study highlights the importance of social support and the potential positive association with youth hopefulness.

Wang and Eccles (2012) addressed social support influences from teachers, peers, and parents on adolescents' trajectory of school engagement. The sample consisted of 1,479 students (52% female, 56% African American) who measured at five time points between 7th grade and three years after high school. Across the three main supports, the researchers used multilevel growth modeling to see how the changes differed over time for the adolescents' gender, race, ethnicity, and social support. Focusing primarily on the role of social support in this study, they found each source of support played a different role in the youth's school engagement. The results suggest that supportive teachers play a crucial role in reducing declines in school rule compliance, sense of school identification, and subjective valuing of learning at school through middle school. The role of peer support was associated with reduced declines in extracurricular participation, sense of school identification, and subjective value of learning at school. As such, the type of peer influenced the level of school engagement. Parent social support was a strong predictor of participation in extracurricular activities, school identification, and subjective valuing of learning. Parent and teacher support acted as a buffer against the general declines in school engagement. The results suggest that adolescents can be influenced by their teachers and

parents when it comes to school engagement, however, peers continue to act as both positive and negative influencers. The study also suggested that the type of peer mattered for the behavioral outcomes of the adolescent. Overall, this portion of their study provides support for the influence social support can have on youth during middle school.

Siddal et al. (2013) examined the differential sources of school social support (i.e., parents, peers, teachers) and early adolescents' global life satisfaction in a prospective study. The participants include 597 middle-school students from 1 large school in the southeastern United States who completed measures of school social climate and life satisfaction on two occasions, five months apart. The results revealed that there was variability in adolescent life satisfaction due to the individualized experiences with one's social supports. Cross-sectional multiple regression analyses of the differential contributions of the sources of support showed that family and peer support for learning was statistically significant concerning global life satisfaction. Prospective multiple regression analyses showed that only family support for learning continued to contribute statistically significant at Time 2. Overall, the results suggest that school-related experiences, especially with family, can potentially spill over into the adolescent's life and impact the level of global life satisfaction. This study contributes to the understanding that social support can impact youth's perception of self and outcomes in academics.

Taken together, these studies primarily focused on social support as an important factor in youth development. However, a gap in the literature is that few studies have examined the unique effects that each area of support can have on adolescents. The current study addresses this gap by investigating the unique effects of individual social supports on youth and how they contribute to one's hopefulness over time. In the next section, literature is examined that addresses the specific areas of support from parents, peers, and teachers. In many of these

studies, researchers only examine one or two sources of social support and their associations with the markers of youth well-being during early adolescence.

In addition to the gap noted about scarce research focused on the unique effects of sources of social support, an additional gap is the paucity of research focused on the accumulation of social support across sources. There hasn't been an extensive amount of literature addressing cumulative social support although Cavanaugh and Buehler's (2016) results indicated that adolescents who perceived higher support across multiple contexts (i.e., family, peers, and school) showed decreased emotional difficulties (loneliness and social anxiety). These findings are tangential to the current study that examines the association between cumulative social support and increases in youth hopefulness in middle school.

Sources of Social Support

This section discusses various studies that analyze the three specific sources of support (parents, peers, teachers) examined in this study. Each source of support can have unique effects and it's necessary to understand the scope of the impact of each source on adolescents' well-being.

Parental Support

Mahon and Yarcheski (2017) conducted a meta-analysis focused on the association between parental support and youth hopefulness. They found seven studies (three published articles and four dissertations). The average weighted correlation was .21. This association was stronger for published studies than unpublished studies and for healthy youth than ill youth. This portion of the meta-analysis contributes to the idea that parent support can uniquely contribute to youth hopefulness over time. These findings are strong and support part of the hypothesis for the current study.

Using a sample of 675 adolescents, Gerard and Booth (2015) examined the relationships between the individual, family, and school influences on adolescent adjustment problems. With regards to social support, this study focused primarily on parental support. This study was a part of a four-year longitudinal study that focused on adolescents' personal experiences with their academic contexts during middle school and high school. The sample was racially diverse and primarily included economically disadvantaged students. The youths' perception of school climate and connectedness to school were negatively associated with school problems. There was a significant interaction between parental academic support and adolescent academic aspirations. Specifically for boys and white youth, parental support acted as a protective factor against conduct problems for students with low academic aspirations. Adolescents' hopefulness, parental academic aspirations, and school connectedness were negatively associated with youth depressive symptoms. Hopefulness and academic aspirations of the youth moderated the associations between both family and school influences on adolescent adjustment with youth gender and race qualifying these interaction effects. Findings suggest that hopefulness showed protective properties and that students' academic aspirations were significantly associated with their perceptions of parental support and parental academic aspirations.

Maiuolo et al. (2019) specifically focused on the source of parental support where they examined the influence of parental authoritativeness and parental support on youth help-seeking intentions and behaviors in 1,582 students (49% female) across 17 high schools. The researchers collected data at two time points one year apart from each other. The study controlled for gender and psychological distress of participants and the results indicated that positive parenting was associated with greater youth help-seeking intentions from professional sources. However, parental authoritativeness and parental support did not predict help-seeking when assessed a year

later. This study does contribute to the potential role of parents, however, in supporting their youth concurrently in times of need and acting as a figure for psychological support, comfort, and guidance.

Peer Support

Focusing on the second meta-analysis completed by Mahon and Yarcheski (2017), the researchers conducted this meta-analysis on the association between friend social support and youth hopefulness. They found seven studies (three journal articles and four dissertations). The results showed that social support from friends had a stronger mean effect size ($ES = .31$) than social support from parents ($ES = .21$); this difference in magnitude was statistically significant. These findings suggest that social support from friends seems to be important in fostering hopefulness in adolescents. These results are important because they extend the idea of social support from peers being a contributor to youths' hopefulness, which is addressed in the current study.

Muscara et al. (2018) focused on the source of peer support during the transition from middle to high school for 208 Italian adolescents (106 boys, 102 girls; $M = 12.56$; $SD = .61$). They looked at the mediating role of peer support as an explanation for the association between family and school satisfaction. Participants completed the *Italian Version of the Family Assessment Device* and the *Social Support Questionnaire* in Wave 1 and the *Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale* at Wave 2. The results showed that among family function dimensions, only affective involvement predicted perceived peer support and school satisfaction. Their mediating results showed that perceived peer support mediated the association between affective involvement in middle school and school satisfaction in high school. These results

suggest that peer support is essential when understanding an adolescent's school satisfaction and that parental involvement did not change the youth's perception of school.

Ellis et al. (2009) conducted a mixed-methods study to examine the effectiveness of a peer support program designed to facilitate the transition to adolescence and high school by enhancing self-concept and other desirable outcomes. The Peer Support program is designed to train senior year high school students to work regularly with small groups of seventh-grade students. This study compiled 930 seventh grade students from three schools over two years in New South Wales, Australia. For the quantitative component, a longitudinal design was employed with a control group and baseline pre-program data to compare the effects. The researchers used a multilevel analytic approach and the results provided evidence that suggests the program was largely successful in achieving its aims of enhancing students' school self-concept, school citizenship, sense of self and possibility, connectedness, and resourcefulness. A subsample of students from the experimental group participated in the qualitative portion, which included open-ended survey results ($n = 408$ Grade 7 students, $n = 75$ peer support leaders) and focus groups ($n = 119$ Grade 7 students $n = 44$ peer support leaders) to identify students' perspective of the program. The findings from this study suggest that peers can have a significant contribution to a youth's school efforts and positive outcomes overall.

Teacher Support

Guess and McCane-Bowling (2016) focused on the source of teacher support for urban middle school students. The study aimed to examine the association between teacher support and youths' overall life satisfaction. Data were collected from 149 middle-school students (56% female, 44% male; 95% African American, 5% White) in a primarily economically under-resourced community (99% of enrollment was economically disadvantaged). The researchers

used a *Child and Adolescent Social Support Scale* and *Multidimensional Student's Life Satisfaction Scale* to assess students' perceived support and life satisfaction. The results indicated that students' perceptions of teacher support positively correlated significantly with life satisfaction. With regards to support from teachers, the researchers specifically looked at emotional support, informational support, appraisal support, and instrumental support. There were statistically significant correlations amongst all areas of support, but informational support contributed most strongly with youth life satisfaction than other aspects of teacher support. This study shows that the teacher-student relationship is important in understanding youth's life satisfaction during middle school.

Suldo et al. (2009) completed a mixed methods study analyzing the association between adolescents' subjective well-being and school experience, particularly with teacher support. The focus of the study was on examining which teacher supports were most strongly associated with adolescents' subjective well-being (quantitative component) and understanding students' perceptions of specific teacher behaviors and/or comments that communicate social support (qualitative component; 50 students and eight focus groups). Data were collected from 401 middle school students attending a single school in a suburban community within a southeastern state. Students were in grades 6 (34%), 7 (40%), and 8 (27%); mean age was 12.92 years ($SD = 0.96$). Most of the sample was female (60%). The researchers found that perceived teacher support accounted for 16% of the variance in students' subjective well-being and that emotional support and instrumental support from teachers uniquely predicted subjective well-being. Themes that emerged during focus groups included the following: Students perceive teachers to be supportive primarily when they connect with students on an emotional level, use diverse and best-practice teaching strategies, acknowledge students' academic success, create a fair space

during interactions with students, and develop a space for students to ask questions. This study recognizes the importance of teacher support and how it can have a positive impact on the well-being of their students.

As a grouping, these studies recognize the salience of social support and how it has widely contributed to reported markers of adaptive youth outcomes. These relationships contribute to the individuals' ability to master emotional distress, share tasks, receive advice, learn skills, and obtain assistance (Warren et al., 2009). Each source of social support offers benefits for these youth presently and across their lifespans. The current study will address parents, peers, and teachers in the same analysis and how they are each associated with youth hopefulness.

Youth Hopefulness

Youth hopefulness can have direct and indirect influences on adolescent beliefs and pursuits for the future (Hinds & Gattuso, 1991). These studies investigate youth hopefulness across various domains and exhibit the unique impact of hope on youth. Some of the studies addressed hopefulness in areas that include diseases and health. The current study may not focus on the specificities of health, but it's important to incorporate this information in the review of literature because it allows for a broad understanding of hope associated with youth psychosocial development. In a quasi-experimental design, Marques et al. (2011) investigated the effectiveness of a 5-week hope-based intervention that was created to increase youth hopefulness, life satisfaction, self-worth, mental health, and academic achievement in middle school. The study included 62 students, which included 31 in the intervention group and 31 in a matched comparison group. All the participants were white, the majority female (71%), with a mean age of 10.96 (Range 10-12 years; $SD = .31$). The participants were also assessed over time

at pre-, post-, 6-, and 18-month follow-ups. There was a significant increase in hopefulness from pre- to post-assessment. At post-test, the intervention group had enhanced hope, life satisfaction, and self-worth. In the intervention group, benefits in hope, life satisfaction, and self-worth were maintained at the 18-month follow-up, whereas the comparison group demonstrated no change in hope, life satisfaction, or self-worth from baseline to post- or follow-up assessment. Results suggest that a hope intervention could increase psychological strengths and participants continue to benefit over time. The study's results support the idea that hopefulness can be beneficial to the well-being and outcomes of youth in middle school.

Çiçek (2021) examined the mediating role of social support and social connectedness in explaining the association between hope and resilience in adolescents. The researcher sampled 413 high school students (57.1% girls; $M = 17.31$, $SD = 1.61$) in Turkey. Youth completed the Children's Hope Scale (CHS), Brief Resilience Scale (BRS), Brief Perceived Social Support Questionnaire (BPSSQ), and the Social Connectedness Scale (SCS). The results showed that hopefulness positively and significantly predicted social connectedness, social support, and resilience. As such, youth who expressed positive thoughts about the future had a higher sense of belonging and connectedness and had strong social support systems also had higher levels of resilience.

Gilman et al. (2006) investigated the association between levels of hope and academic and psychological indicators for 341 middle and high schoolers. The participants were primarily white (87%), and they completed four scales (The Children's Hope Scale, The Student's Satisfaction with Life Scale, The Behavioral Assessment System for Children, and Structured Extracurricular Activities List) and self-reported GPA. Researchers found that youth who had lower levels of hope in comparison to their peers had lower scores on all adaptive indicators.

They also had higher scores on maladaptive indicators in comparison to students who reported high and average levels of hope. The youth that reported higher levels of hope also reported higher levels of personal adjustment, global life satisfaction, self-reported GPA, and less emotional distress. Though this study utilized a cross-sectional design, it suggests elevated levels of hope may promote greater psychological and academic functioning.

Hendricks et al. (2000) also explored levels of hope in adolescents to see if it was a health-promoting behavior (identification of choices and consequences specifically to combat activities that could be health-compromising) among rural, southern early adolescents ($N = 1036$, 85% African American). The study used the *Miller Hope Scale* that looked at hope and three main factors which included life satisfaction, avoidance of hope threats, and anticipation for the future. Factor one focuses on the youth's satisfaction with their competence, their feelings of love and belonging, and one's ability to create meaning in their life. Factor two focuses on the threats to hope that include items such as feeling overwhelmed and potentially a lack of inner strength. Factor three focuses on anticipation and planning for the future to accomplish goals. The youth's total hope score was higher amongst all the factors and particularly higher among females. The researchers also found that among the three factors, there were higher levels of hope in anticipation of a future than for the other two factors. Hope can contribute to one's willingness to choose health-promoting behaviors and overall lifestyle choices (Hendricks, 2000). As such, this study recognizes the benefits of hopefulness and how it can act as a physiological and psychological defense in response to stress.

Ciarrochi et al. (2007) analyzed the distinctiveness of three positive thinking variables which includes hope, self-esteem, and positive attributional style amongst high schoolers (784 students; 382 males, 394 females, and 8 didn't indicate gender). Academic achievement, higher

goal attainment, psychological adjustment, and self-rated global well-being were outcomes of interest. The researchers collected data at two time points: Time one measured verbal and numerical ability, positive thinking, and indices of emotional well-being (positive affect, sadness, fear, and hostility), and Time 2 measured hope, self-esteem, and emotional well-being. Multilevel random coefficient modeling revealed that each positive thinking variable was distinctive in some contexts but not in others. The researchers found that hope was a predictor of positive affect, the best predictor of grade point average, and the best predictor of decrease in hostility. Hope was the only variable that had a predictive utility across all domains. This study contributes to our understanding of hope and further recognizes that people with higher levels of hopefulness are more likely to have higher goal attainment and potentially more positive affect.

Cantrell and Lupinacci (2004) observed hopefulness through a different lens when they looked at a predictive model of hopefulness among a sample of healthy adolescents and a sample of adolescents with cancer. There were 90 youth subjects included in the study where 48 were male and 42 were female. Youth perceived level of self-esteem and degree of hopefulness did not differ by gender or disease status. Overall, the adolescents in the study had moderate levels of hopefulness, with healthy males having the highest level of hopefulness. However, female adolescents did tend to use hopefulness as a coping strategy in connection with their self-esteem. This study shows the relationship between self-esteem and hope which closely relates to the recognition of hopefulness as a resilience asset.

Social Support and Youth Hopefulness

Though rare, a few studies of social support and youth hopefulness utilized both constructs in the same analysis to further understand the association between these two important constructs. Archer et al. (2019) examined the effects of perceived social support on adolescent

hope for middle and high schoolers ($N = 991$; 64% female, 36% male) across 1 year. The study also examined the potential moderating effects of youth gender and age. The results showed the unique impact of perceived social support from parents to significantly predict later hope in adolescents. However, perceived social support from teachers, classmates, and friends did not uniquely predict later hope. They did find that gender and age did not predict later hope in youth, but older-aged youth did moderate the association over time due to the transitional relationships that occur in adolescence. This study provided insight into the mental health practices that are associated with psychological strengths such as hopefulness and suggests that support from parents might be particularly important during early adolescence.

As previously discussed, Mahon and Yarcheski (2017) conducted two meta-analyses for parent and friend social support about adolescent hope in nine studies (ranging in ages 10 to 23). The results showed that social support from peers had a stronger mean effect size (average correlation = .31) in comparison to social support from parents ($ES = .21$); this difference in magnitude was statistically significant. The study suggested that social support from parents and friends played an important role in the adolescents' hopefulness. These researchers did compare their two effect sizes in the ES magnitude but didn't have them in the same analysis. However, the current study will include both the parent and peer supports examined in the same analysis.

Existing Gaps in Current Research

Throughout this literature, the researchers have addressed social support, the unique effects of sources of support, youth hopefulness, and the connecting constructs. However, there are limitations in the studies that have been completed so far in understanding these constructs. As discussed, multiple sources address social support, but it was a challenge to find literature that looked at the specific sources of support. Support from parents, peers, and teachers might

affect youth in different ways and varied contexts, so it's essential to examine the individual impacts of various sources of support on adolescents.

The literature also had few studies that analyzed cumulative support. Call and Mortimer (2001) addressed the idea of the accumulation of support across arenas of comfort, which involves all the social supports working together to benefit the adolescent. This theoretical idea needs to be further explored because if there are more positive supports in a youth's life, there is a potential for more positive outcomes overall. This study addresses the impact of cumulative support on youth hopefulness over time.

The studies had varied forms of research designs, but there was a lack of longitudinal studies that addressed these areas across various time points for longer periods. There needs to be more examination over time to further understand the association between sources of social support and youth hopefulness. Most studies primarily used self-reports from adolescents, so there often wasn't the inclusion of the parents' perspectives on support. In the current study, both the examination of longitudinal work and the usage of reports from multiple sources (youth and parents) are employed.

The current study aims to further understand the association between three sources of social support and youth hopefulness. Specifically, this study looks at the unique effects of support from parents, peers, and teachers on youth hopefulness over time. This study also furthers the understanding of cumulative support and youth hopefulness over time

CHAPTER IV: PRESENT STUDY

Extending from previous research, this study aims to understand the effects of social support on youth hopefulness over time from 6th grade through 8th grades. First addressing if there is an association between three sources of support (parents, peers, teachers) and changes in youth hopefulness. Second, to test if there is an association between cumulative support and changes in youth hopefulness. This study contributes to the literature on social support and its impact on youth hopefulness during the important developmental period of early adolescence.

Method

Sampling Procedure

The population of interest in the current study is early adolescents in middle school. The sample for this study is drawn from a longitudinal study on family life during the youth's transition through early adolescence (Cavanaugh & Buehler, 2016). Participants were from a geographically diverse county in the southeastern portion of the United States and included sixth graders from thirteen middle schools. For families to qualify for this longitudinal portion of the study, the parents had to be long-term cohabitants or married without stepchildren in or outside the home (Cavanaugh & Buehler, 2016). This exclusion was done for three reasons: (a) stepfamilies' complexity with their structure would have required an adequate sample size for this group; (b) data would need to have been collected regarding parent-child relations and stepparent-child relations to understand family dynamics accurately; and (c) funds were inadequate to collect questionnaire and observational data from both stepparents and nonresidential birth parents (Buehler & Welsh, 2009).

The adolescents received letters at school during homeroom for participation and parents were sent two extra invites directly in the mail. Out of the 71% of students who returned their

consent forms, 80% of parents agreed to permit their child to complete a questionnaire on family life during school. This equated to a sample of 2,346 sixth graders and the youth demographic profile matched the county composition. There were 1,131 eligible families from the larger study, and 416 (37%) agreed to participate in the longitudinal portion of the study. At Wave 1 (W1), when adolescents were in the sixth grade, they ranged in age from 11 to 14 years ($M = 11.86$ years, $SD = 0.69$) and 51% ($n = 211$) were girls.

As part of the longitudinal research design, assessments were conducted again 1 year later (W2) and two years later (W3). The students were in seventh grade at W2 ($M = 12.84$ years, $SD = 0.68$) and in the eighth grade in W3 ($M = 13.83$, $SD = 0.67$). Of the initial 416 families at W1, 366 families participated at W2 and 340 families at W3 (82% retention). Using the W1 data, attrition analyses were conducted and there were no differences between the retained and attrited families on any of the study variables (Buehler, 2006). Middle-school-aged youth were chosen because of the transitional period that occurred for youth and their families during that time (Call & Mortimer, 2001).

Sample Characteristics

During Wave 1 (W1), adolescents were in sixth grade and ranged in age from 11 to 14 ($M = 11.86$ years, $SD = 0.69$), and 51% of the sample were girls ($n = 211$) (Buehler, 2006). Most of the families were of European American descent (91%) with a small percentage of African American families (3%) and other ethnic backgrounds (6%; Cavanaugh & Buehler, 2016). During the time of this study, the percentage (3%) was lower than the percentage of married African American couples with their children younger than 18 years in the county (5%) and the U.S. (7.8%; U.S. Census, 2000a, Table PCT27 of SF4). The sample's average level of parental education was an associate degree or two years of college. Educational attainment was similar to

the average of European Americans, over the age of twenty-four, in the county at the time (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000b, Table P148A of SF4). The families in the 2001 study had a median household income of \$70,000, which was higher than the 1999 income for married-couple families in the county (\$64,689 inflation-adjusted dollars through 2001, U.S. Census, 2000, Table PCT40 of SF3).

Data Collection

The data collection process occurred once a year over 3 years with questionnaires and observations. Data were collected initially in sixth grade (W1), a year later in seventh grade (W2), and two years later in eighth grade (W3). Informed consent and assent were obtained at each data collection time point and setting. During W1 of data collection, the adolescents completed questionnaires about family life at school. The questionnaires were completed in groups of 40-50 students during the mornings in each school's cafeteria. The parents and adolescents were also mailed additional questionnaires to complete independently. The families had yearly home visitations where the researchers collected the completed questionnaires and family members were given additional questionnaires to complete. The home visitation portion included observed interaction tasks for the families. The observational task included a semi-structured problem-solving discussion activity. The problem-solving task involved the mother, father, and adolescent where they focused on trying to solve issues of contention selected by the family members (28- items Issues Checklist; Cavanaugh & Buehler, 2016; Melby et al., 1995). Interactions were videotaped and rated by trained coders using the Iowa Family Interaction Rating Scales (Melby & Conger, 2001).

Families were compensated during each wave and the parents were allocated the funds to divide among the family members who participated. At W1, they received \$100, \$120 at W2,

and \$135 at W3 for their participation. As discussed, there was some attrition that was examined for bias using multivariate analysis of variances from W1 data. There were no differences between retained and attrited families on any of the study variables (Buehler, 2006).

Measures

Parent Support

Parental support was measured at W1 with both youth and parent reports using a 10-item questionnaire measure. Youth and their parents completed the acceptance/support subscale from the CRPBI (Children's Report of Parental Behavior Inventory) (Schaefer, 1965; Schludermann & Schludermann, 1970). Youth were asked if their mother or father is a person who, for example, gives a lot of care and attention. The adolescents used a response scale that included: (1) not like her (him); (2) somewhat like her (him); (3) a lot like her (him). The construct represents parental support so there was an average summary score created for paternal and maternal support ($\alpha = .88$). The parents completed the same subscale, but they were asked if the parent is a person who, for example, makes their child feel better after talking over her/his worries with them. The parents used a response scale that included: (1) not like me; (2) somewhat like me; (3) a lot like me. The maternal ($\alpha = .76$) and paternal ($\alpha = .83$) internal consistency estimates of support were adequate (See Appendix A for a list of all items). With regards to evidence of adequate construct validity, Litovsky and Dusek (1985) found a positive correlation between the acceptance/rejection dimension of the CRPBI and various youth self-esteem sub-scores. Adolescents' reports on maternal support, adolescents' reports on paternal support, mothers' reports of support, fathers' reports of support, mothers' observed support, and fathers' observed support (parent support) were aggregated to create a single score to summarize the construct. Paine et al. (2021) used the observed parental warmth rating scale when charting

the trajectories of adopted children's emotional and behavioral problems. The researchers found that observed warm adoptive parenting was associated with a marked reduction in children's internalizing and externalizing problems over time.

Peer Support

Peer support was measured for the adolescent at W2 using a 5- item scale regarding the support and satisfaction with the peer relationships from The School Success Profile (Bowen & Richman, 2001). There were no peer nominations utilized in the measures. Youth were asked how well each of the following statements describe you, for example, "I can trust my friends." The participants used a response scale that included: (1) a lot like me to (2) a little like me to (3) not like me. Items were averaged and higher scores indicated greater support from peers ($\alpha = .79$). William and Anthony (2013) proposed a cross-sectional model of positive family and peer relationships on school misbehavior and health and well-being in adolescence. The researchers used the School Success Profile and found that family togetherness, parent behavior expectations, and friend support were associated with greater youth health and well-being. Peer support was also measured at W2 with youth self-report of best friendship using a 7-item children's friendship scale (Berndt & Perry, 1986; Vernberg et al., 1992). The adolescents were told to think of their same-sex friends and respond based on timing. For example, item one was "If you needed help with something, how often could you count on this friend to help you?" They were then asked to respond according to this response scale: (1) never; (2) once a month; (3) once a week; (4) a few times a week; (5) every day. The items were averaged ($\alpha = .84$) and higher scores indicated greater support (See Appendix A for a list of all items). Berndt and Keefe (1995) examined the influence of friends' behaviors and features of their friendships using the 7-item best friendship scale. Students who had reported more positive features within their

friendships had increased school involvement, whereas friendships with negative features had less involvement and more disruption. Peer support and best friend support were aggregated to create a single score (peer support) to operationalize this construct of peer support.

Teacher Support

Teacher support was measured at W1 using the youth's reports from a 7-item scale regarding teacher support. Three items were from Barber and Olsen (1997) and four items from The School Success Profile (Bowen & Richman, 1997). Youth were asked how many of their teachers, for example, believe you can do well in school. The response scale included: (1) none; (2) some; (3) half; (4) most; (5) all. Items were averaged ($\alpha = .77$) and higher scores indicated greater perceived support from teachers (See Appendix A for a list of all items). Gregory and Weinstein (2004) used the three items from the Barber and Olsen (1997) scale while examining the qualities of adolescent-adult relationships across home and school environments as predictors of academic growth in mathematics. The researchers found that teacher connection had been the strongest predictor of academic growth for adolescents when incorporating a combination of connection, regulation, and authoritative teaching styles.

Cumulative Support Index

Gerard and Buehler (2004) utilized measurement strategies for creating a cumulative risk index that is used similarly in this study to create a cumulative support index. Frequencies were examined for each source of social support and the top 75% of the distribution received a "1" indicating support from the given domain (Cavanaugh & Buehler, 2016). The dichotomized social support domains are then summed to create the cumulative social support index which ranges theoretically from 0 to 3.

Youth Hopefulness

Youth hopefulness was measured at W1 and W3 using the youths' reports from the Life Satisfaction/Hopefulness Scale by Doucette and Bickman (2000). Youth were asked to think about their lives, hopes, and concerns and to fill in a circle to show how they feel about their lives. One item example asked how happy the youth was with their life. The response format was (1) never; (2) sometimes; (3) often; (4) almost always. Items were averaged ($\alpha = .84$) and higher scores indicated greater hopefulness (See Appendix A for list of all items). Gerard and Booth (2015) examined the relationships between the individual, family, and school influences on adolescent adjustment problems. Using the Life Satisfaction/Hopefulness Scale, Gerard and Booth (2015) found that youth hopefulness and academic aspirations moderated the associations between both family and school influences on adolescent adjustment.

Control Variables: Race, Gender, and Household Income

Adolescents' race, gender, and parental income were measured at W1. Due to the compositional make-up of the sample, the adolescent race is dummy coded for two separate variables (white = 1, Other = 0). Gender was also included as a control and is dummy coded as girl = 1 and boy = 2 at W1. Household income was reported by the wives and husbands at Wave 1. The two reports were coded from 1 (less than \$2,500) to 41 (\$100,000 or more) using Census categories and these two reports were averaged. Reports were highly correlated.

Analytic Procedures

This study used SPSS (version 20) to calculate the descriptive statistics. Multiple regression in AMOS was used to test each hypothesis and assess the strength of the association between the dependent variable (i.e., hopefulness) and the predictor variables (e.g., parent support, peer support, teacher support). The information includes the means, standard deviations,

skewness, kurtosis, and standardized and unstandardized alpha values for the variables. For multiple regression, the standardized beta coefficients, the unstandardized beta coefficients, and p-values are provided.

For this study, unique sources of support and cumulative support for youth hopefulness are examined using two models created in AMOS. The first model used a prospective longitudinal design to examine the association between each source of support and W3 youth hopefulness (8th grade). This model addresses higher levels of W1 support (W2 for peer support) being associated with higher levels of youth hopefulness two years later. The second model was used to predict W3 youth hopefulness while controlling for youth hopefulness at W1. This model also examined the association between each source of support being associated with W3 youth hopefulness, but this model looked at increases in youth hopefulness over two years. The same models were created to examine the association between cumulative support and youth hopefulness, with the cumulative support variable replacing the three W1 sources of support variables. A probability of .05 is used to determine statistical significance.

Testing the First Hypothesis

Question 1: Does parental support have unique effects on youth hopefulness during early adolescence?

Hypothesis 1: Controlling for other sources of support and other covariates, parental support during 6th grade is associated with increases in youth hopefulness from 6th through 8th grades.

AMOS is used to calculate the unique, direct effects of W1 parental support on youth hopefulness over time. The table shows if there is a direct association between parental support and youth hopefulness by examining the main effect estimates (i.e., the regression coefficient)

and significance values for each predictor (the *p-value*). A probability of .05 is used to determine statistical significance.

Testing the Second Hypothesis

Question 2: Does peer support have unique effects on youth hopefulness during early adolescence?

Hypothesis 2: Controlling for other sources of support and other covariates, peer support during 7th grade is associated with increases in youth hopefulness.

AMOS is used to calculate the unique, direct effects of W2 peer support on youth hopefulness over time. The table shows if there is a direct association between peer support and youth hopefulness by examining the main effect estimate (i.e., the regression coefficient) and significance values for each predictor (the *p-value*). A probability of .05 is used to determine statistical significance.

Testing the Third Hypothesis

Question 3: Does teacher support have unique effects on youth hopefulness during early adolescence?

Hypothesis 3: Controlling for other sources of support and other covariates, teacher support during 6th grade is associated with increases in youth hopefulness from 6th through 8th grades.

AMOS is used to calculate the unique, direct effects of W1 teacher support on youth hopefulness over time. The table shows if there is a direct association between teacher support and youth hopefulness by examining the main effect estimates (i.e., the regression coefficient) and significance values for each predictor (the *p-value*). A probability of .05 is used to determine statistical significance.

Testing the Fourth Hypothesis

Question 4: Does cumulative support have an association with youth hopefulness?

Hypothesis 4: Cumulative support is associated with increases in youth hopefulness from 6th through 8th grades.

AMOS is used to calculate the unique, direct effects of cumulative support on youth hopefulness over time. The table shows if there is a direct association between cumulative support and youth hopefulness by examining the main effect estimates (i.e., the regression coefficient) and significance values for each predictor (the *p-value*). A probability of .05 is used to determine statistical significance.

CHAPTER V: RESULTS

Descriptive statistics for the sample and variables of interest for the present study are reported in Table 1. In Table 2, bivariate correlations among the individual measures are reported for the analytic sample. The descriptive statistics for the variables included in the analytic model are reported in Table 3. Zero-order correlations of the variables in the analytic model were provided in Table 4. The data were analyzed over three annual waves that represent youth in 6th through 8th grades (i.e., early adolescence).

Table 1 descriptives of the sample were primarily White (94%) and the sample included 416 youth and their parents. The percentage of adolescent girls in the sample was 50.7%. The household income was reported by both mothers and fathers. The mother's household income report included 51.5% of the families having a median income of \$70,000. Similar to the family income, the father's income included 52.3% of the families having a median income of \$70,000. A normality diagnosis was completed by examining the kurtosis and the skewness of each continuous variable. A distribution is considered non-normal if skewness is above or below the absolute value of two and kurtosis is above or below the absolute value of seven (West et al., 1995). Examining Table 1, the data are normally distributed for each of the variables.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Study/Analytic Sample

<i>Variable</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Skewness (SE)</i>	<i>Kurtosis (SE)</i>	<i>Alpha N</i>	<i>Unstandardized Alpha</i>	<i>Standardized Alpha</i>
1. W1 Maternal Support (YR)	416	1.0	3.0	2.74	.32	-2.05	5.04	416	.83	.84
2. W1 Paternal Support (YR)	416	1.1	3.0	2.59	.40	-1.18	1.11	407	.88	.88
3. W1 Maternal Support (MR)	416	1.8	3.0	2.82	.22	-1.63	2.58	403	.76	.77
4. W1 Paternal Support (FR)	416	1.4	3.0	2.64	.32	-.80	.09	412	.83	.84
5. W1 Observed Maternal Support (MR)	401	2.9	8.5	6.15	.79	-.17	.53	393	.71	.72
6. W1 Observed Paternal Support (FR)	409	3.5	7.9	5.95	.83	-.11	-.41	400	.70	.71
7. W2 Peer Support (YR)	365	1.0	3.0	2.76	.35	-1.71	2.85	365	.79	.81
8. W2 Best Friend Support (YR)	358	1.0	5.0	4.05	.81	-.95	.42	358	.84	.84
9. W1 Teacher Support (YR)	416	1.3	5.0	4.49	.59	-1.92	5.59	413	.77	.78
10. W3 Youth Hopefulness (YR)	339	1.0	4.0	3.39	.61	-1.24	1.16	328	.87	.87
11. W1 Youth Hopefulness (YR)	416	1.29	4.0	3.46	.51	-1.23	1.58	411	.84	.84
12. W1 Household Income (MR)	394	5	41	28.92	9.76	-.32	-.93			
13. W1 Household Income (FR)	411	1	41	29.71	9.94	-.30	-.99			
14. W1 Gender (YR)	416	0	1	49%						
15. Youth Race (YR)	416	0	1	94%						

Note: W1= wave 1; W2 = wave 2; W3 = wave 3; MR= mother report; FR= father report; YR= youth report; Gender, 0 = girls, 1 = boys; Race, 0 = other, White =1

Table 2 included the bivariate correlations between the variables for the study sample. A probability level of .05 (two-tailed) was used to determine statistical significance. Youth reports on maternal support also significantly correlated with W1 youth hopefulness ($r = .32, p < .01$). Youth reports on maternal support also significantly correlated with W3 youth hopefulness ($r = .28, p < .01$). Youth reports on paternal support significantly correlated with W1 youth hopefulness ($r = .38, p < .01$). Youth reports on paternal support significantly correlated with W3 youth hopefulness ($r = .32, p < .01$). Mother reports on maternal support significantly correlated with both W1 youth hopefulness ($r = .15, p < .01$) and W3 youth hopefulness ($r = .18, p < .01$). Father reports on paternal support significantly correlated with both W1 youth hopefulness W1 ($r = .12, p < .01$) and W3 youth hopefulness ($r = .19, p < .01$). Observed maternal support (mother report) significantly correlated with both W1 youth hopefulness ($r = .21, p < .01$) and W3 youth hopefulness ($r = .15, p < .01$). Observed paternal support (father report) significantly correlated with both W1 youth hopefulness ($r = .16, p < .01$) and W3 youth hopefulness ($r = .11, p < .05$). As such, without controlling for other variables, these correlations suggest that parental support at W1 is positively associated with youth hopefulness two years later.

Youth report of peer support significantly correlated at both W1 youth hopefulness ($r = .26, p < .05$) and W3 youth hopefulness ($r = .31, p < .05$). Youth reports of best friend support significantly correlated with both W1 youth hopefulness ($r = .26, p < .05$) and W3 youth hopefulness ($r = .31, p < .05$) at W3. Youth report of teacher support significantly correlated with W1 youth hopefulness ($r = .41, p < .05$) and W3 youth hopefulness ($r = .22, p < .05$). There were no statistically significant correlations between race, gender, or household income at W1 youth hopefulness and W3 youth hopefulness. These correlations suggest that peer support and teacher support are positively associated with youth hopefulness. The results from these

associations provide support for creating a composite summary variable for the measure of parental support and peer support to be used to test the hypotheses.

Table 2. Correlations for Study/Analytic Sample

<i>Variable</i>	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1.W1 Maternal Support (YR)	.37**	.17**	.13*	.25 **	.15**	.20**	.28**	.22**	.28**	.32**	.03	.07	-.08	.05
2. W1 Paternal Support (YR)	--	.18**	.25**	.13**	.16**	.26**	.27**	.36**	.32**	.38**	.19	.32	-.10*	-.01
3.W1 Maternal Support (MR)		--	.23**	.25**	.19**	-.01	.05	.06	.18**	.15**	.08	.07	-.01	-.05
4.W1 Paternal Support (FR)			--	.06	.24**	.09	.05	.06	.19*	.12**	.04	.04	-.02	-.08
5. W1 Observed Maternal Support (MR)				--	.40**	.05	.04	.00	.15**	.21**	.16**	.17**	-.02	-.06
6. W1 Observed Paternal Support (FR)					--	.02	.05	.06	.11**	.16*	.18**	.19**	-.01	-.09
7. W2 Peer Support (YR)						--	.53**	.13*	.31**	.26**	.07	.08	-.17**	.04
8. W2 Best Friend Support (YR)							--	.18**	.23**	.26**	.06	.08	-.37**	.09
9. W1 Teacher Support (YR)								--	.22**	.41**	.00	-.01	-.03	-.02
10. W3 Youth Hopefulness (YR)									--	.36	.03	.03	.02	-.05
11. W1 Youth Hopefulness (YR)										--	.03	.02	-.11*	-.07
12. W1 Household Income (MR)											--	.98**	-.05	-.11*
13. W1 Household Income (FR)												--	-.05	-.07
14. W1 Youth Gender (YR)													--	.05
15. W1 Youth Race (YR)														--

Note: W1= wave 1; W2 = wave 2; W3 = wave 3; MR= mother report; FR= father report; YR= youth report

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The variables used in the analyses to test the hypotheses are listed in Tables 3 and 4. The summary composite of parental support was created by combining the youths' reports of both maternal and paternal support, mother report of support, father report of support, mother report of observed maternal support, and father report of observed father support. The summary composite of peer support was created by combining both youth reports of peer support and best friend support. Variables were standardized before creating composites.

The remaining variables were created by using the procedures described in the measures section and documented in the appendix of measures (e.g., teacher support, youth hopefulness, youth gender). Table 3 included the same sample characteristics, and a normality diagnosis was completed utilizing both the kurtosis and skewness. Similar parameters were used to check for non-normality (Kim, 2013). Examining Table 3, the data were normally distributed across the variables.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics for Variables in Analytic Model

Variable	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Skewness (SE)	Kurtosis (SE)	Alpha N	Unstandardized Alpha	Standardized Alpha
1. Parent Support- W1	410	2.63	4.53	3.80	.31	-.43	.23	400	.56	.61
2. Peer Support- W2	365	1.00	4.00	3.40	.52	-1.14	1.26	362	.55	.69
3. Teacher Support- W1	416	1.25	5.00	4.49	.59	-1.9	5.59	413	.77	.78
4. Youth Hope W3	339	1.00	4.00	3.39	.61	-1.24	1.15	328	.87	.87
5. Youth Hope W1	416	1.29	4.00	3.48	.51	-1.23	1.58	411	.84	.84
6. Income	413	3.50	41.00	28.95	9.83	-.29	-.98			
7. Youth Gender	416	0	1	49%						
8. Youth Race	416	0	1	94%						

Note: W1= wave 1; W3= wave 3; Gender, 0= girls, 1= boys; Race, 0= other, White= 1

Table 4 included the zero-order correlations for the variables for the analytic model. A probability level at .05 (two-tailed) was used to determine statistical significance. Parent support significantly correlated with both W1 youth hopefulness ($r = .35, p < .05$) and W3 youth hopefulness ($r = .28, p < .05$). Peer support significantly correlated with both W1 youth hopefulness ($r = .29, p < .05$) and W3 youth hopefulness ($r = .28, p < .05$). Teacher support significantly correlated with both W1 youth hopefulness ($r = .41, p < .05$) and W3 youth hopefulness ($r = .22, p < .05$). Youth hopefulness W1 was significantly correlated with W3 youth hopefulness ($r = .36, p < .05$). These correlations suggest that parent support, peer support and teacher support are positively associated with youth hopefulness at W1 and W3. The correlations also suggest that youth hopefulness had low stability over time.

Table 4. Zero-Order Correlations

<i>Variable</i>	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Parent Support-W1	.16**	.16**	.28**	.35**	.17**	-.05	-.09
2. Peer Support-W2	--	.19**	.28**	.29**	.07	-.35**	.08
3. Teacher Support-W1		--	.22**	.41**	-.01	-.03	-.02
4. Youth Hope W3			--	.36**	.04	.02	-.05
5. Youth Hope W1			.	--	.02	-.11*	-.07
6. Income					--	-.05	-.08
7. Youth Gender						--	.05
8. Youth Race							--

Note: W1= wave 1; W3= wave 3; Gender, 0= girls, 1= boys; Race, 0= other, White= 1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

With regards to the index of cumulative support, 41.3% ($n = 172$) of the youth had support from all three domains, 39.4% ($n = 164$) had support from two domains, 17.1% ($n = 71$) had support from one domain, and 2.2.% ($n = 9$) had no support from any of these domains. The mean cumulative support score was 2.20 ($SD = .80$).

Aim 1: Unique Sources of Support

In this section, Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 are addressed by examining the uniqueness of each social support on youth hopefulness during early adolescence. Table 5 includes the results from the prospective longitudinal model that examined the association between each source of support at W1 and youth hopefulness at W3. Table 6 includes the results from the autoregressive model that examined the association between each W1 source of support and W3 youth hopefulness

while controlling for youth hopefulness at W1. Each analysis controlled for other sources of support and other covariates (i.e., household income, youth gender, and youth race).

Table 5. Prospective Longitudinal with W3 Youth Hopefulness

<i>Variable</i>	Youth Hopefulness W3		
	β	b	<i>p</i>
1. Parent Support- W1	.21	.41	< .001
2. Peer Support- W2	.26	.30	< .001
3. Teacher Support- W1	.13	.13	< .05
4. Household Income	.01	.00	.87
5. Youth Gender	.13	.16	.02
6. Youth Race	-.06	-.17	.21

Note: W1= wave 1; W3= wave 3; $R^2 = .16$

Multiple regression analyses found that W1 parent support was positively and uniquely associated with W3 youth hopefulness ($\beta = .21$; $p < .001$). W2 peer support was positively associated with W3 youth hopefulness ($\beta = .26$; $p < .001$). Lastly, W1 teacher support was positively associated with W3 youth hopefulness ($\beta = .13$; $p = .01$). These three domains of social support and the control variables accounted for 29% of the variance in W3 youth hopefulness. In terms of control variables, household income ($\beta = .01$; $p = .87$) and youth race ($\beta = -.06$; $p = -.17$) were not associated with W3 youth hopefulness. As a control, boys reported higher levels of youth hopefulness at W3 than did girls ($\beta = .13$; $p = .02$).

Table 6. Autoregressive W3 Youth Hopefulness Controlling for Hopefulness at Wave 1

<i>Variable</i>	β	b	<i>p</i>
1. Parent Support- W1	.15	.30	.00
2. Peer Support- W2	.22	.26	< .001
3. Teacher Support-W1	.04	.05	.40
4. Youth Hopefulness W1	.23	.28	< .001
5. Income	.01	.00	.82
6. Youth Gender	.14	.16	.01
7. Youth Race	-.05	-.14	.28

Note: W1= wave 1; W3= wave 3; $R^2 = .21$

Multiple regression analyses found that W1 parent support was positively and uniquely associated with W3 youth hopefulness ($\beta = .15$; $p < .001$). W2 peer support was positively and uniquely associated with W3 youth hopefulness ($\beta = .22$; $p < .001$). W1 teacher support was not associated and uniquely associated with W3 youth hopefulness ($\beta = .04$; $p = .40$). Parent support and peer support along with the control variables accounted for 21% of the variance in W3 youth hopefulness. W1 youth hopefulness was positively associated with W3 youth hopefulness, though the effect size was relatively small ($\beta = .23$; $p < .001$). In terms of control variables, household income ($\beta = .01$; $p = .82$) and youth race ($\beta = -.05$; $p = .28$) were not associated with W3 youth hopefulness. As a control, boys reported higher levels of youth hopefulness at W3 than did girls ($\beta = .14$; $p = .01$).

Summary of Unique Support

Hypothesis 1: Parent Support and Youth Hopefulness

Hypothesis one stated that controlling for other sources of support and other covariates, parental support during 6th grade is associated with higher levels of youth hopefulness from 6th

through 8th grades. Results from the analyses supported this hypothesis across the two separate models for the association between parent support and youth hopefulness. Parent support uniquely predicted the future level of youth hopefulness over two years later (W3) (Table 5). Lastly, controlling for W1 youth hopefulness, parental support uniquely predicted increases in youth hopefulness at W3 (Table 6). As such, support was found for this hypothesis.

Hypothesis 2: Peer Support and Youth Hopefulness

Hypothesis two stated that controlling for other sources of support and other covariates, peer support during 7th grade is associated with increases in youth hopefulness from 7th through 8th grades. Results from the analyses supported this hypothesis across the two separate models for the association between peer support and youth hopefulness. W2 peer support uniquely predicted the future level of youth hopefulness over two years later (W3) (Table 5). Controlling for W1 youth hopefulness, peer support uniquely predicted increases in youth hopefulness at W3 (Table 6). As such, support was found for this hypothesis.

Hypothesis 3: Teacher Support and Youth Hopefulness

Hypothesis three stated controlling for other sources of support and other covariates, teacher support during 6th grade is associated with increases in youth hopefulness from 6th through 8th grades. Results from the analyses partially supported this hypothesis across the two separate models for the association between teacher support and youth hopefulness. Teacher support uniquely predicted the future level of youth hopefulness over two years later (W3) (Table 5). Controlling for W1 youth hopefulness, teacher support did not predict increases in youth hopefulness at W3 (Table 6). As such, support was found for this hypothesis.

Aim 2: Cumulative Support

In this section, Hypothesis 4 is addressed by examining the association between cumulative support and youth hopefulness during early adolescence. Table 7 includes the results from the prospective longitudinal model that examined the association between cumulative support and youth hopefulness at W3. Table 8 includes the results from the autoregressive model that examined the association between cumulative support and W1 youth hopefulness while controlling for youth hopefulness at W1. Hypothesis 4 also controlled for other covariates (i.e., household income, youth gender, and youth race).

Table 7. Prospective Longitudinal W1 Cumulative Support with W3 Youth Hopefulness

<i>Variable</i>	Youth Hopefulness W3		
	β	b	<i>P</i>
1. Cumulative Support	.35	.26	< .001
2. Income	.01	.00	.85
3. Youth Gender	.07	.09	.17
4. Youth Race	-.07	-.19	.16

Note: W1= wave; W3= wave 3; $R^2 = .12$

Multiple regression analyses found that cumulative support was positively associated with W3 youth hopefulness ($\beta = .35$; $p < .001$). Cumulative support and the control variables accounted for 12% of the variance in W3 youth hopefulness. In terms of control variables, household income ($\beta = .01$; $p = .85$), youth gender ($\beta = .07$; $p = .17$) and youth race ($\beta = -.07$; $p = .16$) were not associated with W3 youth hopefulness.

Table 8. Autoregressive W3 Youth Hopefulness Controlling for Hopefulness at Wave 1 for Cumulative Support

<i>Variable</i>	β	b	<i>P</i>
1. Cumulative Support	.24	.18	< .001
2. Youth Hopefulness W1	.28	.33	< .001
2. Income	.03	.00	.53
3. Youth Gender	.08	.10	.09
4. Youth Race	-.05	-.14	.29

Note: W1= wave; W3= wave 3; $R^2 = .19$

Multiple regression analyses found that cumulative support was positively associated with W3 youth hopefulness ($\beta = .24$; $p < .001$). Cumulative support and the control variables accounted for 19% of the variance in W3. W1 youth hopefulness was positively associated W3 youth hopefulness ($\beta = .28$; $p < .001$), which means youth hopefulness remained stable over time for cumulative support. In terms of control variables, household income ($\beta = .03$; $p = .53$), youth gender ($\beta = .08$; $p = .09$) and youth race ($\beta = -.05$; $p = .29$) were not associated with W1 youth hopefulness.

Summary of Cumulative Support

Hypothesis 4: Cumulative Support Sources and Youth Hopefulness

Hypothesis four stated that controlling for other covariates, cumulative support during 6th grade (peer support in 7th grade) is associated with increases in youth hopefulness from 6th through 8th grades. Results from the analyses supported this hypothesis across the two separate models for the association between cumulative support and youth hopefulness. Cumulative support predicted the future level of youth hopefulness over two years later (W3) (Table 7).

Lastly controlling for W1 youth hopefulness, cumulative support predicted increases in youth hopefulness at W3 (Table 8). As such, support was found for this hypothesis.

CHAPTER VI: DISCUSSION

This study sought to fill the gaps in previous research by going beyond previous examinations of social support and youth hopefulness by examining the uniqueness of each social support and cumulative support on youth hopefulness over time. Although Archer et al. (2019) had used the same predictors and outcomes, their results did not predict later hopefulness. The incongruency between Archer et al. (2019) and the current study could be due to a few reasons. Archer et al. (2019) examined youth ranging in age from 10 to 19, while the current study focused on just 6th through 8th grades. The current study also examined the association over three years, while Archer et al. (2019) examined the effects over a year. Lastly, Archer et al. (2019) examined the social supports in isolation, not in one model, while controlling for other sources of support.

The current study examined the association between social support and youth hopefulness for early adolescents over time for 6th through 8th grades. The study also further examines the association between cumulative support and youth hopefulness over time. As hypothesized, parent support, peer support, and teacher support were positively associated with youth hopefulness. Similarly, the accumulation of support sources was positively associated with youth hopefulness. The interpretation of results, strengths and limitations, and implications across theory, future research, and practice are discussed below.

Interpretations of Results

Parent Support and Youth Hopefulness

Parent support significantly predicted youth hopefulness over time. These results suggest that support from parents can be an important aspect of a youth's future orientation. Parents

consistently mattered throughout middle school because youth are still reliant upon their parents. Although adolescents seek independence from their parents and spend more time outside of the home context, youth are still dependent upon their parents for financial and emotional support (Call & Mortimer, 2001). Parents play a prominent role in an adolescent's successful navigation through developmental changes in adolescence and life in general. Parents should further be examined to understand the impact a parent can have on a youth's interests for the future and if the youth's beliefs change as they continue to grow outside of the family context.

The current study's findings were in similar alignment with other studies that examined parental support. The findings from the current study regarding support from parents and youth hopefulness were consistent with the average effect size of .21 reported by Mahon and Yarcheski (2017) in their meta-analysis. In addition, Rueger et al. (2010) found when examining parent support longitudinally, there was an association between parent support and adjustment. Similarly, Siddal et al. (2013) used a prospective multiple regression analysis that showed that family support was statistically significant for youth's global life satisfaction. Due to the close attachment over time, parents can help foster a youth's hopefulness (Snyder et al., 1997). Parents can be a support for their youth's goals and the parent can also model hopefulness. If parents set goals, accept challenges, and cope with difficulties in a positive rather than a negative manner, youth will learn to approach their goals in the same manner (Snyder, 2000). Youth, in general, need parents who support their pursuits and praise them for their efforts. At the same time, youth need support when navigating the challenges that may come when trying to accomplish a goal. (Snyder, 2000). These findings support the current study's results regarding parent support acting as a unique predictor and extend the understanding of how parent support can be impactful on a youth's hopefulness over time.

Peer Support and Youth Hopefulness

The findings from the current study regarding support from peers and youth hopefulness were consistent with the average effect size of .31 reported by Mahon and Yarcheski (2017) in their meta-analysis. In addition, peer support significantly predicted increases in youth hopefulness over time. These results suggest that support from peers can be important in a youths' focus on their future. Peers consistently mattered throughout middle school because of this developmental phase of life. As youth mature from childhood to adolescence, there's an increased focus on relationships with friends and peers (Buchanan & Bowen, 2008; Levitt et al., 2005). Peers can influence the youth's perception of themselves, the behaviors they display, and even the choices they make for their future. Peers should be further examined to understand how youth's hopefulness and youths' choices in their future may change based on the beliefs that are instilled by their friendships. Due to a youth's focus on peer acceptance at this age, their goals can often be shaped and influenced greatly by their peers (Snyder, 2000). Even the make-up of a youth's peer group could potentially impact the youth's hopefulness or even diminish one's hopefulness. Snyder (2000) addresses peer pressure as well, which often has a negative connotation, but it could also encourage youth to study harder and get good grades, which is a sign of high hopefulness for youth. Although this study doesn't address the present-day usage of social media, this could also impact how adolescent engages with their peers or adjusts their beliefs about hopefulness due to outside influence.

The current study's findings were similar to research that has focused on peer support as a unique domain in social support. Rueger et al. (2010) found when examining peer support longitudinally, there was a unique association between peer support and adjustment over time. Similarly, Wang and Eccles (2012) found that support from peers was associated with reduced

declines in extracurricular activities, sense of school identification, and subjective value of learning. These findings support the current study's results regarding peer support acting as a unique predictor and extend the understanding of how peer support can be impactful on a youth's hopefulness outside of their parents and teachers.

Teacher Support and Youth Hopefulness

Teacher support partially predicted youth hopefulness over time. In the results, teacher support predicted the level of hopefulness in W1 and W3, but it did not predict increases in hopefulness two years later (See Table 6). These results suggest that support from teachers can be important to a youth's interests in the future. Teachers mattered throughout middle school, but not over time and one explanation is that youth don't spend as much time with their teachers outside of the classroom context. Another explanation is that students transition into new classrooms and potentially new school systems, so it's challenging for youth to gain full support from their teachers in comparison to their peers and parents who remain consistent in their lives. By this explanation, Barber and Olsen (2004) found that perceived teacher support decreased during the transition from elementary school to middle school. These findings do support the importance of teachers and recognize how they could potentially influence the educational trajectory of their students (Call & Mortimer, 2001). Teachers should be further examined to understand the unique relationship with youth and how a teacher's role can impact the youth's decision-making when navigating their choices for the future.

The current study's findings regarding teacher support were consistent with those from existing literature. Suldo et al. (2009) examined the association between adolescents' subjective well-being and school experience with teacher support. The researchers found that perceived teacher support accounted for 16% of the variance in students' subjective well-being.

Additionally, emotional support and instrumental support from teachers uniquely predicted subjective well-being. Similarly, Wang and Eccles (2012) found that teacher support was important in reducing declines in school compliance, sense of school identification, and subjective value of learning. These findings support the current study's results regarding teacher support acting as a unique predictor and extend the understanding of how teacher support can best be supportive for youth's interests in their goals, at least in the short term.

Cumulative Support and Youth Hopefulness

Each source of support is uniquely associated with youth hopefulness, and cumulatively, the supports significantly predicted youth hopefulness over time. These results support the contention that the accumulation of support from multiple domains can be important to a youth's positive outlook for their future. Levitt et al., (2005) found that cumulative support is important for healthy adjustment during the transition from early to middle adolescence. As such, youth who feel a sense of support from multiple domains can feel supported in their decisions about their future. As early adolescents transition through middle school, they need to have a network of support so they can feel a sense of guidance, and comfort and feel that they can reach their goals (Cavanaugh & Buehler, 2016).

The current study's findings were in similar alignment with another study that examined cumulative support. Cavanaugh and Buehler (2016) tested whether cumulative support (parental, interparental, peer, and teacher) was associated with decreases in youth's loneliness and social anxiety during early adolescence. The current study has gone beyond loneliness and social anxiety and extended to hopefulness. For youth, this means that support across domains not only reduces the chances that youth would experience debilitating impacts on their socio-emotional

development but for the current study, social support would be impactful on a youth's hopefulness and how they believe in themselves for the future.

Strengths

Numerous strengths are associated with the present study. This study was completed with a large sample over a long period. These aspects make the study more valid and reliable in comparison to using just a cross-sectional design and using a smaller sample. Another strength includes the usage of multiple informants within the family. Examining the three sources of support separately and cumulatively also strengthens this study. Lastly, the use of AMOS contributes to the strengths of this study overall.

The first key strength is the large sample size for this study, which consisted of 416 adolescents and their parents. Larger sample sizes more accurately depict the broader population than smaller samples. The current sample is representative of the county from which this sample was drawn.

Another key strength of the present study is the examination of three waves of annual data. Using a longitudinal design allows for an examination of the youths' hopefulness over three years so a change in hopefulness can be accounted for. In comparison to capturing one point in time, this study can capture various time points and cross-compare between W1 youth hopefulness and W3 youth hopefulness.

The usage of multiple informants in data collection is another strength of this study. Previous research has relied primarily on only one informant, but this study incorporated the adolescent's self-report of social support and youth hopefulness, the mother's report of support, and the father's report of support. For this study, adolescents' reports on maternal support, adolescents' reports on paternal support, mothers' reports of support, fathers' reports of support,

mothers' observed support, and fathers' observed support were aggregated to create parent support to capture the complexity of the variable. The use of multiple informants has been shown to increase both reliability and validity (De Los Reyes et al., 2013) and helps in avoiding problems of shared method variance.

As discussed previously, there's been a limited amount of research that addresses both the uniqueness of sources of support and cumulative support. The findings contribute to the literature by examining the uniqueness and the cumulative aspects of social support. The study allowed for examination of the individual domains which helps in understanding which domains were most effective when examining youth hopefulness over time. Above and beyond controlling for other sources of support, the results show the contributions of each social support domain. Along with that, multiple sources of support were shown to contribute to youth hopefulness over time. This result indicates that adolescents who perceived higher support across multiple domains (family, peers, school) experienced improved youth hopefulness. Examining both the individual and cumulative support domains provides an addition to the gaps in the literature.

Lastly, the analytic tool used to examine these associations was another strength of this study. AMOS allowed for the inclusion of all participants in the full sample, while SPSS alone wouldn't account for all the participants. Using AMOS made it possible to examine the three models for the association of social support and youth hopefulness overtime for all the youth.

Limitations

There were some limitations associated with the study as well. This study had a large sample size but had an undiversified composition. The study was also limited to the number of

informants included. The study also had two support sources measured at wave one and peer support was measured at wave two. Lastly, the study couldn't capture change across all three waves over time.

Due to the homogenous sample in the current study, it's difficult to generalize these results. The sample was primarily European-American, and their income levels exceeded the average American income. This sample also only included heterosexual, married couples and they didn't include stepchildren, stepparents unmarried parents, or even LGBTQ+ couples. This study may not be as relevant to families who are ethnically or racially diverse and to families that have unique family structures.

Although the study benefited from having multiple informants, it also only included reports from just parents and youth. This study did not incorporate the peers' perception and the teacher's perception of the youth's experience with social support and youth hopefulness. This study also didn't consider sources outside of the three main areas of this study. The youth may engage with coaches, siblings, extended family members, or other members of their community that act as a form of social support.

The present study measured parent support and teacher support at wave one during 6th grade. Peer support was measured at wave two during 7th grade and this may have affected the findings. Although past research has found that support across each domain has been beneficial to youth development, it's important to note for future studies that address social support and youth hopefulness. This may have been a limitation, but due to the make-up of friendships in middle school, there may not be as much incongruency over time because youth tend to stay with their same friends, so it could potentially make no difference at all.

A final limitation was the inability to capture change in hopefulness across all three waves of data. This study primarily focused on W1 and W3 for hopefulness but didn't consider W2. Although there was change across time, there wasn't an opportunity to examine the change that could have happened in year two of the study.

Implications for Theory

The current study extends current research and remains consistent with the arenas of comfort theory (Call & Mortimer, 2001). Support from various sources helps in strengthening a youth's socioemotional well-being. The findings from this study affirm that social support across domains is important for youth development. Each source can benefit youth in different ways, but ultimately these quality relationships can be beneficial for a youth's hopefulness overall.

Regarding the positive youth development framework (Benson et al., 2006; Lerner, 2009), youth who have connections with themselves and their real-world settings (e.g., homes, schools, and communities) can build up their developmental assets such as youth hopefulness. This theory contributes to the study by taking in the impact of context and bidirectional effects (Lerner, 2009). Middle schoolers are dealing with transitions, pubertal changes, friendship adjustments, and a long list of potential challenges, but positive youth development takes this into account while recognizing that adolescents have capabilities within themselves to reach their goals. By the same token, youth have different sources of support and are impacted by how they see themselves, their world, and their future. Parents, peers, and teachers can promote positive changes and strengths in an adolescent.

The current also addresses internalized motivation, which is rooted in one's desired outcomes for themselves in the prospective future (Larson, 2006; Lerner 2009; Snyder, 2000). Due to the developmental transition in middle school, it's important for youth to be able to

cultivate supportive relationships across multiple domains and to feel a sense of support when navigating their identities and their future aspirations (Cavanaugh & Buehler, 2016; Berry et al., 2021). This theory affirms the importance of instilling hope into youth, and it recognizes how each domain of support can be an active agent in this process. Parents, peers, and teachers can be essential to an adolescent's general thoughts and feelings about hopefulness, goal-directedness, and agency (Snyder, 2000).

Implications for Future Research

Hopefulness has been recognized to be impactful on adolescents even with the absence of risk. Future research, however, should investigate a sample that is at-risk to see if hopefulness is still as impactful on the lives of the youth. This extension of the research could include measures of adversity to see if there is an interaction between the stressor/adversity and support (parent, peer, teacher, or an accumulation of support) to predict hopefulness over time (Cantrell & Lupinacci, 2004; Gerard & Booth, 2015). Specifically, this variation of the present study would look at the buffering effects that each source of support can have on adversity. In this way, future research could supplement the findings in the current study regarding important promotive factors with information about potential protective factors during early adolescence.

Furthermore, future research should investigate variation across different ethnic and racial groups. This sample was primarily European-American, so examining variation within ethnic groups across multiple sources of support and adolescents' future orientation development may vary due to the additional sources of adversity that minority youth face (e.g., racism, discrimination) (Marks et al., 2020). Additional research should include adolescents from diverse family structures (e.g., unmarried parents and stepparents) to examine the potential differences.

Lastly, future research should examine the differential impact of support from each domain by including informants such as teachers, peers, and family members and potentially including other sources outside of those three areas (e.g., coaches and siblings). This study further contributes to the concept of social support and how impactful support can be on youth development. All youth, specifically middle schoolers, need varied social support relationships to foster their hopefulness in and across time so they can see brighter futures for themselves.

Implications for Practice

Several implications from this study can inform the practice to support adolescents. Given youths' hopefulness malleability, youth need support from people who care about them and their futures. Parents are the first important models to impact a child's hopefulness (Fava & Ruini, 2014). They model hopefulness by their communication, their goal setting, perspectives on challenges, and the way they cope with their problems. Parents can model these behaviors for their youth early on and it may lead to a more hopeful perspective throughout life. Fava and Ruini (2014) further elaborate on the impact that peers and teachers can have as well. Peers are important to a youth's hopefulness as well and maybe a significant influence on their perception of their goals (Fava & Ruini, 2014). Due to the closeness with peers in this developmental phase, there could be a transmission of hopefulness across the interactions with peers that could impact the youth's views on hopefulness (Fava & Ruini, 2014). Teachers play an important role in youth's perceptions about their competencies to achieve goals and to cope with obstacles when arise. Educators can help youth think about their futures in complex ways and help youth develop skills to navigate their goals successfully.

The current findings could provide ways that social support can impact a youth's mental health overall. Hopefulness can be enhanced within standard mental health care and in provisions

of specific psychotherapeutic interventions (Berry et al., 2021). The core intervention tasks would include personally relevant goal setting, engagement in meaningful activities, and scaffolding hopefulness and positive expectations for goal attainment (Berry et al., 2021; Snyder & Taylor, 2000). Professionals should position youth to feel supported in their agency, but also should account for the youths' social and contextual supports (i.e., parents, peers, and teachers) that can enhance the youth's hopefulness development overall.

All youth require supportive social relationships, and youth, families, friends, and schools each have a role in fostering healthy relationships for the youth's hopefulness. Hopefulness is an important aspect of a youth's positive functioning in adolescence and the current findings emphasize the impacts that relationships can have on a youth's goal orientation. Adolescents who have quality sources of support can have more hopefulness which can potentially lead them to brighter futures.

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APPENDIX A: MEASURE ITEMS

Parent Support (W1)

Youth complete the 10-item acceptance subscale from the CRPBI (Schaefer, 1965; Schludermann & Schludermann, 1970).

My mother (father) is a person who...

1. Gives me a lot of care and attention.
2. Believes in showing her (his) love for me.
3. Is able to make me feel better when I am upset.
4. Cheers me up when I am sad.
5. Enjoys doing things with me.
6. Smiles at me very often.
7. Makes me feel like the most important person in her (his) life.
8. Often praises me.
9. Is easy to talk to.
10. Hugs me often.

Response Scale: (1) not like her (him); (2) somewhat like her (him); (3) a lot like her (him).

Parents complete the same 10 items:

I am a person who...

1. Makes my child feel better after talking over her/his worries with me.
2. Believes in showing my love for my child.
3. Enjoys doing things with my child.
4. Cheers my child up when s/he is sad.
5. Gives my child a lot of care and attention.
6. Smiles at my child very often.
7. Is able to make my child feel better when s/he is upset.
8. Makes my child feel like the most important person in my life.
9. Often praises my child.
10. Hugs my child often.

Response Scale: (1) not like me; (2) somewhat like me; (3) a lot like me.

Author: Schaefer, E.S. (1965). Children's reports of parental behavior: An inventory. *Child Development, 36*, 413-426.

Schludermann, E., & Schludermann, S. (1970). Replicability of factors in the Children's Report of Parental Behavior Inventory (CRPBI). *Journal of Psychology, 96*, 15-23.

Peer Support (W2)

Youth and the best friend complete 5 items regarding perceptions of friend support and satisfaction with peer relationships (Bowen & Richman, 2001).

How well does each of the following statements describe you?

1. I can trust my friends
2. I am able to tell my problems to my friends
3. I get along well with my friends
4. I feel close to my friends
5. I can count on my friends for support

Response scale: 1) a lot like me; 2) a little like me; 3) not like me

Author: Bowen, G. L. & Richman, J. M. (2001). *The School Success Profile*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, School of Social Work.

Youth and the best friend complete a 7-item measure of support from a same-sex friend (Vernberg, Abwender, Ewell, & Beery, 1992).

Please think of your same-sex friend. For example, if you are a girl, think of your best girlfriend.

1. If you needed help with something, how often could you count on this friend to help you?
2. How often does this friend help you do what is right?
3. How often do you tell this friend things about yourself that you wouldn't tell most kids?
4. How often does this friend make you feel that your ideas and opinions are important and valuable?
5. How often do you feel like it's hard to get along with this friend?

6. When you do a good job on something, how often does this friend praise or congratulate you?
7. How often does this friend encourage you to follow the rules?

Response scale: 1) never; 2) once a month; 3) once a week; 4) a few times a week; 5) every day

Author: Vernberg, E.M., Abwender, D.A., Ewell, K.K., & Beery, S.H. (1992). Social anxiety and peer relationships in early adolescence: A prospective analysis. *Journal of Clinical Child Psychology, 21*(2), 189-196.

Teacher Support (W1)

Youth answer 7 items regarding teacher support. Three items were from Barber & Olsen, (1997) and four items from The School Success Profile (Bowen & Richman, 1997)

How many of your teachers...

1. Believe you can do well in school?
2. Are willing to help you if you need help in schoolwork?
3. Would be willing to help you if you told them about a problem you had?
4. Really listen to what you have to say?
5. Really encourage you to do well?
6. Tell you when you've done well?
7. Respect you?

Response scale: (1) none; (2) some; (3) half; (4) most; (5) all

Author: Barber, B. K., & Olsen, J. A. (1997). Socialization in context: Autonomy in the family, school, and neighborhood, and with peers. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 12*, 287-315.

Bowen, G.L. & Richman, J.M. (1997). *The School Success Profile*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University Of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, School of Social Work.

Youth Hopefulness (W1-W3)

Youth complete Life Satisfaction/Hopefulness Scale (Doucette & Bickman, 2000)

Please think about your life, your hopes, and your concerns. Read each of the following statements and fill in the circle that shows how you feel about your life.

1. I am happy with my life.
2. I have what I need in life.
3. My life is going well.
4. I have all the support from my family or friends that I need.
5. I am able to accomplish the things I want to do in my life.
6. I feel good about what's going on in my life right now.
7. I wish my life was different than it is right now.
8. I am able to do the kinds of things that other kids my age can.
9. I would change my life if I could.
10. There are people I can count on to help me out if I need it.
11. I have more stress and pressure in my life than I can handle.
12. Things never work out for me.
13. I look forward to the future.
14. Having a good life is a matter of luck.
15. There's not much I can do to make my life better.
16. In the future my life will be better than it is right now.

Response Scale: (1) never; (2) sometimes; (3) often; (4) almost always

Parents complete the Life Satisfaction/Hopefulness Scale (Doucette & Bickman, 2000):

Please think about your child's feelings toward their life—hopes, concerns, and so forth. Read each of the following statements and circle the number that indicates how you believe that your child feels about life.

1. My child is happy with the progress he/she is making.
2. My child has the services and/or supports he/she needs.
3. My child's life is going well.
4. My child has support from family or friends.
5. My child is able to accomplish the things he/she wants to do in life.
6. My child feels good about what is going on in his/her life right now.
7. My child wishes his/her life was different than it is right now.
8. My child is able to do the kinds of things that other kids his/her age can do.
9. My child would change his/her life if he/she could.
10. My child has people he/she can count on to help him/her if he/she needed.
11. My child has more stress and pressure in his/her life than he/she can handle.

12. My child thinks that things never work out for him/her.
13. My child looks forward to his/her future.
14. My child believes that having a good life is a matter of luck.
15. My child believes that there's not much that can be done to make life better for him/her.
16. My child believes that the future will be better than it is right now for him/her.

Response Scale: (1) never; (2) sometimes; (3) often; (4) almost always

Author: Doucette, A. & Bickman, L. (2002). Child/Adolescent Measurement System

(CAMS). <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/VIPPS/CMHP/measurementsys.html>