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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

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Education and the social mobility conundrum: An examination of the 'psychosocial and academic trust alienation theory' in the context of disadvantaged students in the UK secondary education sector

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Abstract

The purpose of this investigation was to identify original insights into the educational social mobility conundrum in the UK via examination of the current body of empirical and existing literature associated with disadvantaged secondary school students. The lens of the 'psychosocial and academic trust alienation theory' (PATA) has been applied to explore themes of educational social mobility disadvantage, disengagement and alienation and trauma and trust. This systematic literature review followed PRISMA guidelines, with the SPIDER model adopted to demonstrate the search strategy employed which identified $N = 58$ publications for inclusion. The contribution of this research to the field of children, young people and society is three-fold: Firstly, findings provide evidence of the additional educational psychological theory. Secondly, secondary education is identified as a pivotal milestone, where efforts to drive change for educational progress contributing to social mobility progress for disadvantaged students could be focused. Thirdly, the synthesis of current research and literature, identified that there is currently no existing literature

related to the PATA theory positioned within the disadvantaged secondary school student context aligned to educational social mobility. This analysis shows that the issues experienced in the education system by disadvantaged students in secondary education correlate with the layered elements of the PATA theory, providing justification for further empirical research. Additionally, the insights reported here could be of interest to the children and young people sector, educational psychology community, educational policy-makers and international groups who share similar social policy, social mobility demographics and educational systems.

INTRODUCTION

This systematic literature review is positioned within the field of children, young people and society and is embedded within educational psychology. Furthermore, this research investigates the new concept of the PATA theory (Jones, 2021) in the context of disadvantaged students in the UK secondary education sector affiliated with the educational social mobility landscape. The PATA theory identifies where a student's self-concept, self-esteem (psychosocial) and trust levels create barriers to student engagement in higher education (HE), see Figure 1 (Jones, 2021; Jones & Nangah, 2020). The PATA theory categorises psychological connections in educational practice and seeks to explain the phenomena in relation to disadvantaged students' success or failure. The PATA theory is deeply rooted in alienation theory and is prompted by students who display disengaging or alienating behaviours in an educational framework. Therefore, this original psychological theory may well be relevant across other educational sectors and student age ranges. Consequently, the PATA theory (Jones, 2021) will be further investigated via this systematic literature review, in the context of the secondary school sector, to establish what current empirical data and wider literature are available on the main elements of the theory. This is then further aligned to educational social mobility within the UK. Educational social mobility has been prolifically and exponentially researched over the last 25 years with evidence found, thus far, that indicates that the education sector alone cannot address entirely the wider socio-economic status of children and families (Eyles et al., 2022). However, what has been established is that '... specific well-targeted educational programmes and approaches can transform children's lives.' (Eyles et al., 2022, p. 18). This provides solid justification for educational policy-makers, educators and educational researchers to continue to explore new and innovative approaches to the social mobility conundrum via the education system.

The aim of this systematic literature review is to bring new insights into many of the issues experienced by educational social mobility policy-makers, educators and children and their
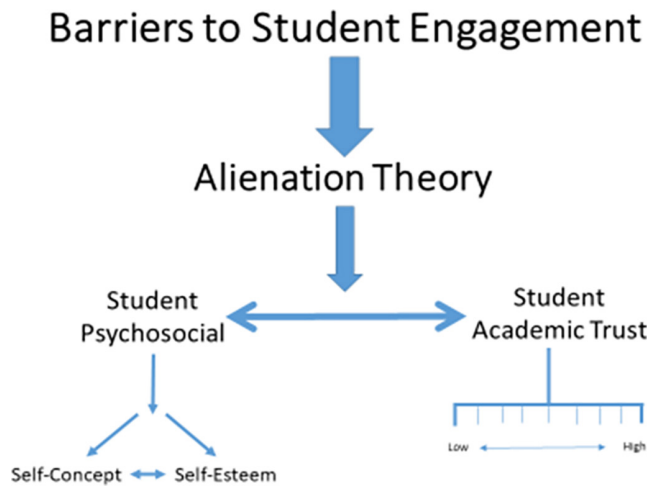
FIGURE 1 'The psychosocial and academic trust alienation theory' (PATA theory; Jones, 2021, p. 155).

families from disadvantaged backgrounds in the UK. A new theoretical approach could instigate important changes to current educational practices during the secondary school years, where disadvantaged young people often start to become disaffected (Earl et al., 2016). Alternative approaches may identify more effective working methods for educators, education systems and for policy-makers to use to contribute to improved social mobility via the education system. Therefore, this systematic review of the available literature is presented focusing on educational social mobility in the context of secondary education and connecting themes through the lens of the PATA theory (Jones, 2021).

Previously, Jones and Nangah (2020), identified '... traumatic emotional experiences in WP [widening participation/disadvantaged] student populations connected to psychosocial and academic trust alienation [PATA] theory contributes to engagement barriers in HE'. It is widely documented that lack of student engagement leads to lower attainment, impacts course completion and affects the ability to progress in terms of educational social mobility (Earl, 2017; Earl et al., 2016; Economic & Social Research Council, 2012; HM Government, 2015, 2021; Jones, 2021; Jones & Nangah, 2020; Ofsted, 2008; Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission, 2014). Much of the discussions based on the Jones and Nangah (2020) review could also be comfortably transferred to the secondary education context. It seems sensible, therefore, to undertake further and more focused research into the psychological needs of disadvantaged pupils, at differing educational levels, if attainment gaps are to be addressed and social mobility and equality of opportunity are to be improved within educational systems.

This systematic literature review focuses on the concept of the PATA theory (Jones, 2021) and related themes, by searching for text relevant to the context of secondary school-aged students in the UK. It seeks to answer the following research questions:

Research Question 1: What current literature related to educational social mobility and disadvantage, disengagement and alienation, and trauma and trust, is available on secondary school students?

Research Question 2: How do the themes of secondary school educational social mobility and disadvantage, disengagement and alienation, and trauma and trust correlate with the PATA theory?

METHODS

The literature search was streamlined by employing PRISMA guidelines affiliated with the research title and subsequent research questions. This provides evidence of the careful and strategic consideration undertaken to assess the appropriateness of each item of literature included in this review (O'Brien & McGukin, 2017; Shamseer et al., 2015). This also demonstrates researcher attempts to evidence objectivity, credibility, and validity (Jahan et al., 2016; Xiao & Watson, 2017) aligned to the discussions, debates and examinations presented.

Identification, screening, eligibility and inclusion process

The research intention straddles both education and psychology and therefore academic databases in both disciplines have been utilised for the systematic literature search (see Figure 2). Additionally, searches have been undertaken using open databases and Google Scholar for historical sources on secondary education literature, educational social mobility and disadvantage, disengagement and alienation, and trauma and trust; the core elements of the PATA theory (Jones, 2021). Furthermore, a wide range of literature genres have been searched, including peer-reviewed research journals, periodicals, government research, sector organisation research, sector magazines and other appropriate educational and psychological sources.

Following the literature search strategy, specific questions were asked of each item to assess its suitability for inclusion, as follows:

1. Does the literature align with the secondary education sector?
2. Is the literature closely linked to the research questions and themes?
3. Does the literature add discerning and objective contributions to the research intention?
4. What is the date, geography and context of the literature and how does this link to the current day?

Finally, the SPIDER model was employed as a further tool to scrutinise and filter search returns (Jahan et al., 2016). This adds legitimacy and justification for the selected articles by strengthening the inclusion/exclusion process, demonstrating inclusion transparency and minimising researcher bias (Cohen et al., 2011). Importantly, Jahan et al. (2016, p. 2) highlight that, '...the quality of assessment is an important step in systematic reviews, and it can lead to adverse consequences if not done properly'. The SPIDER model (Jahan et al., 2016) was applied as detailed in Table 1.

Systematic literature review - results

Literature search returns filtered using PRISMA guidelines (O'Brien & McGukin, 2017; Shamseer et al., 2015), the research questions and the SPIDER model (Jahan et al., 2016; Table 1), identified that $N = 58$ articles/publications were suitable for inclusion (Figure 2).

Figure 2 provides detailed information on the size and scale of the initial literature search return results, from both academic database sources and open database sources. These search returns were then further filtered using key terms, 'educational social mobility, disadvantage, disengagement, alienation, trauma and trust'. This was undertaken to locate relevant articles both empirical and non-empirical studies for inclusion in the results. The literature identified as being unrelated to the research questions, context or the secondary education sector was, at this stage, mostly discounted.
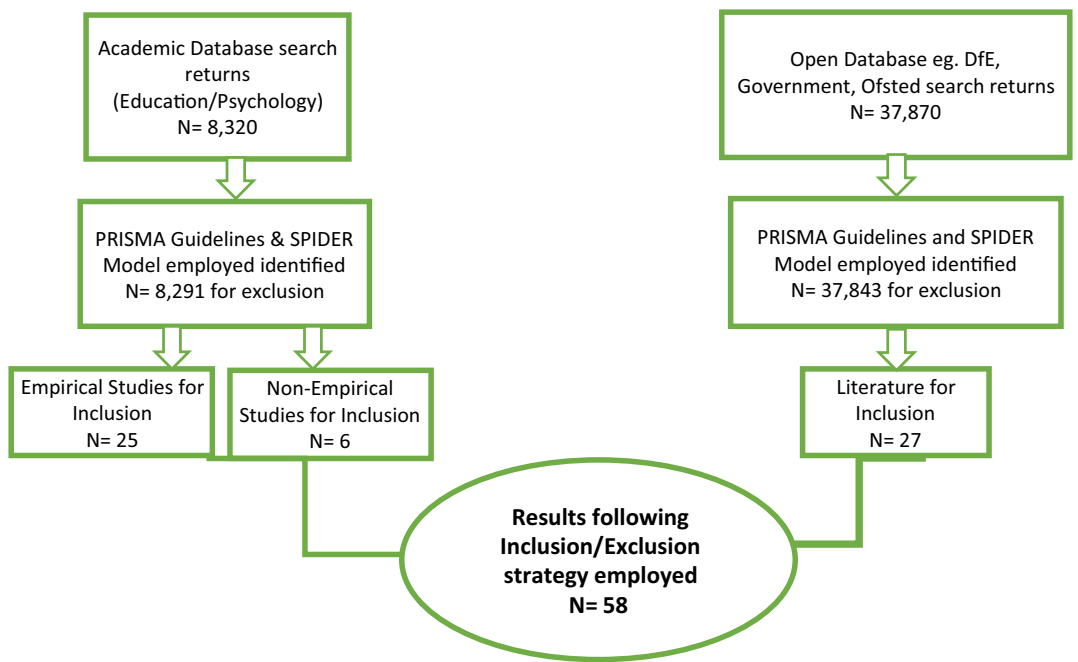
FIGURE 2 Flow diagram of the literature included in the systematic review, and synthesis of results following the application of the inclusion/exclusion methods adopted.

TABLE 1 Literature search inclusion/exclusion criteria based on the SPIDER model (Jahan et al., 2016)

Spider model	Literature examination	Research inclusion/exclusion criteria applied
Sample	What is the sample size, who are the participants in the literature reviewed and is sample detail provided?	UK Secondary School education/ Secondary School-aged, related focus
Phenomena of Interest	Does the literature align with the focus and context of the research themes?	Social mobility, educational disadvantage, disengagement, alienation, trauma and trust
Intention	What is the purpose of the literature and is it relevant to the research questions?	UK or international focus and strength of links to research phenomena of interest
Design	What is the design of the literature reviewed (e.g. data collection tools?)	Interviews, surveys, literature reviews, data and statistics
Evaluation	Does the literature provide effective appraisal aligned to the research focus and questions?	Currency, relevancy and validity were scrutinised and analysed against the research questions
Research Type	What is the research style or methodology of the literature reviewed and how does this link to the research questions?	Empirical research, government statistics, peer-reviewed articles, Charity research, newspaper: methodology – qualitative/quantitative

Boolean operators of AND/OR were further adopted to drill down the search results and to identify quality and relevant literature, to aid the inclusion/exclusion process (Cohen et al., 2011). The search results in Figure 2 demonstrate the results of the initial literature search and evidence the impact of the search strategy applied, including the use of the research questions and the SPIDER Model (Jahan et al., 2016) and the effects of the inclusion/exclusion process adopted. This is to evidence transparency of the research strategy employed, the results and justification for each item of literature that is included within the synthesis of the results section.

Education and the social mobility conundrum

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RESULTS

Research Questions 1 and 2 have been synthesised and presented in unity following the critical analysis process. This decision was based on the rationale that the themes are closely interrelated and to aid the presentation of the results, contributing to a distinct flow of the synthesised results. Therefore, throughout this section, the themes of educational social mobility and disadvantage, disengagement and alienation and trauma and trust have been applied to the new concept of the PATA theory (Jones, 2021) in a secondary school context. The results are presented below using an organised and systematic thematic approach to provide clarity on the complexities of the PATA theory (Jones, 2021) aligned to the educational social mobility landscape and the disadvantaged secondary school sector. It has been identified through the search strategies that there is no available literature that connects the themes of the PATA theory to educational social mobility in the secondary school sector, confirming the originality of these results.

Educational social mobility and disadvantage

Social mobility strategies in education aim to address wider societal economic challenges by enabling children and young people the prospect of movement in status within the economic hierarchy (HM Government, 2021). The Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission (2014) refers to the term 'social mobility' in the context of wider economic inequalities experienced by children and families. However, social mobility in education is '…often used to describe efforts to close achievement gaps between disadvantaged children and their more privileged peers' (Eyles et al., 2022, p. 6) and is often linked to equality. Eyles et al. (2022, p. 6) further elaborate, 'low social mobility levels suggest some degree of inequality of opportunity in society, with adult outcomes too dependent on children's backgrounds'.

Economic disadvantage in the UK still appears to be a growing problem, despite prolific research, strategic funding and schools providing innovative interventions (Eyles et al., 2022; HM Government, 2021a). For children in secondary education, the achievement gap between those from low socio-economic (SES) households and their more affluent peers is increasing, heightening inequalities and affecting long-term life prospects. Social mobility in education focuses on how best to 'narrow the educational gap', reduce inequalities for disadvantaged children and young people, and thus contribute to the improvement of long-term economic well-being and life chances (The Equality Trust, 2022). That said, Maslen (2019) contends that the concept of social mobility is a prob-

lematised discourse that is multi-dimensional and steeped in historical political nuances. The PATA theory provides insights that could aid the educational social mobility conundrum as it is focused on a different approach to educational practice (Jones, 2021) for the disadvantaged student population.

Currently, Marmot et al. (2020) report that social mobility and educational progression will take at least five generations before improvements are realised. This highlights the significance of the education sector within the wider scope of the problematised concept of social mobility (Eyles et al., 2022; Maslen, 2019). As the education sector has been identified as a crucial contributor to drive social mobility through educational practice for students from low SES households, it would seem sensible to continue to explore wider theoretical concepts and new approaches. Marmot et al. (2020) also report that social mobility as a whole in England has stalled, they attribute this to being, in part to;

> ...a result of the profound and persistent socioeconomic inequalities in experiences in early years, education and the labour market', with northern cities and coastal towns most affected (Marmot et al., 2020, p. 88).

In October 2021, the new chair of the Social Mobility Commission explained that 'from education to early years in the home and onto the world of work, improving social mobility is more vital than ever....' (HM Government, 2021d). This further demonstrates that social mobility and educational disparities between SES for the most disadvantaged students remain an acknowledged, significant and problematised issue. However, despite historical government educational social mobility initiatives, policy, research and educational practices, it is clear that there is still some way to go to address growing educational inequalities and long-term life chances for disadvantaged students via the UK education system (Eyles et al., 2022). The global Covid-19 pandemic has also further impaired educational progress for disadvantaged students (HM Government, 2021), demonstrating that the gap is indeed continuing to widen, further impacting social mobility progression attempts via the education system. This demonstrates the need to explore the challenges experienced within education from different standpoints and where potentially the complexities of the PATA theory (Jones, 2021) could contribute towards closing the educational gap between those from low SES households and their more affluent counterparts.

The term 'disadvantaged' is explored here within the current education and governmental framework, and for the purposes of this research, is not explored within the broader scientific discourse. As it stands, the term 'disadvantaged' in an educational framework refers to school students who are eligible for free school meals or who have qualified for free school meals in the previous 6 years (HM Government, 2015, 2021b). In 2014, the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission (pi) stated that

> In the UK, demography too often shapes destiny. Being born poor too often leads to a lifetime of poverty. Both advantage and disadvantage cascade down the generations. Social mobility in Britain is low and is stalling.

While improvement in educational attainment is acknowledged for disadvantaged students in the London areas between 2010 and 2015, across the rest of the country, there continued to be little progress. This is despite the government introducing Pupil Premium Funding (PPF) in 2011; a set amount of funding awarded to schools for each individual child who qualified for free school meals (FSM; HM Government, 2015) with the intention of narrowing the educational gap and increasing social mobility via the education system. As of 2021, Pupil Premium Funding

stood at £955 per year for each secondary school pupil, £2345 per year for each pupil who had been adopted from care, had left care and looked after children (HM Government, 2021b). Each school has the autonomy to decide how this funding is spent, however, strict and transparent reporting, and strategic planning are required by schools to evidence how this funding is utilised (Education Endowment Fund, 2021b; HM Government, 2021c). Currently, FSM eligibility rates are the highest in the North East and West Midlands areas of the UK and lowest in the South East areas, although an increase in FSM eligibility is reported across the UK as a whole in 2021 (HM Government, 2021). As of June 2021 (HM Government, 2021), approximately 20.8% of school pupils in the UK qualified for FSM, an increase of 3% from the previous year, indicating a growing disadvantage. In the secondary school system, this equates to 726235 pupils, 17.2% of the secondary school-age population. Of the 8.9 million school-aged pupils in the UK, approximately 4213724 pupils attend 7234 secondary schools (including maintained, non-maintained, special schools and non-maintained special schools, pupil referral units and independent schools; HM Government, 2021). Approximately 78% of secondary schools in the UK are now academies or free schools, which receive funding from Government and are Ofsted inspected (HM Government, 2021f). There has also been an increase seen in the number of pupils in secondary and special schools since 2020 (HM Government, 2021). A higher percentage of secondary schools now have stronger autonomy in how they deliver education to their disadvantaged students. This suggests that there is the potential to establish new and innovative pedagogical practices that could have a greater impact on 'narrowing' the educational gap and thus contribute more effectively to improving social mobility via the educational system (Eyles et al., 2022).

The government had stated that it was committed to ending child poverty by 2020 by helping disadvantaged children outside of school (HM Government, 2015), leading to The Children and Families Act (2014). This brought in wider reforms to support vulnerable children and their families (Children and Families Act, 2014). As of 2019, and without taking into consideration the effects of the global pandemic on education for disadvantaged students, there were continuing disparities in terms of educational achievement reported between those from disadvantaged backgrounds and their more affluent peers. In 2021, The Education Policy Institute (EPI) stated that during the spring and summer terms of 2021 disadvantaged secondary school students were continuing to fall further behind their more affluent peers, making less progress in terms of educational recovery because of the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic (HM Government, 2021a). This report also highlighted those students making the most progress in terms of educational recovery were those with the highest in-person attendance (HM Government, 2021a). The EPI report also informs that the percentages of mental health decline during the pandemic for parents, families, and young children had a clear link between socio-emotional decline and socio-economic factors such as families being unable to pay bills (NHS Digital, 2020). Furthermore, the Marmot Reports of 2010 and 2020 (Marmot, 2010; Marmot et al., 2020) highlight that poverty and disadvantage are also affected by social determinants of health, further impacting educational social mobility progress. This signals that children and families who are living in poverty are also more likely to experience higher levels of health needs, which will affect school attendance, achievement and progression (Marmot, 2010). The PATA theory (Jones, 2021) analyses specific students' barriers to engagement and could be used as a tool to quickly identify those students who need targeted holistic support. In 2021, the Education Endowment Fund (EEF) developed a strategy tool for schools to demonstrate their plans and areas of focus for the spending of the PPF (HM Government, 2019, 2021c) using an evidenced-based practice approach. They also acknowledge that 'research has found that disadvantaged pupils have been worst affected by the impact of the pandemic' (Education Endowment Fund, 2021a). With government

deadlines for child poverty now long gone, there is a need for stronger commitment and focus if educational social mobility in the UK is to have a stronger impact. Perhaps now would be a good time to review the needs of disadvantaged students through a different theoretical lens and based on the student's individual needs (Jones, 2021).

The analysis here demonstrates the historical context, trials and tribulations, of the educational social mobility mission and the ongoing struggles to narrow the educational gap for disadvantaged secondary school students. These students have additionally been severely impacted by the effects of the global pandemic. That said, there is evidence that the government and schools are using guidance tools to continue to assess and redress their strategic obligations in relation to PPF (Education Endowment Fund, 2021a; HM Government, 2019, 2021c), and thus educational social mobility and educational disadvantage. However, there is little evidence or mention of the psychological needs or method of identification of barriers to engagement of individual SES students (Jones, 2021).

The Economic and Social Research Council Economic and Social Research Council (2012, p. 1) reported that 'educational barriers appears [sic] to be one of the main barriers which stop people moving out of poverty', and that lower achievements in secondary schools also lead to lower levels of entry into HE, affecting the ability for secondary education to make a real impact in terms of wider social mobility contexts (Eyles et al., 2022). The Department for Education (HM Government, 2017, p. 9) stated that 'Government has a key role in helping to break the cycles of disadvantage that can restrict opportunity based on background and geography'. There is much emphasis on disadvantaged pupils having access to 'good' or 'outstanding' Ofsted-rated schools across the country as a tool to improve social mobility via the education system. However, there is little to no mention or emphasis within the government targets (HM Government, 2017) for how schools and Ofsted consider the individual psychological needs of the students who are experiencing barriers to engagement. The onus, from the literature, is that the educational social mobility issue is the responsibility of the government in terms of targets, schools in terms of Ofsted grading, and parents and parental backgrounds as determinants for the students' potential success or failure (Economic & Social Research Council, 2012; HM Government, 2017). The PATA theory (Jones, 2021) focuses on the individual students' educational psychological needs, by identifying barriers to engagement while encompassing the wider influences of a student's disadvantaged status. This new theoretical concept could provide a different standpoint in which to review the challenges presented and discussed above in relation to educational social mobility and the disadvantaged secondary school student.

Furthermore, in 2014, Baker et al. reviewed the results of the Effective Provision of Pre-school, Primary and Secondary Education Project (EPPSE; HM Government, 2012) in relation to educational aspirations. They found that 'low aspirations are presented as a major barrier to closing educational attainment gaps and increasing levels of social mobility' (Baker et al., 2014, p. 525). However, they go on to contest the view that disadvantaged young people hold low educational aspirations. Interestingly, EPPSE (HM Government, 2012) undertook research on behavioural developmental trajectories from year 1 of primary school to the end of key stage 3, under two categories: (1) self-regulation and (2) peer problems. This identified that students' psychological status has a clear link to educational outcomes. Marcin et al.'s (2019, p. 38) Swiss study, recognised that a student's self-efficacy status can be affected by negative feedback, leading to students pulling away from the process of learning, further demonstrating the precariousness of a young person's psychological well-being within the secondary school-aged context. In addition, HM Government (2012, p. 58) states that 'Although growth seems fairly linear across KS1 and KS2 in primary school there appears to be a reduction in "self-regulation" during KS3'. The DfE (HM

Government, 2012) further report that 'self-regulation' levels drop much lower by the end of year 9 in students from low SES households, compared to their high SES peers, establishing a clear attainment gap between SES groups. They also acknowledge the link between self-regulation' behaviours as a predictor for academic attainment and progress (HM Government, 2012). There could be many contributing factors which trigger a divide of academic ability, such as GCSE options in Year 9, plus the impact of ability sets from Year 7, puberty, peer pressure, peer influences or not having the same consistency as one educator as in primary school leading to disjointed relationships with teachers. The longitudinal study undertaken by Morinaj, Hadjar and Hascher (2020, p. 280) in Switzerland and Luxembourg, found similar contributing factors for secondary school-aged pupils, stating.

> It is quite reasonable to expect that alienated students are likely to be at greater risk
> for becoming members of disadvantaged, socially excluded population groups.

The literature synthesised here relating to educational social mobility and disadvantage demonstrates that SES student's psychological status can affect their potential for success or failure (Jones, 2021). It also identifies that those from low SES groups are doing much less well than their higher SES peers. However, according to Baker et al. (2014), this is not necessarily related to the student's levels of aspiration. They found that '... the problem is not necessarily one of low aspirations but of the absence of opportunities and conditions for them to be realised' (Baker et al., 2014, p. 539). The results here suggest that it would be prudent to assume that for low SES students, their psychological status is affected due to their experiences of poverty, disadvantage, possibly traumatic experiences and subsequent inequality (Baker et al., 2014; HM Government, 2012; Jones & Nangah, 2020). The challenges experienced by the education sector, policy-makers and children and families in relation to educational social mobility and disadvantaged students in the secondary sector have been identified. To conclude this theme, the results here suggest that there is scope to view the educational social mobility conundrum using an alternative approach, such as assessing the individual educational psychological needs of SES students by identifying and addressing barriers to educational engagement (Jones, 2021).

Disengagement and alienation

Secondary school disengagement and academic underachievement have severe long-term effects on individual student, their families and society (Henry et al., 2012). Furthermore, school dropout rates, resulting from disengagement, can lead to lower future earning potential over the student's life, with an amplified potential for involvement in criminality and incarceration (ibid). Ofsted (2008, p. 4) defined disaffected students, as those who display,

> ...regular low-level disruptions or are regularly disruptive or challenging leading to
> fixed term exclusions, or those with absences of more than 20% of the academic year,
> or those who were quiet and withdrawn or uninterested in lessons.

Teaching staff find disengaged students in the classroom to be a significant challenge, contributing to continued social and academic achievement difficulties (Fredricks, 2014; Henry et al., 2012). They also find that they are '...often confronted with pupils that do not participate, become disruptive, and withdraw themselves from classroom activities' (Earl et al., 2016, p. 32). Furthermore, Reeve (2006), Skinner, Kindermann and Furrer (2009) (cited in Earl et al., 2016, p. 32) reported that

> ...disengaged pupils will typically not try hard, give up when faced with challenging tasks, and alienate themselves in the classroom by withdrawing from learning activities.

Bronfenbrenner (1986, p. 430) defines alienation as '...to lack a sense of belonging, to feel cut off from family, friends, school or work...'. He refers to these as the 'four Worlds of childhood', with school clearly being a significant element of a child's life (Bronfenbrenner, 1986, p. 430). According to Mann (2001, p. 8), alienation is described as 'the estrangement of the learner from what they should be engaged in, namely the subject and process of study itself '. Based on Hascher and Hadjar's (Hascher & Hadjar, 2018, p. 172) international research the term 'school alienation' is presented as a multi-faceted concept, consisting of negative attitudes that develop in a domain-specific manner. Bronfenbrenner attested over 36 years ago that alienation for young people was on the increase, identifying that schools had a key role to play in creating cultural connections for the young people between those 'four Worlds' (1986, p. 430). Furthermore, Marcin et al.'s (Marcin et al., 2019) international research identified that students' negative attitudes towards school can manifest in alienation. They acknowledge that students alienated from learning processes at secondary school can display psychological and emotional and/or behavioural difficulties, which can ultimately lead to school exclusions (ibid). Significantly, SES students who are excluded or not in school regularly, disengaged or feel alienated from school may also be at a higher risk of being drawn into child exploitation or criminal county lines activity (Children's Society, 2022; Lamrhari et al., 2021). This reveals the additional detrimental impact of alienation within education and highlights the importance of addressing the potential effect on wider societal challenges. Interestingly, Barnhardt and Ginns (2014) suggest that alienation is not necessarily a prerequisite for disengagement. These debates provide evidence of the complexities of the terms, 'disengagement and alienation', and as a subsequence raise awareness of broader societal risks for disadvantaged secondary school students.

International research found that alienation issues are heightened by the transition from primary to secondary school (Marcin et al's, 2019). In addition, Stevens (2018, p. 781) reported that children with conduct disorders from high-need families found 'the disjuncture between the nurture experienced at primary school and a lack of nurture later at secondary school was problematic' (Stevens, 2018, p. 781). Ofsted (2008) identified several challenges to addressing secondary school engagement, for example difficulties accessing outside agencies such as mental health services, parents being disaffected and not willing to work with the schools, and potential criminality, for example drugs, gangs as further barriers. Furthermore, Stevens' (2018, p. 781) research also found that

> Consistent relationships with supportive adults were important, but were rare after the transfer to secondary school. Literacy problems remained unrecognised or unaddressed for too long, contributing to children's lack of engagement.

Ofsted's (2008) findings recommend communities of practice, working in partnership with parents, bespoke support and a flexible curriculum dependent on need, as being most effective when supporting disengaged pupils. Stevens' (2018, p. 781) more recent research identified that '...good communication could aid development of successful approaches to supporting children with difficult behaviour' who are from high needs or disadvantaged families. This indicates that home-to-school approaches for disadvantaged secondary students could be having an impact on student engagement, alienation and thus barriers to engagement (Jones, 2021). Results suggest that providing stronger 'nurturing' practices with consistent supportive adults within education could be effective for disadvantaged

students. That said, secondary schools in the UK do demonstrate multi-agency working practices, whereby there are attempts to engage with the student's 'four Worlds' (Bronfenbrenner, 1986) to create cultural connections and to meet legislation requirements, such as early intervention and Safeguarding (HM Government, 2018). However, despite Ofsted and governmental strategies, there are still significant issues to 'closing the educational gap' for those from disadvantaged demographics (HM Government, 2021a) and the results suggest that alienation is a contributing factor.

Research located in higher education reported alienated students as those who '...almost consciously self-sabotage' (Jones, 2021, p. 162). These traits can be identified in secondary school students who display negative behaviours that lead to detentions and potential exclusions (Earl, 2017). It can be identified from the literature that disadvantaged students' alienation in its various forms in secondary schools could be a contributing factor to low academic achievement. Notably, Hascher and Hagenauer (2010) also found the prevalence of alienation is significantly higher in boys. In the 2019–2020 academic year, the HM Government (2021) report found that school exclusions for boys continuing to be three times higher than for girls, with exclusion rates peaking at 14 years old. Rates of pupil exclusions also continue to be higher for pupils who are eligible for FSM (HM Government, 2021e) or for those students who have Special Educational Needs. Çağlar (Çağlar, 2013, p. 185) identified that '...alienation towards the school will considerably obstruct the educational organisation's ability to achieve their goals'. This finding suggests that a high prevalence of disengaging and alienated FSM secondary pupils could hamper a school's ability to deliver education effectively for the disadvantaged demographic. Moreover, Earl et al. (2016) found that despite the historical presence of alienating or disengaged student behaviours in the classroom, there was a distinct lack of theoretical understanding in the educational field. They investigated psychological needs in terms of student autonomy and competence, as a tool to understand disengaging secondary student behaviours, with a focus on psychological control in classrooms. However, their study did not review students' psychological needs from varying demographics or by identifying students who were displaying barriers to engagement (Jones, 2021). Again, this provides justification for original research undertaken within the secondary school education system into the psychosocial needs of students from disadvantaged backgrounds in relation to alienation (Jones, 2021).

So far, the synthesis of results has positioned alienation as belonging to the student, however, Stevens' (2018, p. 781) research highlights that within secondary education, 'inconsistent disciplinary responses to minor behaviour issues tended to escalate problems, and most children were eventually excluded from mainstream education'. This indicates that alienation and disengagement can be enforced on a student by the school system and their subsequent behaviour management policies and practices. Students who are excluded from education are effectively plunged into alienation by being disengaged from the learning environment. She goes on to state that 'communication between parents and school staff was often problematic; parents sometimes experienced school contacts as burdensome, ill-informed and unsupportive' (ibid). Cultural attitudes towards SES students could lead to higher proportions of disadvantaged young people being excluded from education for minor behaviour issues eg. not having the right equipment/shoes/coat rather than being engaged within meaningful and inclusive teaching environments where fairness is at the heart of practice (Çağlar, 2013). The analysis here raises the issue of students being alienated from secondary school via school behaviour management practices.

An additional perspective that links to alienation and disengagement is the work of Marshall et al. (2014), who report self-esteem as being the demonstration of a student's evaluation of their own, individual positive and negative feelings about themselves. For example, this could be influenced by their experiences within education, the family, society or how they feel they are perceived. Vallerand's (2000) review of Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory, also

recognises the influences of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on student success or failure. It is well documented that historically, FSM students can experience stigma, teasing and bullying (Child Poverty Action Group and British Youth Council, 2012). Addis and Murphy (2018, p. 400) confirm this continued assertion for FSM pupils, explaining that qualifying students '...will have consequences in terms of welfare stigma...'. They also conclude that '...poor pupils constantly strive to hide poverty in an attempt to avoid being singled out, stigmatised and bullied' (Addis & Murphy, 2018, p. 401). It is clear, therefore, that the impact of poverty, disadvantage and qualifying for FSM's could have a negative effect on secondary school students' self-esteem and thus has the potential to affect engagement. In addition, for secondary school-aged students, psychology advocates that '...self-esteem is seen as a critical factor in their development, yet empirical research suggests a more complicated picture' (Marshall et al., 2014, p. 1275), they add that

> ...positive self-concept leads adolescents to actively develop and maintain positive social support networks. That is, high-self-esteem adolescents believe they have social worth and consequently engage in behaviours [sic] that build social support.

In contrast, for secondary school-aged students, low self-esteem could manifest itself as behaviours where social relationships are rejected, avoided or destructed demonstrating alienation. For example, Tarquin and Cook-Cottone (2008, p. 16) identified that there was a correlation between a student's '...self-concept and student alienation'. Furthermore, Schulz and Rubel (2011, p. 286) studied the phenomenology of alienation in high school and found three thematic factors that contributed; (i) the need to build relationships, (ii) the loss of trust in school adults and (iii) the fear of failure. The inter-relation of these themes aligns with belonging, trust and self-worth. The authors add that 'these students, who too often come from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.... may be ill-prepared for future responsibilities' (ibid). This suggests that having a greater sense of social worth, belonging, trust and self-worth could increase a student's self-concept and self-esteem (psychosocial) levels, and thus potentially reduce student alienation and increase academic trust. This provides further evidence to support the layers and aspects of the PATA theory (Jones, 2021) in secondary educational practice, as the PATA theory is prominently positioned within alienation philosophy.

In addition, Marcin et al.'s (2019) Swiss primary and secondary education study found that disadvantaged students doing least well were found to be at risk of school alienation. Similarly, Morinaj et al.'s (2020) international research reported that the complex relationship between school alienation and the cultural context of the student directly contributes to academic outcomes. In addition, Morinaj et al.'s (2020) longitudinal study identified that school alienation is a contributing multi-dimensional construct that has a direct impact on secondary school students' academic outcomes. The examination of literature here reveals the need for educators, policy-makers and government to understand more fully the multi-faceted issues faced by the secondary school sector when presented with students who are disengaging or alienating and where original theoretical perspectives could provide new insights (Jones, 2021). The results highlight the significant impact of alienation within a secondary school context from the perspective of alienation as owned by the student, but also of alienation as enforced by the education sector itself. Disengaged and alienated disadvantaged secondary school students severely affect the ability of the education sector to contribute successfully to the wider social mobility agenda.

Trauma and trust

According to Cavanaugh (2016, p. 41), school-related challenging behaviours displayed by students who have experienced trauma can present themselves, '... as aggression, attendance problems, depression, inattention, anxiety/withdrawal and delayed language and cognitive development'. This is similar to alienating or disengagement behaviours, suggesting that secondary school students who display these behaviours in a school environment, could well have experienced trauma or be experiencing trauma. Thomas et al. (Thomas et al., 2019) identify the high prevalence of trauma experienced in the stages of childhood and adolescence, acknowledging the negative effect this can have on students' abilities to self-regulate, recall, understand and organise, further hindering social and academic success in school. Furthermore, Morgan et al. (2015, p. 1038) identify that for some 'young people who have experienced trauma, neglect or abuse, or those whose lives and school attendance have been impacted by poverty', meeting the expectations of school systems can be extremely difficult and at times completely overwhelming. Thomas et al. (2019) highlight the importance for teaching and school staff to understand the neurological science behind traumatic experiences and young people's responses or behaviours in the school environment. They highlight the '...fight, flight and freeze response when a student perceives a threat to his or her safety' (Thomas et al., 2019, p. 426). They add that this is crucial information '...for shifting the mindset of educators, administrators, and school staff' when learning to support students from disadvantaged backgrounds or who may have experienced or be experiencing trauma (ibid). Chi Kin Lee et al. (2019, p. 463) also add that '...student trust in the teacher makes students feel safe ...'. This demonstrates that secondary school teachers and school staff need to fully understand the holistic needs of their school students to provide effective and successful support for ongoing success and educational progression. School-based trauma-informed practices include, '...support for student safety, positive interactions, culturally responsive practices, peer support, targeted support and strategies that support the individualised needs of the students' (Cavanaugh, 2016, p. 42; Chi Kin Lee et al., 2019).

Morgan et al. (2015, p. 1037) state that, 'relational pedagogy can redress the impact of trauma and social exclusion experienced by young people', adding that '...trauma-informed practice and relational pedagogy in flexible learning contexts as strategies' can be utilised to aid re-engagement (ibid). Moreover, Marcin et al's (Marcin et al., 2019) research found that positive student/teacher relationships were critical in the quest to reduce secondary school students' feelings of educational alienation. They further identify that the minimisation of alienation is very much dependent on mutual trust and justice, adding that student/teacher relationships need to be based on '...transparent evaluation practices and respectful, appreciative, and supportive relationships ....' (ibid, p. 47). Chi Kin Lee et al. (2019, p. 463) assert that 'teacher trust has a positive impact on self-efficacy. While student trust has a positive impact on intrinsic motive...'. In addition, García-Moya et al. (2019, p. 1) identified that 'relationship building is not seen as a central aspect of effective teaching' and that 'relational pedagogy still receives less attention than subject knowledge and didactics in teacher training'. Jones' (2021, p. 163) research results recommended that educators should 'embed social pedagogical and psychological educational practices into teacher training...', demonstrating how the concept of trauma and trust is rooted within the layers of the PATA theory and aligns with wider research in the field of secondary education both in the UK and internationally.

It would be prudent, at this stage, to purport that disadvantaged secondary school students are potentially exposed to more traumatic experiences that could ultimately affect their ability to trust, suggesting that educational relationships are vitally important to their ongoing progress and engagement (Jones & Nangah, 2020). This further reinforces the need to research, review

and consider changes to pedagogy and teacher training to encompass the diverse needs of the disadvantaged student demographic.

Trust-Based Relational Interventions were found to be effective when working with secondary school-aged children (Parris et al., 2015). The PATA theory (Jones, 2021) also found similar practices as most effective for disadvantaged HE students, demonstrating how this theoretical concept supports trauma-informed and social pedagogical approach to educational practice (Jones, 2021; Jones & Nangah, 2020). This signals the potential value of both trauma-informed practice and the PATA theory (Jones, 2021; Jones & Nangah, 2020) as a tool in educational practice to help narrow the educational gap for those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Furthermore, Avery et al. (2021, p. 381), identify that 'schools offer a unique environment to prevent and counter the impacts of childhood trauma', and it would appear that the secondary school stage is a timely place to focus such efforts. Cavanaugh (2016, p. 44) identifies that

> While much of our work as professionals in trauma-informed schools need to focus on the unique needs of children who have experienced such hardships, it is also important to address the needs of adults who work directly with children.

Cavanaugh (2016) goes on to assert that working in a multi-professional capacity alongside counsellors, social workers and support teams can go some way to providing professional support, not just for the children but also for teaching and school staff. Thomas et al. (2019) identify that while the prevalence of educational research into the topic of trauma-informed school practices is high, there are issues with the dissemination of this information to change and inform current teaching practice, particularly at the teacher training stage. Furthermore, Cavanaugh (2016, p. 42) explains that trauma-informed practice should be embedded within the multi-tiers of educational strategy and policies, with '...school-wide positive behavioural interventions' reflected in each school's vision, mission and cultural ethos. In addition, Avery et al. (2021) explore the trust-based relational model in their systematic review of school-wide trauma-informed approaches. They identified that neurobiological traumatic experiences which affect the body's stress reactions can have a significant effect on a young person's physical and mental health, relationships and behaviours (ibid). They also propose that urgent research is needed to understand more fully the '...interactions between core elements of a trauma-informed approach, teaching pedagogy and organisational factors...' in a school-wide context (Avery et al., 2021, p. 381). This further demonstrates the urgency for whole-school pedagogy and policy reform for disadvantaged students.

To conclude this theme, the critical analysis and literature reviewed indicate that trauma and trust have a significant influence on disadvantaged secondary school students' ability to engage in education and thus contribute more fully to educational social mobility progress.

Summary and key findings

Social mobility and disadvantage

The educational gap for disadvantaged secondary school students is continuing to widen, affecting social mobility progress. Northern cities and coastal towns of England are continuing to present with the highest levels of educational and socioeconomic deprivation (Marmot, 2010). For disadvantaged secondary school students, in-school attendance and engagement are key to improve educational outcomes and equality of opportunity.

Disengagement and alienation

Disengagement and alienation act as barriers to disadvantaged students' educational progress and thus social mobility. Unaddressed gaps in the educational ability for disadvantaged students within secondary school exacerbate the educational gap and alienation. Students presenting with challenging classroom behaviours in the form of alienation and disengagement characteristics create significant problems for teaching staff and schools. Disadvantaged students' self-concept and self-esteem (psychosocial) status can affect their ability to engage in education positively or negatively. Home-to-school approaches for disadvantaged secondary students and changes in 'nurturing' pedagogical practices from primary education can also impact disengagement and alienation for disadvantaged students. Positive student/teacher relationships in secondary education are critical to minimise alienation and disengagement. Alienation can be owned by the student but can also be enforced by the behaviour management practices of the school system.

Trauma and trust

Neurological changes caused by traumatic experiences may underly disadvantage young people's responses or behaviours in the school environment and can significantly affect trust. Behaviour management systems and strategies used within secondary schools can affect a disadvantaged student's ability to build trust. School-wide positive behavioural interventions embedded in the school's vision, mission and cultural ethos can improve trust for disadvantaged students. Nurturing relationships with school and teaching staff can help to shape trust, based on transparent evaluation practices, mutual respect and supportive and consistent relationships. Disadvantaged students who have experienced in trauma and who are also displaying disengaging and alienating behaviours need stronger interventions to build trust to develop their self-concept and self-esteem (psychosocial) levels and therefore, academic trust levels within an educational context.

Summary

This systematic literature review provides evidence that the PATA theory offers a lens to educators into the complex intricacies of the disadvantaged secondary school student demographic, by connecting themes of educational social mobility and disadvantage, disengagement and alienation, trauma and trust. In addition, the PATA theory is deeply focused on the drive to improve educational social mobility through equality of educational opportunity and educational progress for disadvantaged students (Jones, 2021). That said, it is important to acknowledge that the PATA theory is not a utopian educational social mobility solution as there are many challenges within education that can interrupt or disrupt the characteristics of the theory in practice. For example, relationship building between student and teaching staff can be severely affected when staff leave or are off sick, or when supply teachers are relied upon. Challenges experienced by teaching and school staff in the sector, who are already under enormous pressure from government targets, data, statistics, lack of funding and the consequence of Ofsted ratings (Adams, 2020; Civinini, 2021; Stewart, 2020) need to be recognised as a risk to the effectiveness of the PATA theory in practice. Currently, many teachers are leaving the sector due to the challenges and pressures they are experiencing (García-Carmona et al., 2019; García-Moya et al., 2019; Perryman

& Calvert, 2020). Strategies would need to be implemented to ensure that teaching and support staff are retained in education and are supported by these growing challenges and pressures.

Although implementing the PATA theory (Jones, 2021) in educational practice presents challenges, knowledge of this theory provides educators with new insights that could influence changes to educational practice. Leadership teams, governors and policy-makers could review their vision, mission and strategic plans for the disadvantaged student demographic and the educational social mobility agenda in light of the insights of the PATA theory and the thematic debates presented.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the purpose of this systematic literature review was to examine empirical and existing literature with the aim of establishing new insights into the secondary school educational challenges affecting social mobility and disadvantaged students' educational progress. The lens of the PATA theory has been applied to the following themes: educational social mobility and disadvantage, disengagement and alienation and trauma and trust. These themes are interconnected and correlate with the intricacies of the PATA theory in an educational psychological context. Using PRISMA guidelines and the SPIDER model aided the literature inclusion/exclusion process and facilitated the focus aligned to the specifics of the research questions. This systematic literature review critically examined previous research and identified that while the PATA theory (Jones, 2021) acknowledges the interconnections of the power of the relationship between the internal world of the student and the social environment in which they are positioned, research within a secondary school context is absent.

Finally, the contribution of this research to the field of children, young people and society is three-fold; firstly, findings provide evidence of the additional educational psychological theory. Secondly, secondary education is identified as a pivotal milestone, where efforts to drive change for educational progress contributing to social mobility progress for disadvantaged students could be focused. Thirdly, the synthesis of current research and literature, identified that there is currently no existing literature related to the PATA theory positioned within the disadvantaged secondary school student context. Furthermore, the research results reveal that the issues experienced in the education system by disadvantaged students in secondary education correlate with the layered elements of the PATA theory, providing justification for further empirical research. The insights reported here could be of interest to the children and young people sector, educational psychology community, educational policy-makers and international groups who share similar social policy, social mobility demographics and educational systems.

Recommendations

The key findings lead to the following recommendations:

1. There is a strong case for further research into the new concept of the PATA theory (Jones, 2021) aligned with the secondary school sector. Qualitative research could be a useful approach to seek the opinions and expertise of secondary school leadership, teaching and support staff who provide education and support for disadvantaged secondary school students. As areas of the North have been identified as having the largest amount of FSM secondary pupils it would be sensible to focus future research efforts on secondary schools in these areas.

2. Secondary school education has been identified as a key milestone in disadvantaged students' educational journey where alienation can begin to manifest. Therefore, it would be sensible to focus research efforts in this sector aligned with the original concept of the PATA theory.

3. Results suggest that secondary schools with disadvantaged students who are displaying alienating behaviours would benefit from embedding psychological educational practices and trauma-informed and social pedagogy into teacher training, to strengthen the skills and retention of the education workforce and improve relational pedagogy. This aligns with the ethos of the PATA theory.

4. There is scope to further scrutinise consistent and nurturing school relationships within a secondary school context for disadvantaged students, with a focus on building trust and improving student self-concept and self-esteem (psychosocial).

5. Secondary school leadership teams, governors and policy-makers could review their vision, mission and strategic plans for the disadvantaged student demographic and the educational social mobility agenda in light of the insights of the PATA theory, and the thematic debates presented.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

All literature used to form the data collection for this systematic review journal article has been appropriately cited in the reference list and clearly marked. All the literature is accessible via academic databases or through open access databases as stated.

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