

Relations between Disadvantage Level and UCLA Experience: Evidence from UCUES 2003

Student Affairs Information and Research Office

Introduction

This study explores how the disadvantage level of UCLA respondents to the University of California Undergraduate Experience Survey 2003 relates to their experience at UCLA. For this purpose, a Disadvantage Level variable was constructed by taking into account parents' education, parents' income, parents' occupation, social class, membership in an underrepresented racial/ethnic group, parents not born in the U.S., and first language learned (see Table 1 "Construction of Disadvantage Level"). Correlations between this Disadvantage Level variable and experience variables are examined. Then Disadvantage Level is grouped into "Not Disadvantaged" and "Somewhat Disadvantaged" to examine the differences in the experiences and satisfaction with service utilization between these two groups. Significant results are presented in the attached tables and charts.

Findings

The study finds that overall, UCLA respondents have relatively low Disadvantage Levels, with only 15% of them at levels between 5 and 8 on a 0 – 14 scale (Table 2), indicating a skew towards the lower end of the scale (Figure 1). No respondents are found at a level higher than 8. Transfer respondents have higher average Disadvantage Level than do direct-entry respondents (Table 3).

Among the UCLA-experience variables that are examined in the study, we find that the following variables have significant correlations with student disadvantage level (Table 4).

What factors are positively correlated with Disadvantage Level?

The higher their Disadvantage Level:

- The more highly respondents rate the importance of, and their progress in, developing further Internet research skills, web design skills and computer applications skills in major fields.
- The more frequently respondents report having skipped classes for employment.
- The more highly respondents rate the importance and frequency of working for pay on faculty's research projects.

What factors are negatively correlated with Disadvantage Level?

Respondents with higher Disadvantage Level tend to have lower level of satisfaction with:

- Their ability to get into a major they want
- Their overall UC GPA
- Overall quality of faculty instruction
- Overall academic experience.

Respondents with higher Disadvantage Level also tend to have a lower frequency of having in-depth conversations with students with different political opinions and different personal values.

How do “Somewhat Disadvantaged” groups differ from “Not Disadvantaged” group in service utilization?

Comparing percentages of service utilization and satisfaction by a dichotomous “Disadvantage Level” variable (with 0 and 1 grouped as “Not Disadvantaged” and 2 through 8 as “Somewhat Disadvantaged”) produces the following significant results regarding utilization of and satisfaction with student services (Table 5 and Table 6).

Utilization

The respondents in the “Somewhat Disadvantaged” group have significantly higher percentages than those in the “Not Disadvantaged group” in using (Table 5):

- Financial Aid Office (68% somewhat disadvantaged vs. 42% not disadvantaged)
- International Student Service (8% somewhat disadvantaged vs. 2% not disadvantaged)

The percentage of “Somewhat Disadvantaged” group that used Health Services is significantly lower (56%) than that of the “Not Disadvantaged” group (64%).

Satisfaction

The only significant percentage difference between respondents in the “Somewhat Disadvantaged” group and those in the “Not Advantaged” group in degree of satisfaction is with utilization of Financial Aid Office (Table 6): A higher percentage (87%) of the “Somewhat Disadvantaged” group reports “Satisfied” than that of the “Not Disadvantaged” group (74%).

What experiences are rated as “important” more often by the “Somewhat Disadvantaged” group?

In the following six areas (also see Table 9), significantly higher percentages of “Somewhat Disadvantaged” respondents reported “important” than do “Not Disadvantaged” respondents:

Respondents Reported Areas As "Important"	Somewhat Disadvantaged (%)	Not Disadvantaged (%)
• Work For Pay on Faculty Project	73.7	64.6
• Prepare Further for Grad School	92.8	86.3
• Develop Further Personal Code of Values	94.6	90.4
• Develop Further Internet Research Skills	90.9	84.9
• Develop Further Web Design Skills	66.6	53.0
• Develop Further Computer Skills in Major Field	82.0	66.0

In summary, larger proportions of “Somewhat Disadvantaged” respondents recognized working for pay on faculty projects, preparing for grad school, developing personal values and developing computer skills as important goals of their college career than do those of “Not Disadvantaged” respondents.

What do these findings mean for student services?

- Disadvantaged students' tendency to be less satisfied with their opportunities to get into a desired major field, their grades, the quality of faculty instruction and overall academic experience suggest that academic advisory and retention services may need to emphasize these areas in their programs.
- The correlations between disadvantaged level and developing computer skills indicate that disadvantaged students may have lagged behind in computer skills before college and feel the urgency to fill the gap left by the "electronic divide." To level the playing field, faculty may need to specify computer skill requirements for their classes and recommend remedial level computer courses be provided accordingly.
- The greater likelihood of disadvantaged students' skipping classes for employment and working for pay on faculty projects indicates that disadvantaged students feel the financial pressure more keenly. Working on professors' projects for pay may help both academically and financially.
- The negative relationship between disadvantage level and having in-depth conversations with people with different values and different opinions may suggest that intervening factors such as employment and family responsibilities result in some students having less opportunity for these kinds of interaction, or in giving them less priority.

Appendixes

Table 1. Construction of Disadvantage Level

(Disadvantage Level = Sum of the scores in the table; Levels range between 0 and 14)

Source Variables	Scores Assigned
Mother's Education Level:	No High School = 2 Some High School = 1
Father's Education level:	No High School = 2 Some High School = 1
Mother's Occupation:	Clerical = 1 Laborer = 1
Father's Occupation:	Clerical = 1 Laborer = 1
Social Class When You were Growing Up:	Low income or poor = 2 Working class = 1
Parental Income Quartiles:	Under 30,000 = 2 Between 30,001-62,499 = 1
First Generation College Student:	Yes = 1
Race/Ethnicity:	Black = 1 Hispanic = 1
First language:	Other than English only = 1
Parents Born in the United States:	Neither parent born in the US = 1

Table 2. Distribution of Distadvantage Level Among UCLA Respondents

Disadvantage Level	Frequency	Percent
0	200	27.2
1	139	18.9
2	104	14.1
3	89	12.1
4	92	12.5
5	66	9.0
6	40	5.4
7	4	0.5
8	1	0.1
Total	735	100.0

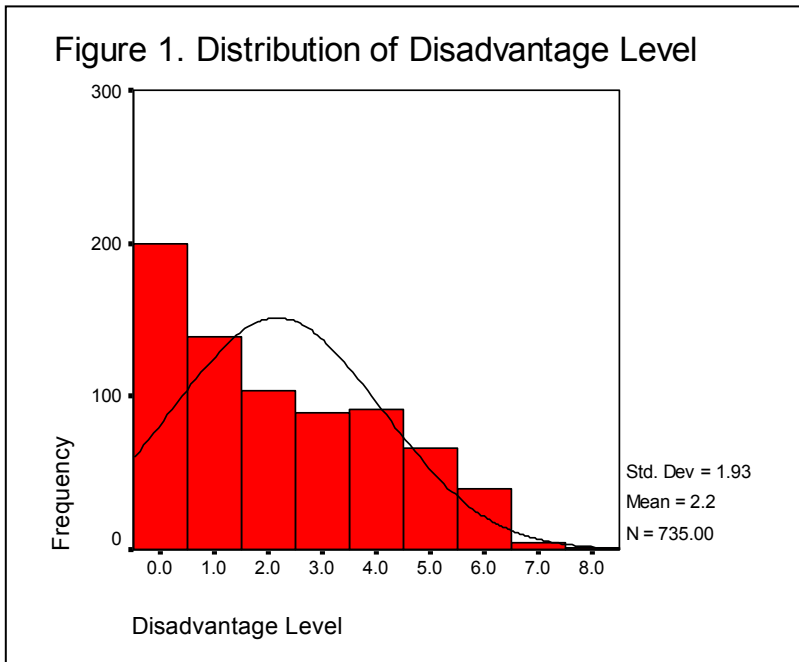


Table 3. Difference in Mean Disadvantage Scores of UCLA Respondents by Entry Status

Entry Status	Mean Disadvantage Score	N
Direct	2.01	530
Transfer	2.56*	205
Total	2.16	735

*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level

Table 4. Significant Correlations Between UCLA Experience and Disadvantage Level*

UCLA Experience Variables	Disadvantage Level (0 - 8)
Variables Positively Correlated with Disadvantage Level	
Importance of and progress in developing further Internet research skills (Q6_a_17)	0.105**
Importance of and progress in developing further web design (Q6_a_18)	0.168**
Importance and progress in developing further computer applications in my field (Q6_a_19)	0.143**
Frequency of having skipped class for employment this year (Q10b_a_3)	0.104**
Importance and frequency of working for pay on faculty research project this year (Q7a_a_6)	0.148**
Variables Negatively Correlated with Disadvantage Level	
Satisfaction with ability to get into a major you want (Q14b_a_2)	-0.124**
Satisfaction with your overall UC GPA (Q14b_a_4)	-0.219**
Satisfaction with overall quality of faculty instruction (Q14b_a_5)	-0.128**
Satisfaction with overall academic experience (Q14b_a_7)	-0.099**
Frequency of having had in-depth conversations with students with different political opinions (Q10a_a_10)	-0.177**
Frequency of Having had in-depth conversations with students with different personal values (Q10a_a_11)	-0.101**

* The coefficients value of a perfect correlation between two variables is 1. With this criterion, readers can evaluate the strength of association between two variables.

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

**Table 5. Significant Percentage Difference* in Services Utilization
By Dichotomous Disadvantage Variable**

Dichotomous Disadvantage Variable**		Campus Financial Aid Office (Q12a_a_1)		Health Services (Q12a_a_10)		International Student Services (Q12a_a_11)	
		Used	Not Used	Used	Not Used	Used	Not Used
Not Disadvantaged	(N)	140	193	213	119	6	325
	(%)	42.0	58.0	64.2	35.8	1.8	98.2
Somewhat Disadvantaged	(N)	264	124	217	170	32	354
	(%)	68.0	32.0	56.1	43.9	8.3	91.7
Total	(N)	404	317	430	289	38	679
	(%)	56.0	44.0	59.8	40.2	5.3	94.7

* All the percentage differences are significant at .001 or .05 level.

** Although the range of Disadvantage Level is from 0 to 14, it only reaches 8 among UCLA respondents. Therefore, we group them into a Not Disadvantaged group (Disadvantage Level ≤ 1) and Somewhat Disadvantage group (Disadvantage Level ≥ 2).

Table 6. Significant Percentage Difference* in Satisfaction with Utilization of Campus Financial Aid Office by Dichotomous Disadvantage Variable

Dichotomous Disadvantage Variable**		Used Campus Financial Aid Office (Q12a_a_1)	
		Satisfied	Dissatisfied
Not Disadvantaged	(N)	104	36
	(%)	74.3	25.7
Somewhat Disadvantaged	(N)	230	34
	(%)	87.1	12.9
Total	(N)	334	70
	(%)	82.7	17.3

Table 7. Significant Percentage Difference* in Satisfaction with Overall UC GPA by Dichotomous Disadvantage Variable

Dichotomous Disadvantage Variable**		Your Overall UC GPA (Q14b_a_4)	
		Satisfied	Dissatisfied
Not Disadvantaged	(N)	229	103
	(%)	69.0	31.0
Somewhat Disadvantaged	(N)	178	210
	(%)	45.9	54.1
Total	(N)	407	313
	(%)	56.5	43.5

Table 8. Significant Percentage Difference* in Planned Degree Attainment Level by Dichotomous Disadvantage Variable

Dichotomous Disadvantage Variable**		Planned Degree Level (Q23)	
		Undergrad	Graduate
Not Disadvantaged	(N)	55	283
	(%)	16.3	83.7
Somewhat Disadvantaged	(N)	44	351
	(%)	11.1	88.9
Total	(N)	99	634
	(%)	13.5	86.5

* All the percentage differences are significant at .001 or .05 level.

** Although the range of Disadvantage Level is from 0 to 14, it only reaches 8 among UCLA respondents. Therefore, we group them into Not a Disadvantaged group (Disadvantage Level \leq 1) and a Somewhat Disadvantage group (Disadvantage Level \geq 2).

Table 9. Significant Percentage Difference* in Importance of Experiences By Dichotomous Disadvantage Variable

Dichotomous Disadvantage Variable**		Work For Pay on Faculty Project (Q7a_a_6)		Develop Further Prep for Grad School (Q6_a_13)		Develop Further Personal Code of Values (Q6_a_14)		Develop Further Internet Research Skills (Q6_a_17)		Develop Further Web Design Skills (Q6_a_18)		Develop Further Computer Applications Skills in My Field (Q6_a_19)	
		Important Yes	Important No	Important Yes	Important No	Important Yes	Important No	Important Yes	Important No	Important Yes	Important No	Important Yes	Important No
Not Disadvantaged	(N)	208	114	290	46	302	32	286	51	179	159	223	115
	(%)	64.6	35.4	86.3	13.7	90.4	9.6	84.9	15.1	53.0	47.0	66.0	34.0
Somewhat Disadvantaged	(N)	274	98	363	28	370	21	358	36	261	131	319	70
	(%)	73.7	26.3	92.8	7.2	94.6	5.4	90.9	9.1	66.6	33.4	82.0	18.0
Total	(N)	482	212	653	74	672	53	644	87	440	290	542	185
	(%)	69.5	30.5	89.8	10.2	92.7	7.3	88.1	11.902	60.3	39.7	74.6	25.4

* All the percentage differences are significant at .001 or .05 level.

** Although the range of Disadvantage Level is from 0 to 14, it only reaches 8 among UCLA respondents. Therefore, we group them into a Not Disadvantaged group (Disadvantage Level ≤ 1) and a Somewhat Disadvantage group (Disadvantage Level ≥ 2).