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Abstract

Restorative Practices (RP) aims to shift from punitive-based disciplines to valuing relational-based approaches in education. RP Facilitators' (also: trainers, associates, practitioners) play a central role in supporting school campuses to adopt and implement RP. This study showcases seven RP Facilitators' efforts to implement RP, with a specific focus on honoring the 'Core Self' and the types of 'Labors' central to their work as change agents. This study offers insight into the nuances of initiating paradigmatic shifts and the types of support RP Facilitators need to promote and sustain RP; and in turn, help them support the education community to learn how to educate our children in ways that are equitable, humanizing, and restorative.

Keywords*:* facilitators, restorative practice, justice, core self, labors, community, relationships

Restorative Praxis: Evoking the 'Core Self' and the Fluidity of 'Labors'

"Remember then that there is only one important time, and that time is now.

The most important one is always the one you are with.

And the most important thing is to do good for the one who is standing at your side.

For these, my dear boy, are the answers to what is most important in this world.

This is why we are here."

- From *The Three Questions* by Jon Muth

As literacy educators, it's not unusual for us to call upon favorite picture books to help us make sense of our experiences. Like young Nicolai in Jon Muth's *The Three Questions*, to construct meaning from our lives, we engage *with* the world around us, continuously asking, relating, and reflecting on the decisions we make. After asking his friends three questions: *When is most important?; Who is most important?; and What is the right thing to do?,* Nicolai responded in the moment based on a call of urgency and needs. Indeed, as Leo the Turtle guides Nicolai to see at the end of the story, it was Nicolai's attentive presence and discerning participation with those around him that shaped the importance of his actions. And though it may seem unfamiliar to bring Zen philosophy into educational research, the parallels allowed us to consider deeply the themes of presence, needs, and a call to action in education.

We find that, for the *Restorative Practice Facilitators* (hereafter, RPFs), restorative work in schools parallels with the message of Nicolai's story, for those who endeavor to do "right" in their worlds, like Nicolai, the labor of knowing what is "best" to do is embedded in the *doing.* And this doing, and subsequent iterations of "best," is dependent upon context, the specific needs of the moment, the humans involved, and the capacity of the RPF to endure the labor. Restorative mediation, for instance, varies across moments, and as such, the term for the advocate-laborer of the space has taken different titles across the literature.

Nicolai's formative experience in the forest, for instance, was very physical; it required his youth and dexterity, his clear eyes, his sharp ears, and his gentle spirit. He could not have been as successful, perhaps, in spaces that required historical knowledges of the context. In schools the scope of what is required, knowledge of schooling discourses, sociopolitical context, histories of place and communities, and instructional and pedagogical practices, demand a unique and flexible stance.

Literature Review

Currently, public school education is steeped in zero-tolerance policy where punitive-based practices are the primary methods in the disciplining of youths, particularly youths of color (Winn, 2020). What was originally meant for keeping children safe from external harms (e.g., gun violence) has resulted in exclusionary and disproportionate discipline (Fabelo et al., 2011). Furthermore, there is evidence that these policies and practices play a role in contributing to the school-to-prison pipeline phenomenon (Smith, 2015). In recent years, schools seeking to break the pipeline trajectory and repair harm and (re)build relationships in school communities have turned to *Restorative Practice* (RP), a relational-based approach to education rooted in

Indigenous traditions of talking circles and collective approaches to peacemaking (Lincourt et al., 2021).

Early iterations of RP used in schools have since emerged from the growing field of *restorative justice* (RJ), a philosophy or framework of *reparative discipline* working to counter the Western, consequence-driven, legal determinants of justice (Heitzeg, 2009; Tsui, 2014). Framed as an alternative to carceral, punitive discipline practices, central goals in RJ are to reduce offender recidivism, alleviate harm to victims and their families, and repair community ties after offenses have been caused. To do so, RJ Facilitators are brought in by an organization to mediate the conflict and foster resolution (Bolitho & Bruce, 2017). RJ Facilitators, often considered *third party mediators,* specialize in conflict resolution in these spaces. The role of the facilitators, too, have many names in the extant literature: practitioners, support staff, trainers, associates, specialists, and/or coordinators (Bolitho & Bruce, 2017; Helenek & Downs, 2017; Romano & Arms Almengor, 2021). Despite the role (or label) a facilitator assumes, they are holistically described as professionals dedicated to a restorative "way of life" (Boyes-Watson & Pranis, 2015; Winn, 2020). Or, per Zehr (2002), a desire to "collectively identify and address harms, needs and obligations, in order to heal and put things as right as possible" (p. 37). This restorative framework aims to intentionally shift from the shadows of punishing measures to one "focused on responsibility, accountability, nurturance, and restoration" (Schumacher, 2014, p. 1). The work of RP implementation demands, on the part of the whole school community, a paradigm shift from punitive-based disciplines to valuing relational-based approaches in education (Lang et al., 2016).

A facilitator taking a RP approach to discipline applies tools and practices in "tiers" of response to harm. Tiers, per Passarella (2017), represent the spectrum of support provided to communities and use various tools of practice to center dialogue between people or groups to promote healing and repair of broken relationships. Broadly, Tier 1 is considered community-wide relationship building, whereas Tier 2 involves repairing and healing in response to specific harm(s). Tier 3 works to support responsible community reintegration. Common RJ practices include sharing story, truth-telling circles, and accountability through conferencing (Amstutz & Mullet, 2005; Davis, 2019). It must be noted that RJ programming outside of schools typically attends *individual cases* through victim-outreach or victim-offender conferencing (Helenek & Downs, 2017). Yet, as we will explore, this is only one part of an in-school RPF's community-centered labor.

In schools, the role of the RPF has been less clearly defined than it has in the judicial system, despite a similar ethos and motivation. School-based RPFs, much like their RJ counterparts, also take upon planful meetings between and among community members according to the three tiers of support, but this is *only one component* of the role (Romano & Arms Almengor, 2021; Valandra & Yazzie, 2020). Across the literature, RPFs in schools are taking on additional educational responsibilities, therefore expanding (and pixelating) the role alongside other professional activities (or labors). For example, some districts or schools place the onus of RP professional learning on the school faculty (Bevington, 2015; Garner et al., 2020) as a means to accept a campus-wide change, fracturing the time and capacity for the institutionally assigned, dual roles of teacher-facilitator to fully learn and embrace the practices and enact change. Findings also suggest a "tension between individual professional judgement and the strictness of the school structures" when trying to implement the work (Bevington, 2015, p. 111). Multiple narrative cases reveal that *adding* restorative practices into or onto systems

born from traditional disciplinary models (systemically designed for exclusion and marginalization) significantly predisposes them to regressing back to punitive patterning and ongoing cycles of harm (Armour, 2015; Valandra & Yazzie, 2020) and hinders authentic relationship building (Joseph, Hnilica, & Hansen, 2021). This is because systems are composed of *people* who subscribe to these systemic patterns: habitually, historically, even politically.

Studies show how schools or districts adopt particular programming, such as Safer Saner Schools (Joseph, Hnilica, & Hansen, 2021) or Mayworm et al.'s PD model (2016) (Garnett et al., 2020), in hopes to "standardize needs-based assessments" (unironically) also struggle to apply them to contextual and local needs—a key component of responsive justice (Romano & Arms Almengor, 2021). For instance, Garnett et al. (2020) identified pushback from teachers who were trained to incorporate RP in addition to all their other duties, which reduced the sustainability and commitment of the programming. In these cases, many teachers reported "initiative overload" (p. 30), feeling unprepared for or rushed into Tier 2 responses, and lack of coaching or support in their implementation.

Clearly, adult support is key. Cavanagh, Vigil, and Garcia (2014) present a case at a high school where Latino/Hispanic parents partnered with university researchers on a program called Culture of Care, a "reform project" to support teachers in centering relationships and cultivate restorative practices in classrooms. Barriers to *authentic* caring (as theorized by Cavanagh, 2011; Noddings, 2003; Valenzuela, 1999) included teachers' deficit mindsets (Valencia, 2010), low expectations of students, and lack of racial reflexivity. Similarly, Romano and Arms Almengor's (2021) case on Black women who serve in RP roles on white-led urban schools, reveals the significant "importance of facilitating racial reflexivity and the need to build a more race conscious community in schools" (p. 10). Joseph, Hnilica, and Hansen (2021) also name "racial inequity in school discipline" as "the most significant and complex barrier" to successful RP implementation. This begs the question: who *really* needs the restorative support if these practices are to be thoughtfully embedded? And how might this look?

When a school or district can afford to provide RPFs to campuses in ways to support the faculty and students on a day-to-day basis, research shows promising outcomes related to small, but important, philosophical, and programmatic shifts (Armour, 2015). However, and as mentioned above, schools are socially contested sites in the U.S. that privilege normative White measures around bodies, beliefs, and actions. This means that RP in schools, if they are to be fully realized, must address the macro-discourses that shape the *adults'* underlying theories on learning, success, and knowing. Ignoring this pivotal component of the training, which includes embedding racial reflexivity, cultural proficiency, and social-emotional support, has been shown to thwart implementation, and further, incite relational harm to the RPFs, and particularly RPFs of Color. Our research works to understand how these notions (the hurdles) mix with the *operational* aspects (Tier support, circles, coaching) in a way that can fully protect and mindfully plan for a generative, sustainable RPF role.

RPFs play a central role in supporting school campuses to adopt and implement whole-school restorative practices (Sepeda, 2016; González, 2015). Changing initiatives in any capacity or context is a challenging task because it requires a paradigmatic shift in perspectives and practices; as such, it is often met with denial and resistance (Blood & Thorsborne, 2005). Therefore, we have to work to make visible and re-see the profession for the schooling context in particular if transformational change is to endure over the long-haul. Paul and Borton (2013) speak most clearly to the dexterity an RPF must take in varying contexts. Though they work in

the justice system, their notions on the necessary footing (as a form of interactional labor) required by a skilled RPF provide us with guidance as we explore this question in school settings. They describe four facilitation orientations: facilitation as advocacy, facilitation as counseling, facilitation as healing, and facilitation as community peacemaking. … These are not static orientations. Facilitators can work from different orientations as they manage relational tensions that emerge over the course of interactions and learn more information. These orientations are also products of training, personal value systems, and previous relational and individual experience (pp. 208-209).

Since RPFs are integral to the restorative practice process, this paper aims to explore the following research question: *What are RPFs' collective lived-experiences around implementing whole-school restorative practices across their respective school campuses?*

Theoretical Framework

To frame our understanding of RPFs transformative work in school settings, we use Fine's (2018) theory of *Critical-Restorative Practice*. This framework draws on the traditions of and unites the synergies between critical and restorative perspectives to capture the intricacies and nuances of humanizing, transformative, and social justice advocacy work. According to Fine, the "critical" element draws on Freire's humanism and the transformative model of education where both students and teachers are subjects in the teaching and learning space (p. 119). The "restorative" element draws on the principles of the *Social Discipline Window* (SDW) (McCold & Wachtel, 2003); specifically, the "restorative window". The SDW illustrates four approaches to the regulation of behavior: *punitive, permissive, neglectful, and restorative* (Fine, 2018, p. 107). We center our study inside the fourth window of high control/high support, a collaborative form of restorative discipline enacted with a community. The theorists note, and our study concurs: "Cooperative engagement is a critical element of restorative justice" (McCold & Wachtel, 2003, p. 2). Thus, the "restorative window" centers learners' lived experiences and critical analysis of the relationship between the 'self' and 'context' (Fine, 2018, p. 121).

RPFs work with students, teachers, and administrators to promote and encourage a *Critical-Restorative Practice* framework in their day-to-day teaching and learning. The role our participants take in schools is unique to the partnership, the goals, and the locales in which they practiced. These factors make them a uniquely rich sample to understand and support how restorative practices can endure and, with time, thrive. Thus, our study draws on *Critical-Restorative Practice*, specifically using the framework to examine how RPFs actively navigate educational contexts that exemplifies the critical elements of schooling (e.g., curriculum, history, etc.). And, to it we describe how RPFs embody the "With" window stance in regard to historical and institutionalized systems and barriers.

Methodology

This research was situated within a larger qualitative study (Miles & Huberman, 1994) examining RPFs' lived experiences around supporting schools to adopt and implement Restorative Practice (RP) initiative.

Context and Participants

The RP initiative is part of a five year (2017-2022), grant-funded effort to reduce disproportionate disciplinary rates, conducted at one Central Texas school district serving culturally, linguistically, and socioeconomically diverse communities. The participants included seven RPFs implementing a whole-school restorative practice initiative across ten schools (six elementary and four middle schools). Per the grant criteria, a total of three RPFs were each responsible for two elementary campuses and four RPFs were each responsible for one middle school campus (See Appendix A for 2020-2021 enrollment and demographics).

Data Collection

We employed ethnographic data collection methods (Heath et al., 2008) during summer 2018 through spring 2020. We attended bi-weekly professional learnings in various RP contexts as participant-observers (Creswell, 2007), taking field notes and writing analytic and theoretical memos (Erlandson et al., 1993). Relevant data sources for this analysis included one-on-one interviews, presentations, and local artifacts such as circle lesson plans and restorative practice training materials.

Data Analysis

To begin our analysis, we transcribed all audio-recorded interviews and presentations. Each RPF's interview generated between 15-20 pages of transcription data. As a research team, we used inductive analysis to guide our first round of individual coding (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Afterwards, we met as a team to discuss our codes and margin notes and to review our similarities and variances (Smagorinsky, 2008).

Using critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2013; Gee, 2014; Rogers, 2004) we noted commonalities in the roles and actions the RPFs endured, specific to power in schooling discourses. Discourses of schooling included: whiteness as dominant, restorative work as counter to neoliberal measures of effectiveness and standardization, RP processes as non-linear, time as micromanaged for efficiency, implicit and explicit deficit mindsets (such as children needing to be "fixed"), and the hierarchy of "expertise" amid the "grueling" nature of learning to teach. This system provided a schema for us to engage in a second round of coding using "Labor" as a point of reference.

Findings

This research study focuses on RPFs' lived experiences supporting schools in the adoption and implementation of restorative practices. We document how the *Core Self* (Boyes-Watson & Pranis, 2015) plays the important role of anchoring and sustaining RPFs' capacity to navigate and negotiate challenges and resistance within these spaces.

Our analysis also reveals four focal areas, or what we're calling *Labors*, of professional RPF praxis in schooling settings: (1) Advocacy Labor, (2) Emotional Labor, (3) Intellectual Labor, and (4) Physical Labor. Broadly across the cases (n=7), the four Labors work together in varying degrees to ground, or situate, an RPF's strategic responsiveness to particular contexts, or

during particular events. Additionally, we consider the Labors to be *interconnected* and *dynamic* modes of relation, applied effortfully toward the RPF's broader restorative goal(s). These *Labors* help us illustrate how an RPF negotiates responses to a diversity of relational stimuli.

We begin with Fine's (2018) *Critical-Restorative Practice* framework to illustrate how the RPFs hone a finely tuned metacognitive compass on their *Core Self* in order to navigate and negotiate the institutionalized structures of punitive-based discipline policies and practices in schools. A *Core Self* that encompasses their identity, cultural proficiency, and behavioral, linguistic, and social-emotional repertoire. Then we continue with McCold and Wachel's *Social Discipline Window* (2003), as an entry point to situate the Labors into a familiar frame. As highly skilled social professionals, RPFs intentionally Labor to remain in this quadrant of the window, modeling and maintaining a restorative mindset when engaged with the school community.

Below, we illustrate how RPFs bring their *Core Selves* to the professional work of being agents of change, how they advocate for a safe and positive school culture so that our children can be educated in ways that are equitable, humanizing, and restorative. Following, we parse the Labors individually to demonstrate each more deeply and to further delineate the magnitude of the efforts and the dexterity required of RPFs *in situ*. It is important to note here that, although the Labors are separately delineated, they are bounded by the context and enacted intellectually and dynamically.

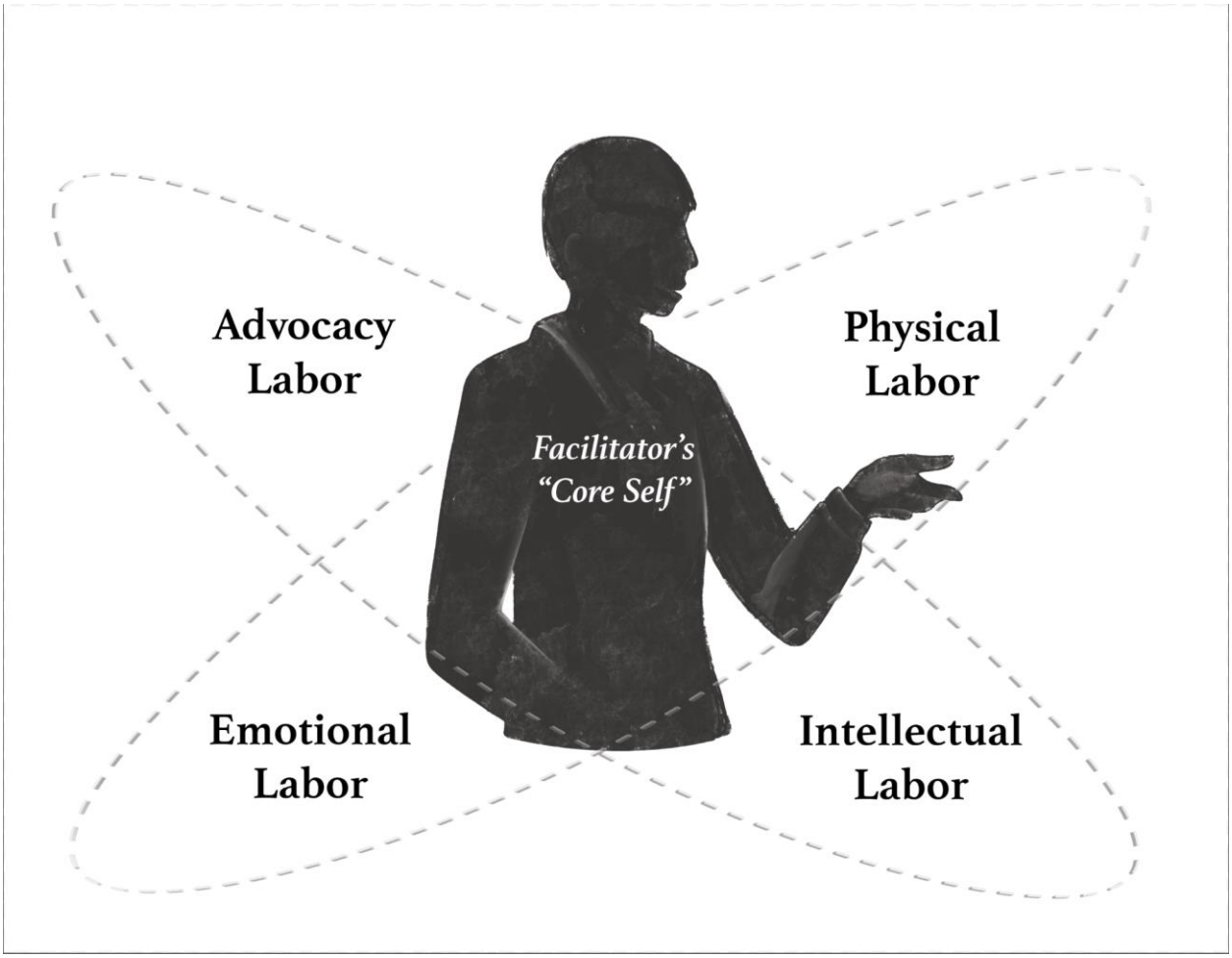

Figure 1: This image represents the RPFs and how the Core Self and the Labors are deeply intertwined and skillfully utilized in their day-to-day work of supporting the adoption and implementation of restorative practice.

The Core Self

Restorative practice is anchored in 7 Core Assumptions which are derived from and built on Indigenous teachings and other wisdom traditions (Boyes-Watson & Pranis, 2015):

- The true self in everyone is good, wise, and powerful
- The world is profoundly interconnected
- All human beings have a deep desire to be in a good relationship
- All humans have gifts, and everyone is needed for what they bring
- Everything we need to make positive change is already here
- Human beings are holistic
- We need practices to build habits of living from the core self

In this analysis, we focus on the seventh core assumption: the *Core Self*. The Core Self serves as a compass RPFs return to for centering, grounding, and guidance. As a compass, it

serves to signal RPFs to engage in critical praxis (reflection-action) (Freire, 1968). Critical praxis, as recursive, engaged reflection through both theoretical and practical lenses, is significant to our positioning of the RPFs in this paper. Their presence is *with* and *becoming* at all times.

In the following event, Jamaal discusses the challenging interactions that may occur within circles and the importance of continually building bridges with individuals resisting restorative practice.

> "Where do you draw the line? That's the thing with restorative, you don't really draw the line or close the door. You draw your line when things are being said that are hurtful. We're disruptors, that's what we're going to do, but we're going to do it in a restorative way. You want to keep those conversations going with people because they're the ones you're trying to reach. So you have to go in already with some armor. Nobody in the circle is going to come out and just blatantly be racist, but they may say some things that sit funny, and you have to know what your triggers are, know what's going to come, expect these moments so that when you're faced with them, you know how to move; otherwise, it will get you excited, you're going to get flustered, and you may feel like bowing out…you just have to keep in mind that those are the exact people that you want to be having the conversation with, but you want to ask them those questions so that they start self-reflecting: 'That's interesting to me. You said you always had a problem growing up with Black people. Tell me more about that. Where do you think that comes from?' You just keep them going…because your first reaction is to say, 'Oh, hell no, I ain't dealing with this….' But then you're becoming just like everybody else. That's the difference between what we do and what I hope many of you choose to do and everybody else. And we want people to come…, so we can break these barriers" (Interview, 10.29.2020).

For educators familiar with a cultural proficiency "journey" or Sealy-Ruiz's (2018) *Archaeology of Self*, we see the RPF's stories (our data) centering a similar grounding notion: That in order to do well by others in regard to sociocultural, sociopolitical re-storying (or restoration), one must be willing to do the work on themselves *first* and *alongside* the people with whom they work. This "peeling back the layers" (Sealey-Ruiz, 2018) includes deep recognition of one's own racial and intersectional identities and how they shape and are shaped *by* various experiences across spaces. In schools in particular, these knowledges (or ways of being, learning, and relating) contain within them historical and contemporary discourses that often power (or, dictate) how people interact. An RPF who endeavors to engage humans through this lens, for restorative purposes, takes upon their backs a responsibility to acknowledge and withstand these harms *in situ*, or in-context, in the moment. By carrying these knowledges into their daily engagement with others on purpose, they do so in full realization they are leaving their vulnerabilities open to harm. Indeed, they prepare their minds and hearts for this by going into schools "already with some armor" (Jamaal, Interview 10.29.2020) such as: continued self-learning, giving themselves and others grace when "messing up," and staying mindful and curious about their own health and well-being when facing challenges.

In the following anecdote, Ximena discusses the power of engaging restorative pedagogy and how it impacts the *Core Self*. She shares:

> "The biggest reward is the personal impact on yourself. On how you change as a human being. It really is work that you come to breathe and live and believe. And that changes you. It changes you because it's one of the seven core assumptions we practice to help us live from our *Core Self*. And the fact that I get to do this every day means I practice this every day. I practice forgiving people that are unkind to me. I get to practice being slow. I get to practice being reflective. So the biggest reward is the impact on how you change as a human being, how you realize that you are good, wise, and powerful. And that goodness that you carry does influence other people's *Core Self* to come out and shine. The other reward is just seeing what this work does to other people" (Interview, 10.28.2021).

In this statement, we hear Ximena exploring how the restorative way of life both designs *and is designed by* the work in which she participates each day. It is transformational; it is rigorous; it embeds the health and peace she imagines for her community; and it is very clearly something she wants for herself. These affective statements are what appear to center her (and the other RPFs) stamina when engaging restorative practices across campuses.

The Labors

We see the Labors: *Advocacy*, *Emotional*, *Intellectual*, and *Physical* exhibited across the RPFs' efforts to promote and support the adoption and implementation of RP within their respective school campuses. Through our analysis, we demonstrate how the Labor tenets are a form of RPFs' participatory craft in the everyday efforts of promoting and supporting RP implementation.

Advocacy Labor

Include recognizing one's positionality and participation with others as inter-relational rather than transactional and honing a keen awareness on timing and processes of change. This ethos of futurity and intentional planning shows up consistently across all data. By having "boots on the ground" and "skin in the game" (Jamaal, Interview 10.29.2020), RPFs' language centers presence and active membership in campus life as a form of building reciprocity and authenticity. Jamaal noted that in order to build a possibility for restorative practice to *begin* as well as thrive, there needs to be first and foremost relationship and trust.

> "Yes, walls can sometimes be built up. It has been my experience that prep work must be done in these circumstances…this means gathering information by having restorative conversations with individuals to understand what they may be experiencing, their beliefs, and where they are. Trust must be developed at this point as I am listening from a completely nonjudgmental position, from the heart…I have found that once a relationship has been established, individuals feel more open to the idea of addressing the situation from a restorative approach. Maybe then a circle comes up. This prep work should not be rushed as the timing is everything" (Interview, 10.29.2020).

Jamaal's reflection highlights how the *Labor of Advocacy* is nuanced with layers of strategic work required to navigate contrary behaviors to RP. According to Jamaal, 'prep work' wields the power to dismantle 'walls' of resistance. This form of 'prep work' requires RPFs to assume multiple roles within a singular space. For instance, RPFs embody the living form of

restorative practice by addressing difficult matters from a relational-based approach, modeling behaviors of empathy and compassion. RPFs also assume the role of researchers to understand individual lived experiences and histories; thus, allowing RPFs to make considerations from multiple perspectives. Furthermore, they position themselves to be responsively vulnerable by evoking the power of a 'nonjudgmental' framework to approach 'walls' that are 'built up.' Nuanced within this framework are thoughtful interpersonal practices of deep listening, relationship building, and trust building through an asset-based approach. By coming into this space with an 'open heart' and an 'open mind,' RPFs, according to Jamaal, can have a stronger likelihood of supporting 'individuals to feel more open' to restorative approaches. In the work of advocacy, capturing the hearts and minds of individuals resistant to RP, is a form of success.

Emotional Labors

These are closely connected to the work of the aforementioned *Core Self*, or laboring for one's own cultural consciousness, reflexivity, and inner strength when faced with tension. However, this emotional *holding-tight* to the *Core Self* means that the RPFs often endure emotional, interpersonal harms that non-restorative spaces and incidents incur. Data includes RPFs using language describing their efforts as a "marathon" and incurring a "slow burn," (Jamaal, Interview 10.29.2020) especially when their work, as it often does, puts them in harm's way. This Labor, we argue, is a form of emotional endurance. For example, Ximena notes:

> "I have found [I need to] speak for myself. I value what other people think about my work. I'm a really hard worker. I show up, education matters to me, equity matters to me, the work that I produce matters a lot to me. And this role has had a lot of people literally slam the door in my face, talk about me negatively behind my back, actively try to sabotage my work ethic, me, what I've been doing. And that hurts, you know" (Interview, 03.31.2021)?

In this statement, we experience the collision between Ximena's RP intentions and the harm she has endured over time. Though the physical rejections seem startling, they are not uncommon for the RPFs. Words such as "sabotage" and "slam" evoke the negative energy that Ximena felt (and still feels) in her nervous system when recalling challenges related to her job. In this case, we see the RPF taking on a hybrid role in reflection of these incidents, using these experiences as further study into their own identity, strength, and care, but also to help shape their (re)commitment to, and understanding of, the hurdles—systemically and relationally— in the field. Loretta notes:

> "I think the rewards personally are just being affirmed in who I am and still strengthening my own identity as a Brown woman…developing that love for yourself, that courage, that strength within yourself that you know is connected to who you are and where you come from and the ancestors who have survived so much for you to be here" (Interview, 10.29.2020).

Loretta's words bring forth the importance of humanity and wholeness in the work of restorative practice. In engaging with the principles and practices of restorative pedagogy, Loretta has in some ways internalized the relational work of RP, and through it experienced transformation and developed the capacity of honoring one's own emotional well-being with 'love,' 'courage,' and 'strength.' With this recognition is a deeper connection to honoring one's

own ancestry and their journeys of strength and arrival. We argue that this form of transformation is a way to heal and sustain oneself emotionally within the space and work of advocating for restorative practice in school spaces.

Intellectual Labor

Includes the strong educational background needed in order to position one's work in varying contexts, alongside professional educators and specialists as a curricular, instructional practitioner and colleague. For example, RPFs often model, train, and support teachers in other disciplinary areas on how to plan and facilitate circles. Here, Jamaal discussed working alongside Special Education teachers to facilitate circles to support neurodivergent learners; and through this experience, learn how to better serve them:

> "I am fortunate enough to have a couple of Special Education teachers that have brought me in to facilitate them with their students. We have covered a variety of topics from community building and connection, to identifying triggers and self-regulation techniques. The teachers have an opportunity to learn so much from their students" (Interview, 11.03.2020).

This comment helps us recognize the RPF's responsibility to professional knowledges around schooling systems and, specific to this case, Special Education discourses. Jamaal is not a Special Education teacher, but he is a seasoned middle school educator, who brings developmental and social knowledges into his dialogue. His asset-based perspective: "teachers have an opportunity to learn so much from their students" shows a theoretical stance that responsive educators accept into practice. As with any system— legal, schooling, business, or otherwise—a practitioner must know the "ropes" or the theories that shape discourse if they are to be of authentic support. In schools, this includes experience with critical pedagogy, child development, and curricular design (among others).

Physical Labors

Per our data, these include RPFs being in-person, being present, and being "on," or continuously modeling a restorative ethos, while working on campus. These labors include the languaging and translating when engaged in restorative facilitation, planning, and engaging professional development workshops with faculty, students, and or families, designing and running Tier 1 and Tier 2 circles, "onboarding" new colleagues, and administrative work such as juggling multiple school calendars. Here, Natalie details a particular labor:

> "I have a coaching model that I have recently developed that I've been using that leads teachers through the different types of circles. I modeled the circle for them. I co-facilitate the circles with them. I participate in circles with them. And then I gradually give less and less support as they become more and more secure in their practices" (Interview, 03.31.2021).

In this statement, we hear how carefully Natalie releases the responsibility of restorative facilitation to the teachers in her campus community. By developing a "coaching model" specific to her context, she is taking on the labor of mentorship with continuity in mind. Her modeling and continued support with the teachers is not a "one and done" or a "sit and get" type of

professional development, but an apprenticeship based on dialogue, reflection, and guidance in actual classrooms. Although circles are only one component of taking on a restorative practice, it can be a generative entry point for the RPFs to get to know a teacher and what is puzzling them in their practice while also engaging with the students with whom they work. "Being on" in this case, is making visible the languaging (translating, translanguaging, body-language, etc.), timing, and trajectory of an impactful restorative circle.

Discussion and Implications

Current RP programming is operational, but significantly devoid of subjectivity. Studies show how schools or districts adopt particular RP programming, such as Safer Saner Schools (Joseph, Hnilica, & Hansen, 2021) or Mayworm et al.'s PD model (2016) (Garnett et al., 2020), in hopes to "standardize needs-based assessments" but struggle to apply them to contextual and local needs—a key component of responsive justice (Romano & Arms Almengor, 2021). Multiple narrative RP case studies also reveal that *adding* restorative practices into systems born from traditional disciplinary models (systemically designed for exclusion and marginalization) significantly predisposes them to regressing back to punitive patterning and ongoing cycles of harm, hindering RP goals of authentic relationship building (Armour, 2015; Parker, 2020; Joseph, Hnilica, & Hansen, 2021; Valandra & Yazzie, 2020). Additional barriers to *authentic caring* (as theorized by Cavanagh, 2011; Noddings, 2003; Valenzuela, 1999) include teachers' deficit mindsets (Valencia, 2010), low expectations, and lack of racial reflexivity (Romano & Arms Almengor, 2021).

Our study shows how RPFs center communities' lived experiences, enduring and invigorating the social-emotional humanity of this work. The data illuminates their hearts and souls while constantly faced with rejections, denial, and exclusionary mindsets. Key stakeholders need studies that reframe the RPF role in order to better welcome them, support their goals, and shape campus ethos toward collective healing and repair. The systems and structures of schooling, however, are not yet fully capable of welcoming and working alongside RPF Professionals, but we believe they can. Acknowledging the *Emotional, Physical, Intellectual, and Advocacy* Labors involved in the role is a positive step forward.

We close with words from one RPF, Ximena, who reminds us of the tenacity needed to Labor for restorative practices in schools:

> "Even if you have leadership or some teachers that are willing to change the way they approach discipline, if they are not being truthful and being self-reflective, they're just continuing to cause harm and harm and harm…. We have been conditioned to think we need to separate the work world and our personal world. And that's absolutely not true if you're an active restorative practice practitioner. Because *it's a way of being*, it's *a way of living*. And if you're choosing to separate all that, then you're not being holistically present in that mindset…. It starts with *you* as a teacher. It demands you really be self-reflective and identify: *What are my values? What are things that are going to really trigger me?* so you can keep moving forward with the work, even though it feels like everything is against you" (Interview, 03.31.2021).

Limitations and Conclusion

We recognize our analysis is based on one longitudinal study in one school district in one state. Despite this, the case we present mirrors similar findings around the imperative need for leadership support when incorporating restorative practices on public school campuses. Indeed, school-wide (ideally: system-wide) human capacity to engage these practices relies on leadership changing the very policies and evaluative measures that the traditional systems champion. This, we must argue, is *Advocacy Labor* as well. Leaders who are serious about incorporating restorative practices must turn a critical eye upon how their own relational, behavioral practices shaped the wider campus culture *before and while* they seek RP support. They, too, must study deeply how race and campus culture contribute to every component of the data with which they systematically require of their teachers; how they analyze this data, and how they advocate for policy redesign. They must partner with RPFs in ways that engender collaboration, open-communication, humility, and a sense of inquiry.

Similarly, the Labors we present above do not mirror the typical professional duties asked of educators, causing some to argue that the restorative "way of life" is not compatible with our US schooling systems; or, that these practices, designed for the epistemological, ontological shifting of human-relation, is *not the goal of learning* itself. Indeed, they may assert that these are *political* problems not educational problems, and resist change or punish advocates through curricular or instructional means. We see this already in the news via book bans, curriculum revisions, and teacher shortages. Decisions, therefore, regulating content and delivery of classroom lessons influence the ability for RPFs to do the very work they are hired to do. These social, practical, institutional barriers quite verily compose the system that our RPFs *Labor* is against. In fact, due to these barriers, it becomes easy for folks to "give up" on these practices and blame the *system* for its inherent resistance.

Schooling systems, however, are composed of *people* who subscribe to the patterns and practices. Until the people who hold participatory sway (school leaders and policy makers) recognize their roles as implicated in the reproduction of harm, the capacity for the RPFs to do the work is severely limited. Putting RPFs into spaces that are not prepared and ready for the change, or into hierarchies that place the impetus of change on the backs of the "hired" few, will exhaust and extinguish the role before it can gain traction. And in the end, it is the children in these spaces who will ultimately be placed in the bullseye of harm—who will thus suffer the institutional decisions that place their humanity, human-rights, and educational-rights as secondary to politically-warring discourses that do not place their best interest at heart. With urgency, we urge our stakeholders to, when making important, life-altering decisions concerning the wellbeing and fate of our children, to mindfully consider Leo, the Turtle's poignant questions: *When is most important? Who is most important? and What is the right thing to do?* To this, we urge our stakeholders to respond in the way of Nikolai, which is with urgency and an unwavering commitment to provide a responsive and humanizing educational experience for our children to thrive. For those who endeavor to do "right" in their worlds, like the RPFs, the *Labor* of knowing what is "best" to do is embedded in the *doing.*

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Appendix A: 2020-2021 Enrollment and Demographics Elementary Schools (K-5th)

RP Facilitators	Schools	Demographics 2020-2021
Nina	Brook	Total Students: 598 Economically Disadvantaged: 49.3% English Language Learners: 28.9% Special Education: 7.7%
	Carter	Total Students: 472 Economically Disadvantaged: 91.9% English Language Learners: 77.1% Special Education: 11.7%
Natalie	Boyd	Total Students: 444 Economically Disadvantaged: 95.9% English Language Learners: 78.2% Special Education: 14.6%
	Palmer	Total Students: 444 Economically Disadvantaged: 92.3% English Language Learners: 81.5% Special Education: 7.4%
Josephine	Blane	Total Students: 1,054 Economically Disadvantaged: 63.9% English Language Learners: 30.6% Special Education: 16.1%
	Beverly	Total Students: 441 Economically Disadvantaged: 17.7% English Language Learners: 17.5% Special Education: 4.5%

Appendix B: 2020-2021 Enrollment and Demographics Middle Schools (6th-8th)

RP Facilitators	Schools	Demographics 2020-2021
Dorothy	Monterey	Total Students: 573 Economically Disadvantaged: 96.7% English Language Learners: 54.3% Special Education: 23.9%
Ximena	Brody	Total Students: 932 Economically Disadvantaged: 96.1% English Language Learners: 69.4% Special Education: 20.7%
Jamaal	Dalton	Total Students: 649 Economically Disadvantaged: 97.5% English Language Learners: 63.8% Special Education: 15.7%
Loretta	Gabriel	Total Students: 335 Economically Disadvantaged: 91.9% English Language Learners: 49.9% Special Education: 25.7%

IN PURSUIT OF SOCIAL JUSTICE: DESIGNING SENTENCES FOR DRIVING WHILE INTOXICATED (DWI) AND DRIVING WHILE UNDER THE INFLUENCE (DUI) OFFENDERS

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to discuss the advances in self-reporting of Driving While Intoxicated (DWI) and Driving Under the Influence (DUI) since research that studied exploring the impact of punishment on driving while intoxicated (DWI) and driving under the influence (DUI) defendants (Scott, 2015). In this article, the researcher will discuss research prior to 2015, research from 2015, and research after 2015 related to DWI/DUI self-reporting of DWI/DUI behaviors and punishment as well as self-reporting related to alcohol cravings and self- reporting of access to drinking settings. Social justice concerns, implications and future research will be discussed.

In Pursuit of Social Justice: Designing Sentences for Driving While Intoxicated (DWI) and Driving While Under the Influence (DUI) Offenders

Although there are many strategies to finding out what approaches to designing punishment that help to reduce recidivism among DWI/DUI defendants, one approach that has not been fully used is one that incorporates the notion of self-reporting. Self-reporting is defined as data obtained by asking respondents to report something about themselves and completed by respondents themselves (Chan, 2009). Meanwhile, lawmakers, judges, and other criminal justice stakeholders are invested in designing punishments that reduce recidivism in order tap into the potential benefits of self-reporting. Self-reporting should be explored for its potential in finding what can work regarding the design of punishments that could prevent recidivism, not to add the possibility of reducing injuries and deaths in DWI/DUI cases.

There are indications from research conducted by this writer that the use of self-reporting and the components of self-reporting including cravings and drinking settings may be important factors in accomplishing these goals (Scott, 2015). The perspectives gained from the additional knowledge should be explored for the real benefits in developing and designing punishment that recidivism in DWI mad DUI cases by better defining punishment impacting DWI/DUI recidivism and helping improve accurate self-reporting contributing to punishment designs which will ultimately reduce recidivism.

The three elements of self-reporting- overall self-reporting, self-reported cravings, and self-reporting drinking settings- that seem to have implications for advances in research critical to designing punishments that impact recidivism will be explored in this article. These three aspects of self-reporting will be examined as well as a myriad of issues related to self-reporting in general, self-reporting in relation to cravings, and self-reporting of drinking settings.

Study Approach

This study uses a qualitative approach including a review and analysis of key concepts that appear throughout the literature. First, this article will review the key findings from research on self-reporting prior to 2015 and their key implications. Next, we will revisit the researcher's 2015 study related to self-reporting and its implications for the designing of punishment that may possibly reduce recidivism in DWI/DUI cases. Next, we will examine more recent research (after 2015) literature in this area related to self-reporting that occurred in 2015. In this section, we highlight in depth more recent research addressing self-reporting related to cravings and drinking settings. Next, we will summarize the findings and the implications for the designing of punishment that will address recidivism in DWI/DUI cases. Finally, this study is conducted with an eye toward social justice. This study is unique because it suggests that the approach to punishment for DWI/DUI offenders if not properly designed, could contribute or aid in ongoing recidivism.

Self-Reporting DWI/DUI Before 2015

Prior to this writer's 2015 Study, several studies discussed findings on self-reporting including references to self-reporting as well as cravings and drinking settings which are aspects of self-reporting. One article by Schell, Chan, and Morral (2006) asserted that the process of self-reporting from the offenders' perspective needs to be free of bias. They suggest that offenders

must feel comfortable enough to share their true feelings about their experience. However, they found that there is a gap that exists in the literature regarding offenders providing the truth about their punishment and their future behavior during self-reporting. The authors asserted that underreporting has been the most common limitation in many DWI and DUI studies. Moreover, they found that DWI/DUI defendants who believed alcohol to be a positive attribute in their lives were not influenced by the sanctions that were imposed as part of punishment.

Another article by Lapham and England-Kennedy (2012) discussed DWI/DUI defendants self-reporting on punishment and treatment. They stated that the opinions and thoughts about punishment and treatment from the defendants' perspective could be the answer to developing meaningful solutions to this problem. Another article highlighting self-reporting by Rider, Kelley-Baker, Voas, Murphy, McKnight, and Levings (2006) mentioned employing the Preventing Alcohol-Related Convictions (PARC) program. PARC presents an approach of controlling driving to drinking settings instead of controlling drinking at drinking settings. Though they agreed that their study was limited in addressing prevention in some ways due to the use of self-reporting, they still concluded that the thoughts expressed by the DWI/DUI defendants would be helpful in aiding in preventing recidivating. Another article related to DWI/DUI punishment and self-reporting by Yu, Evans, and Clark (2006) asserted that generalized sanctions for DWI/DUI offenses may not affect all offenders in the same manner. Consequently, they supported self-reporting in predicting the effects of deterrence as opposed to just relying on sanction information.

The last three articles on self-reporting prior to 2015 further emphasized the frame of mind or beliefs of defendants regarding punishment and further action. In the first article by Freeman et al. (2006) it was suggested that DWI/DUI defendants believed their punishment to be harsh but not convincing enough for them to avoid repeat offense. They also discovered that based upon the self-reporting about drinking habits of the DWI/DUI defendants, it was possible to predict and determine future drinking and driving behaviors. These results indicated that DWI/DUI defendants are not deterred by the punishments that are given for their offenses and other actions might need to be taken such as treatment. Another article discussing DWI/DUI punishment by Freeman, Liossis, and David (2006) found that the defendants believed that their punishment was adequate and thought that they were given due process in court, but they did not feel as though the law was fair nor that the government in attempting to control their behaviors. Articles prior to 2015 focused on the harshness of punishment as a deterrence of DWI/DUI behaviors but was not effective. Also, an article prior to 2015 found that self-reporting by defendants allowed researchers to identify possible repeat offenders.

Self-reporting DWI/DUI 2015 Study

We will now revisit this writer's 2015 Study. In 2015, this writer conducted a qualitative case study that provided data to address the gap existing in self-reporting by allowing first time DWI and DUI offenders to describe their ordeal after they have completed the probationary period so that researchers could examine their thoughts via self-reporting to develop purposeful punishment strategies. This study was the only major study to this point which explored this avenue. At the time of this research, no other research studies discussed the meaning of punishment for DWI/DUI offenders to adequately design punishment that would reduce recidivism. The findings from this research study showed that punishment can be effective in

preventing DWI and DUI offenses in the future based upon self-reporting by the participants in this study. The findings from this study also addressed the need to help DWI/DUI defendants understand their drinking craving, the effects 24-hour drinking facilities had on DWI/DUI defendants, and self- reportage by defendants about their punishment and drinking patterns.

The research before this study on self-reporting by DWI/DUI defendants focused on the problems associated with self-reporting such as underreporting, defendants being truthful, and possible bias responses associated with defendants' fear of possible sanctions due to their responses. Scott (2015) made every effort to assure the participants that their identities would remain confidential which would allow the defendants to respond truthfully. This writer concluded that the honesty by the defendants is crucial to finding the punishment that is beneficial to reducing recidivism. This conclusion was based on two major reasons. Thus, the findings and implications of self-reporting, self-reported cravings, and self-reported drinking settings (24-hour drinking facilities) that were mentioned in studies prior to 2015 and the reference to these elements emerging from this writer's 2015 study leads to the need to assess the scholarly contribution made since 2015 to better understanding the impact of these three elements in developing fair punishments to reduce recidivism in DWI/DUI cases.

Self-reporting DWI/DUI After 2015

In this section of the article, concepts of self-reporting in the more recent studies will be examined. The writer's 2015 study clearly suggests that self-reporting by DWI/DUI defendants is understudied and should be studied more because the understanding the meaning of punishment through self-reporting is essential in reducing recidivism of DWU/DUI behaviors. Now we examine these more recent studies.

One important study conducted by Stringer (2020) examined Stafford and Warr's redefined deterrence model by evaluating the connection of punishment to the following: avoidance, severity, and apparent certainty, driving under the influence (DUI) self-reporting. The Staffor and Warr Model is concept of the deterrence theory presented to a group of repeat DWI/DUI offenders to describe their drinking and driving behaviors by self-reporting. Stringer (2020) findings additionally indicated that experiences both vicarious and personal were related significantly to certainty of perceptions and punishment severity and DUI self-reporting. Except for severity of punishment perceptions, the results support the theory that self-reporting by repeat offenders could be beneficial. Based on Stringer (2020) study, it appears as though severity of punishment perceptions is rarely examined, and future research related to self-reporting of punishment is needed. Stringer (2020) results from this study also propose that alcoholism may cause the deterrence to function inversely. Moreover, Stringer (2020) results from this study greatly enhance the sparse research that explored predictors severity and certainty perceptions of punishment as well the unintended connection between self-reported DUI and these predictors.

After examining Stringer (2020) study, more research is needed on self-reporting because understanding the meaning of punishment can be the key to determining if the severity of punishment can reduce recidivism. Moreover, based on Stringer (2020) study, the notion that alcoholism works against even the most severe form of punishment should be examined because treatment may be the only option in changing DWI/DUI behaviors.

In this section, five recent studies related to the key elements of self-reporting which are alcohol cravings and drinking settings also provided interesting insights. In reviewing the literature on self-reported alcohol cravings, and drinking settings, five major articles were found. These articles were conducted on participants that self-reported alcohol cravings and drinking settings in treatment settings. In the first article related to self-reported cravings by McHugh, Fitzmaurice, Griffin, Anton, & Weiss (2016), linkage of grander alcohol cravings with a heightened probability of alcohol usage in the preceding week was evaluated. The writers' used the COMBINE Study (Combining Medications and Behavioral Interventions for Alcohol Dependence), an enormous alcohol dependency treatment clinical trial which took place at multiple sites. They found that cravings were found to be linked strongly with alcohol consumption were 31% higher and had a greater likelihood of drinking during the following week. The writers also found that alcohol cravings were associated strongly with alcohol consumption for the following week. Such alcohol cravings could be adequately measured by usage of a brief self-reporting scale.

In the second article related to self-reported cravings by Helstrom et al. (2016) examined the daily self-reported journal rating of cravings amongst participants during a twenty-eight impatient treatment program for substance abuse was examined. The results yielded a self-reported decrease in cravings by the naltrexone-treated group as opposed to the compared group. The cravings change in trajectory echoes prior reporting which suggest that reduction in cravings is due in part to the efficacy of naltrexone in the treatment of alcohol dependency. Acceleration of cravings reduction can be achieved by providing alcohol dependent treatment seeking individuals with naltrexone, reliable with a principal goal of several addiction treatment programs. Comparison was measured by the 100 residential alcohol dependent patients consuming naltrexone to the 100 patients that declined the naltrexone treatment. Decreased cravings were shown more rapidly in participants that consume naltrexone.

The third article related to self-reported cravings by Szeto, Schoenmakers, van de Mheen, Snelleman, and Waters (2019) asserted that alcohol usage continues to be a serious worldwide social health crisis. Understanding relapse better could aid the growth of modern interventions. Lower craving was self-reported by individuals that were more mindful with higher MAAS scores, than individuals that were less mindful. Evidence does not suggest that the association of cravings and MAAS is mediated by approach bias, attentional bias, stress, or negative affect. On the other hand, evidence did support an unintentional pathway from MAAS to alcohol consumption in which higher mindfulness was linked to lower cravings scores which were linked to less alcohol consumption. Evidence did not support that MAAS considerably moderated links amongst cravings, affect/cognitive stress/negative biases, or amongst drinking and cravings. In summation, alcohol dependent patients that were more mindful recovering self-reported fewer craving scores than patients that were less mindful, the linkage showed to be more independent of cognitive and stress/negative biases.

The fourth article related to self-reporting, cravings, and drinking settings by Kuerbis et al. (2020), Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD) was evaluated. AUD is a disorder that many individuals have but would aim for moderation because they do not believe their alcohol consumption is the cause of the dangerous penalties that warrant abstaining. They suggest that individuals will continue to place themselves in drinking settings while they are attempting moderation. A comprehension of certain exterior indicators prompting cravings is vital to implementation of the best treatment for AUD. The severity of AUD was evaluated on cravings as a Highly Valued

Drinking Contexts (HVC). HVC was associated with higher reports of all cravings and craving intensities, exceeding the effects of many other context elements such as already drinking and negative effects. The impact of HVC on all cravings was significantly moderated by the severity of AUD. The greater the severity of AUD enhanced the already high probabilities of all cravings. AUD could assist in making DWI/DUI defendants aware of their drinking habits along with HVCs, in different drinking settings in which alcohol consumption could be worse.

The fifth article related to alcohol settings by Marcus and Siedler (2015) on the sale of alcohol during the hours of 10 pm and 5 am was prohibited at outlets that were off premises (e.g., supermarkets, gas stations, kiosks) on March 1, 2010, in the German state of Baden-Württemberg was assessed. The authors of this study relied on data from monthly administrators from a seventy percent random sample of hospital stays in German from 2007 to 2011 to investigate the temporary influence of this prohibition on hospitalizations. They found that the evidence is lacking on the reduction in the percentage of hospital stays related to volatile incidents because of the ban prohibition.

In examining the current literature that exist on self- reported behaviors including alcohol cravings and drinking settings, the two elements are found to be related Kuerbis et al. (2020). The alcohol cravings were seemingly induced by the drinking settings. A theme of correlation seems to emerge in following the recent literature that exist on self-reported alcohol cravings and drinking settings. Limiting the drinking setting could possibly limit alcohol cravings. More research on these two elements related to self-reporting should be examined closely to understand the effects on DWI/DUI behaviors, punishment, and recidivism.

Social Justice Approach

As previously stated by Szeto et al. (2019) alcohol usage continues to be a serious worldwide social health crisis. According to Crichlow and Joseph (2015) asserts that alcoholism is also a social justice concern. The criminal justice system is filled with obstacles that impede rehabilitation. Traditionally, the response to aggressive and violent behaviors included incarceration which was found to be ineffective. The increase of disciplinary actions to decrease criminality has not shown the anticipated outcomes. Moreover, there is limited satisfactory studies to support, “what works,” with offending (Sherman, 1998).

Recently, society has asked for severe punishment to decrease drunk driving (Applegate et al., 1995). However, many scholars have argued for alternatives that would view drunk driving as an issue of public health withing social organizations, which could be more successful in decreasing the commonness of damages due to drunk drivers. The lingering question is what the public will support regarding this issue. Societal surveys show that most people are in support of decreasing drunk driving by rehabilitation and legal deterrence, however, society is also in support of various social based initiatives.

Drabble and Herd (2014) conducted a study in which they viewed measures utilized by activists involved in change efforts regarding laws and policies linked to the promotion and sales of alcohol-based interviews from 184 social activist residing in various cities throughout the United States. Several methods were employed aiming to improve localized circumstances and swaying policies as illustrated by social activist region wide. The centralized measure was grassroot mobilization which supported the development of laws being enforced, discussions

with politicians, media sponsorship, collaborations with law enforcement, educational training, negotiations with owners of stores that sell alcoholic beverages, revising norms of communities, and straightforward actions.

Herd (2011) examined the social construct of alcoholism complications by activists devoted to policies regarding alcohol policies movements in urban areas during the 1990s. Approximately two hundred interviews were conducted with informants who were requested to provide their opinion on the mobilization of communities on issues related to alcohol policies. Contrasting with other social movements which place emphasis on addiction experiences and alcohol problems of individuals, in this study, the informants concentrated on the significance of alcohol marketing and sales from alcohol merchants causing several social disorders which include nuisances, drug usages, public intoxication, violence, and crime consuming communities. The common themes that emerged from this study, illustrated the social conditions during the 1980s and 1990s that urban communities faced, included increased juvenile delinquency, persuasive alcohol sales campaigns, crack cocaine epidemic, chronic poverty in rub-down neighborhoods.

Herd and Berman (2015) conducted a study in which participants in several cities in the United States were questioned about the rational for their neighborhoods mobilizing against problems related to alcoholism. Data analysis was in consideration of the mobilization theory regarding the literature related to the social movement. Opposing the assertions that the main catalyst for modification is due to resources, participants placed emphasis on the role of grievance and connecting issues that causes residents to have more awareness of or experience frustration because of problems, therefore, prepared for change. Seemingly, resources provided by deficient conditions clarified movements of participation, signified that the effectiveness of resources must be guided to address and linked to the grievances of social situations in urban societies.

Herd (2010) conducted a study with the goal of describing the rationale for activists engaging in campaigns to revamp policies related to alcohol related problems in urban communities and if the frameworks illustrated primary models utilized in the arena of alcoholism being modeled as a disease, viewed from an alcohol related problem standpoint, or an approach to alcoholism from a public health aspect. The results of this study yielded that the activist's models have common aspects with approaches that were dominant and focused more on individuals and less on the regulation of alcohol sales and marketing. On the other hand, activists' model varied in meaningful way by placing the focus on the alcohol related problems at the community level; on alcohol usages related problems with social norms; and the link between the use of illicit drugs and alcohol usage.

Summary and Conclusion

We examined the studies prior to 2015, the 2015 updated studies, and self-reporting studies since 2015. According to Scott (2015) research that studies alcohol cravings and drinking setting related to DWI/DUI offenses from the defendant's perspective via self-reporting is limited and more research on self-reporting of DWI/DUI is needed.

Based on the study by Scott (2015) the meaning of punishment for DWI/DUI offenders is missing literature, especially regarding DWI and DUI behaviors and punishment. It is not rare to

hear about punishment for DWI and DUI crimes but there is not much research discussing life during and after these crimes from the defendant's perspective. The offenders that experience punishment should be heard through self-reporting. Self-reporting experiences after punishment could possibly aid in designing punishments that could help to reduce recidivism.

Based on the study by Stringer (2020) some research which currently exist on self-reporting, does not discuss the meaning of punishment instead, it lends itself to treating alcoholism without considering the consequences of such behaviors.

Researchers in the past felt strongly that DWI and DUI defendants need to be evaluated for drinking problems (Stainback & Rogers 1983; Freeman & Watson, 2006; Freeman & Watson, 2009; Jones & Holmgren, 2009; Yu, Evans, & Clark, 2006) or given stiffer punishments for these crimes (Scott, 2015; Freeman, Liossis, & David, 2006). Researchers in the past also believed that first time offenders are given lighter sentences because this is their first time being arrested (Scott, 2015). Although treatment should be studied more, punishment could possibly reduce recidivating if well understood to be effective through self-reporting. Moreover, if alcoholism is found to be the source of the problem, court ordered treatment is vital to preventing subsequent offenses of DWI/DUI.

Recommendations

Although there is a need for more research devoted to self-reporting of DWI/DUI by defendants experiencing the punishment, there is a plethora of research devoted to self-reporting of alcohol cravings and drinking settings by participants in treatment. This type of research may prove to be essential to the reducing alcohol cravings which could ultimately reduce recidivating. The current research on self-reported alcohol cravings and drinking settings were mainly conducted on individuals that were in treatment environments for alcoholism. However, DWI/DUI self-reported behaviors should be incorporated into treatment to possibly promote sobriety and recidivism. Clinicians should allow current patients in treatment to discuss their experiences with DWI/DUI punishment in group settings or with individuals that were punished for their behaviors. The voluntary speakers in a group setting can help patients in treatment understand the consequences of punishment for their drinking behaviors.

Helping individuals in treatment understand their drinking craving and settings may lead to being arrested for DWI/DUIs is a future implication. Research did focus on alcohol cravings, however, the persons involved in current research related to alcohol cravings were in treatment for alcoholism. It is still important to teach DWI/DUI defendant to recognize alcohol cravings, urges to drink, and techniques to reduce heavy drinking episodes during and after punishment to prevent recidivism. More research should be devoted to self-reporting of alcohol cravings and drinking settings by DWI/DUI defendants to possibly prevent subsequent offenses.

Understanding the effect 24-hour drinking facilities have on DWI/DUI defendants (Scott, 2015). There is very little research on the effects of 24-hour drinking facilities and DWI/DUI defendants. While it is important to understand cravings and setting that foster heavy drinking the aspect of drinking and driving in relation to DWI/DUI arrest should be investigate in treatment programs because the chances of being charge with a DWI/DUI are high amongst individuals suffering with alcoholism. Though this study does show promise because it led to a reduction in hospitalization due to reducing alcohol availability, more research should be

devoted to understanding the role alcohol availability plays in drinking and driving including the access to 24-hour drinking facilities.

A future implication in need is self- reportage by DWI.DUI defendants about their punishment and drinking patterns. Researchers could possibly learn what aspects of punishment cause a change in DWI/DUI behaviors. Understanding the meaning of punishment could be crucial to addressing drinking and driving behaviors. Current research is still not addressing the meaning of punishment for DWI/DUI defendants through self-reporting. It is vital to understand the meaning of punishment but adding the comprehension of alcohol cravings and drinking settings appears to be germane to reducing recidivism. Future research should address self-reporting for the purpose of developing punishment for DWI/DUI defendants to prevent recidivating. Regardless of the punishments imposed, DWI/DUI arrests are still on the rise. DWI/DUI defendants' self-reportage is still the best way to understand what does and does not work in relation to punishment and reducing recidivism. Moreover, self-reporting of punishment for DWI/DUI defendants with second and third offenses of DWI/DUIs should be examined to understand the rationale for the repeated recidivism despite the punishment imposed. Until meaningful punishment is developed through self-reporting, drinking, and driving behaviors will likely persist.

Future research should also address alcoholism. This research suggests that treatment in lieu of punishment for DWI/DUIs to break the continuous cycle of drinking and driving recidivism by individuals suffering from alcoholism. Finally, future research should address the social justice component of DWI/DUI punishments. This research indicates that DWI/DUI punishment must be constructed in a way to reduce the continuous cycle of recidivating.

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THE INFLUENCE OF RACIAL STATUS ON STUDENT VIEWS ABOUT CAMPUS POLICE

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Abstract

This study examines the influence that student characteristics have on their perceptions of the campus police. Previous research shows that a person's integration in the community, tolerance of differences, positive interactions with others, and perceptions of safety all shape how he/she perceives police performance. Moreover, studies have either been mixed or have not examined how respondents' race interacts with these features to impact police perceptions of college students. Using a sample of 125 students enrolled in Sociology courses at a small university and a survey instrument designed by the authors, we find both similarities and differences among black and white students. For instance, the belief that racial tolerance will reduce violence and that campus administration addresses violence adequately is related to a higher comfort level of calling the police among both groups. However, involvement in extracurricular activities and the ability to discuss differences with others are significantly related to perceptions of positive interaction with police among black students, but not among white students. Among black students, having to call campus police about a violent incident is related to a positive view of police presence on campus. Yet white students have a more positive view of police on campus if they perceive that campus administrators address violence adequately. Possible avenues of future research and the implications of our findings are also discussed.

The Influence of Racial Status on Student Views about Campus Police

The Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement was initiated after the shooting death of 17-year-old Trayvon Martin in 2012. Martin was unarmed when he was shot by a neighborhood watch coordinator. Since Martin's case and the BLM, many instances of unarmed Blacks killed by the police have surfaced on social media platforms and mainstream media outlets over the past decade (Campbell & Valera, 2020). According to Mapping Police Violence (2022), Blacks are 2.9 times more likely to be killed by the police than Whites. Moreover, the Police Violence Report reveals that 25% of individuals killed by police officers were Black. As a result of the media attention given to police violence against Blacks and the visibility of the BLM movement over the past decade, the tension is undeniable between Blacks and police officers.

However, negative relations between African Americans and the police are not a recent issue. Data from the 1960's reveal that Blacks have a long history of having negative views of the police. For instance, in a 1969 Gallup Poll, 46% of Blacks reported that the police have been more harmful than helpful to Black rights (Roper Center, 2017). Recent research also supports these findings – Blacks and other minorities have a significantly less favorable view of the police than Whites (Miller & Davis, 2008; Najdowski et al., 2015). These views also extend to Black youths and college students as they have a less favorable view of the police compared to White youths (Lewis et al., 2017; Mbuba, 2010). Such views and attitudes have significant implications as research suggests that a positive view of police and community support are vital for law enforcement to conduct their work in a competent and effective manner (Murty et al., 1990). Moreover, negative views, poor treatment, and subsequent distrust of police may result in either hesitation to call the police or not contacting the police at all, despite needing their assistance (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003; Tyler & Fagan, 2008). Thus, it is imperative that research examines the views of police among different groups of people, including young adults attending college.

The current study builds on this previous literature by investigating racial differences in how police are perceived based on a sample of college students from a small, southern, four-year public university. Previous research has examined whether type of university (Lewis et al., 2017), student's major (Mbuba, 2010), how social media reports on police violence (Campbell & Valera, 2020) and how police victimization and viewing crime related television programming (Franklin et al., 2019) influenced the perceptions of college students and if students' racial background played a role. This paper aims to expand on this previous research by incorporating several social factors that may influence how college students view police, such as the level of student integration in school and community; how students view their interaction with others, comprising of whether they perceive themselves to be open-minded and respectful; the level of tolerance and acceptance of diversity students have; whether students perceive their campus to be safe from violence; and, finally, the impacts of various demographic variables are explored, including gender, age, socioeconomic status, familial household structure (e.g., raised in a single parent home), romantic relationship status, GPA, and political view. There is a considerable gap in the literature as the above-mentioned factors have not been previously explored.

Literature Review

Perceptions of Police

An abundance of literature reveals that Blacks and other racial minorities view the police more negatively than their White counterparts (Dowler & Sparks, 2008; Gabbidon & Higgins, 2009; Lai & Zhao, 2010; Miller & Davis, 2008; Najdowski et al., 2015), including being suspicious and distrustful of the police in response to the perception that the police profile potential criminal suspects based on race and/or ethnicity (U.S. Department of Justice, 2016). This general viewpoint spans across minority juveniles, young adults, and older adults. For instance, one study revealed that urban youth reported a feeling of mistrust and betrayal of police along with an unfavorable view of police surveillance. Moreover, these sentiments were most profound for minority boys (Fine et al., 2003). Studies that examined the perceptions and attitudes of adults also highlight the importance of race. Utilizing the Attitudes toward the Police Scale (ATP), Webb and Marshall (1995) find that, in comparison to Whites, Blacks are less likely to agree with scale items that portray the police as having a positive demeanor and positive characteristics. More recent research reveals that Blacks are more concerned that police will stereotype them, and fear being treated unfairly, while Whites are not as concerned with stereotyping and profiling (Najdowski et al., 2015).

As for college students, Lewis et al. (2017) find that Blacks have a significantly more negative view of police than Whites. Similarly, Mbuba (2010) found a significant difference between minority and White student views of the police, with Black students holding more negative views. Moreover, research that examined racial differences in attitudes toward the police among college students revealed several patterns: (1) most Black students feel that police use too much force while performing their duties; (2) minorities are more likely to experience police brutality; (3) police are more likely to use deadly force on a Black male; and (4) police need more competency (Lewis et al., 2017). In addition, Black college students are more likely to feel victimized by the police compared to White college students (Girgenti-Malone et al., 2017). In a sample of largely Black and Latinx college students, Campbell, and Valera (2020) reveal that viewing videos of police brutality on social media platforms resulted in feelings of sadness, fear, frustration, and hopelessness. Thus, such reactions to witnessing police violence may affect how college students view the police.

Interactions with the Police

Holding a negative view of law enforcement influences how people interact with the police in situations involving contact (Rosenbaum et al., 2005). It is also worth noting that police can also bring their own perceptions and judgments during interactions with racial minorities. The literature consistently reveals that negative stereotypes of Blacks (e.g., Blacks, particularly men, are criminals) influences how they are viewed and treated by society, including by law enforcement (Krueger, 1996; Rome, 2004; Welch, 2007). Indeed, Blacks do report feelings of concern during interactions with police due to stereotype threat, or the apprehension that police are going to treat Blacks (and other minorities) unfairly due to the negative stereotypes surrounding Blacks. This apprehension results in anxiety or uneasiness and other behaviors that are deemed threatening or suspicious by the police (Najdowski et al., 2015). Hence, perceptions play a large role in how police are viewed, how racial minorities are viewed, and impacts the interactions between racial minorities and police.

The literature highlights the importance of contact with the police and the quality of these interactions, particularly as an explanation for negative views of the police. For example, Tyler

(2006) shows that police treatment of an individual during an interaction, such as being unfair, impolite, and aggressive is found to have a greater influence on whether a person holds negative views of the police than the result of the encounter (e.g., arrest, imprisonment). Additional research reveals the importance of both the number of contacts with the police and the quality of such encounters. According to Cheurprakobit (2000), satisfaction with the police declines significantly when the number of interactions with the police increases; however, individuals who experienced unfair treatment were also less likely to report having positive views of the police (Correia et al., 1996; Schafer et al., 2003; Skogan, 2005). Proactive policing has increased the number of interactions between law enforcement and those living in the communities they serve. However, it is argued that such policies tend to focus on racial minorities and their neighborhoods, which increases the likelihood of police interaction among racial minorities, particularly youth (Epp et al., 2014; Rengifo & Pater, 2017). Research further suggests that in addition to racial minorities having more contact with the police, they are more likely to endure more negative encounters, such as being treated like a criminal and experiencing verbal and physical harassment. Whites do not experience as many negative encounters with the police; thus, Whites tend to have more favorable views and trust in the police (Jones, 2014; Rengifo & Pater, 2017). Weitzer and Tuch (2005) show that 37% of Blacks report being mistreated by police due to their race compared to only one percent of Whites. Therefore, contact with the police and subsequent treatment solidifies many of the negative perceptions found for Blacks.

Adolescents and young adults, specifically those between the ages of 15-24, are most prone to committing a crime, thus creating the opportunity for increased negative encounters with the police. However, research suggests that being a young adult or age is not the key factor that shapes police perceptions or interactions. Williams and Nofziger (2003) argue that it is not being young that influences police views, but rather it is being in college that influences whether an individual holds a less favorable view of the police. College students, regardless of police contact, are more likely to view police performance negatively, are not as confident in the police, and are less trusting of them compared to other young adults and older adults. Williams and Nofziger (2003) further argue that such views may stem from increased police contact both within the campus during parties and at the local bars, and that college students are subject to increased surveillance and control by the police. Additionally, Franklin and colleagues (2019) find that among Black students who have either personally experienced or had a family member experience police victimization during an interaction held more negative perceptions of law enforcement compared to Black students who did not personally experience or did not have a family member experience such an interaction. Thus, the type of interaction experienced is a significant predictor of police perceptions and attitudes. While literature investigating juveniles are robust, research that examines college students specifically – although they are in the crime prone age range, are at a higher risk of having negative encounters with the police and are more likely to hold more negative perceptions of law enforcement – merits further exploration to better understand the relationship between police and college students and the role of police interactions on college students' views on the police.

Calling the Police

The perception that the police will unfairly treat an individual may lead to the reluctance to call the police to report violent incidents or victimizations. Sunshine and Tyler (2003) propose the issue of procedural justice, which is a person's view of whether one is treated fairly by the

police and decisions are made in an objective manner. Procedural justice results from negative police interactions and contributes to negative perceptions of the police. Additional research highlights the link between just behaviors among the police and police cooperation and reporting crime (Bradford & Jackson, 2016; Tankebe, 2009; Tyler & Fagan, 2008). Given racial minorities are more likely to report negative police interactions and perceptions, the willingness to contact the police may also be hindered. Research shows poor relationships between residents and police in disadvantaged communities, including high levels of violence, racial discrimination, and police brutality. As a result, residents may adopt a "code of the street" characterized by solving problems via violence as opposed to calling the police (Anderson, 1999; Clayman & Skinns, 2012). According to Kwak and colleagues (2019), perceptions of police ineffectiveness decreased the likelihood of reporting crimes among Blacks, and perceptions of unfair treatment or procedural injustice also decreased the likelihood of contacting the police. Despite the influence of procedural justice on reporting crimes, Saad (2020) revealed that the majority of Blacks in the U.S. want police presence to remain the same in their communities, while only 19% want less of a presence. However, how college students view the police and subsequent comfort level with calling the police to report a crime is not as understood. Police legitimacy, trust, and following police orders are related to attachment and conforming values among a sample of college students (Ferdik et al., 2016), but more research needs to be conducted to determine how college students feel about actually contacting the police.

Police Authority

Distrusting the police can result in the questioning of the police's authority and lacking confidence in the police as a group. Thus, such negative views may further cement the belief that the police are not a legitimate authoritative body. Such perceptions are related to hindering the ability of the police to enact their authority thus lowering their effectiveness (Murty et al., 1990; U.S. Department of Justice, 2016). Additional research shows that these types of perceptions are important factors in assessing the police, including how just police are while doing their jobs (Braga et al., 2014; Sunshine & Tyler, 2003). Thus, how police are perceived – as a legitimate, authoritative body – is vital to protecting the communities they serve, including college students and college campuses.

Research shows a positive relationship between views of police legitimacy and cooperation among samples of adolescents (Hinds, 2009) and adults (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003). Moreover, evaluations of police performance as positive among youth is found to positively influence how legitimate the police are viewed, and such evaluations were strong indicators of how police are perceived among youth (Hinds, 2007). Additionally, Hinds (2009) found younger adolescents were more willing to cooperate with police than older adolescents. This finding may extend to college students who are generally in their late adolescence and early 20's. However, Ferdik and colleagues (2016) examined the role of social bonds, as a measure of norm internalization or conformity, on the perception of police legitimacy among a sample of college students. Specifically, student values, commitment to education, attachment to their school, and involvement in extra-curricular activities predicted increased obedience to police. Assessing how college students view police authority is important to understand to evaluate the level of cooperation students give in assisting and obeying the police.

Social Integration

Previous research has investigated how some college students' characteristics impact perceptions of the police. For example, Lewis et al. (2017) compared Black and White students attending a traditional state university with those attending a Historically Black College or University (HBCU) and found students from a HBCU held more negative views of police compared to those enrolled in the traditional state university. Moreover, Mbuba (2010) examined academic major (criminal justice versus non-criminal justice), but the findings revealed that attitudes toward the police did not vary according to major. Further research conducted with college students has also examined the role of parental attachment and commitment to doing well in school on evaluations of police legitimacy, but significant relationships were not found (Ferdik et al., 2014). However, other integration and attachment characteristics that may impact college students' perceptions of the police have not been investigated, such as employment status, involvement in extracurricular activities, church attendance, and the presence of role models. The current study explores higher levels of integration and attachment to social institutions, including work, school, and church is related to having more positive views and interactions with the police.

Positive effects of student involvement in extracurricular activities are documented in the literature. Research conducted on a large sample of high school students from multiple states reveals a positive relationship between participating in sports, clubs, and performing arts and positive adult-student relationships and school connectedness (Martinez et al., 2016). Hence, positive, and significant interactions with adults in positions of authority at school (e.g., coaches, teachers, and club advisors) may extend to perceptions of the police, another type of adult authority figure). Indeed, some research has investigated the role attachment and school integration on views of the police. For instance, in a racially diverse sample of 13- to 18-year-olds, Wu et al. (2015) find that attachment to fathers, commitment to school, and conventional beliefs directly and positively influenced attitudes toward the police. However, these social bonds indicators did not mediate the effect of race and attitudes. According to Zhang et al. (2014), an overall measure of social attachment that consisted of family, neighborhood, and school attachments, is found to have the most significant and positive influence on how police are viewed among a sample of Chinese adolescents in China. These results suggest that attachment and social bonds are an important factor that influences perceptions of the police, at least among youth. In contrast, Ferdik et al. (2014) find no relationship between two indicators of social integration – parental attachment and school commitment – and perceived police legitimacy in a sample of college students. Nonetheless, the research in this area, particularly investigating young adults and racial differences among this group, is rather slim. Further research on the influence of social integration and attachment to social institutions, including school, church, and work, on perceptions of the police among juveniles and young adults is warranted.

Tolerance and Diversity

The current study specifically investigates several variables that may influence how college students perceive the police. These factors include having similar or non-similar friends, the willingness to date or marry interracially, racial tolerance, the ability to be open-minded and discuss differences along with respecting others. Allport's (1954) intergroup contact hypothesis

helps to frame the importance of exploring how interacting with dissimilar others may increase positive perceptions of police, including one's comfort level contacting the police and police interaction. According to the intergroup contact hypothesis, increased contact with dissimilar others will reduce prejudice if four circumstances were met. The first circumstance is equal group status within a situation where both groups must perceive themselves to be equal. The second circumstance involves both groups having a common goal(s) enabling them to work together to achieve it. The third condition is cooperation where effort to achieve a common goal(s) is characterized by interdependence among the groups. Finally, the groups must respect or support those in a position of authority, such as the police (Allport, 1954). The current research is not assessing the utility of this hypothesis per say, but rather the intergroup contact hypothesis frames the importance of exploring how interacting with dissimilar others may increase positive perceptions of police, including one's comfort level contacting the police and police interaction. Thus, if Black students are comfortable interacting with White students, feel they have equal status to them, and have a common goal, they may adopt more similar attitudes toward the police as their White counterparts.

Furthermore, criminological research shows the impact of social networks on deviant attitudes and behaviors. The central premise of differential association theory is the importance of social networks in influencing the delinquent attitudes and behaviors of peer groups (Sutherland, 1947). According to Haynie (2002), members of a particular group will tend to share the same perceptions when attachments are strong among group members. Thus, if students belong to groups that hold the police in higher regard, view them as authority figures, and treat law enforcement with respect, then perceptions may be more positive.

The ability to be open-minded and discuss differences with others may be conceptualized as personality traits in addition to indicators of diversity tolerance or tolerance of others who are different. Tellegen (1991, p. 622) defined personality traits as "a psychological (therefore) organismic structure underlying a relatively enduring behavioral disposition, i.e., a tendency to respond in certain ways under certain circumstances." Traits are important to consider given their relationship to various outcomes, including job performance, and their impact on shaping people's experiences and responses (Roberts, 2009). While the relationship between personality traits and police officers, particularly when it comes to job performance and success, is well documented in the literature (Laguna et al., 2010; Masood et al., 2017; Papazoglou et al., 2019), examining how personality traits impact one's perceptions of the police is not well known. Thus, the current study begins to explore how being open-minded and accepting of differences influence police perceptions among college students.

Perceptions of Campus Safety

The literature shows that perceptions of safety and views of the police are related. For instance, neighborhood or community characteristics, such as low crime rates, are related to higher perceptions of safety and confidence in the police (Nofziger & Williams, 2005). Research has also examined perceptions of college students on campus safety and police presence. Students believe that the purpose of campus police is to keep them safe; however, they also appear to question to the legitimacy of campus police (compared to other law enforcement) (Jacobsen, 2015), which may result in reduced cooperation and respect for campus police. Other studies reveal more favorable views of the police and their role in keeping the school safe.

Research conducted at Colorado State University suggest that most students surveyed had positive interactions with campus police, believed they were respectful, helpful, and prompt in handling issues, and feel their campus is safe (Ciaravola, 2017). Wilson and Wilson (2011) also find supportive attitudes among students toward campus police for both Whites and Blacks and males and females, but White students were more likely to support law enforcement carrying guns on campus than Black students. However, it is unclear how perceptions of campus safety relate to perceptions of police among Black and White students.

Expectations for Current Research

The aim of the current study is to expand upon the existing literature on racial differences in police perceptions utilizing a sample of college students. The literature summarized above reveals racial differences in how police are viewed, quality of police contact, and whether the police are called. While there is research on various factors that impact college student perceptions of police (e.g., major, university type, media consumption, police contact), there is also a gap in the research as other variables have either not been examined, including measures of tolerance, diversity, campus safety, or specifically explored for racial differences. To address this gap in the literature, the current study explores two research questions: (1) How do perceptions of the police, specifically interactions with the police, willingness to call the police, and respecting authority differ between White and African American students? (2) What factors influence perceptions of the police, specifically interactions with the police, willingness to call the police, and respecting authority among White and African American students?

Data and Methods

The data came from a survey designed and administered by the authors to 282 students enrolled in Sociology courses at a small, southern university. The survey contains items that examined a variety of violent viewpoints and anti-violence strategies, as well as student socio-demographic, social interaction, and economic characteristics. For this paper, we compare racial differences in views about campus police and the factors that contribute to these differing viewpoints.

Three dependent variables are used to examine student views about police. A scale consisting of two items, “My interactions with police have been positive” and “I have interacted with campus police,” is used to measure student viewpoints on police interaction. (Cronbach’s alpha= 0.60) Both items are rated on a 7-point scale ranging from strongly agree (assigned a value of 1) to strongly disagree (assigned a value of 7). The second item in this scale is reverse coded.

Another scale consisting of two items, “I would feel comfortable calling the police to report a violent situation” and “Seeing the police patrolling makes me feel safe,” is used to measure student comfort with police. (Cronbach’s alpha= 0.71) Both items are rated on a 7-point scale ranging from strongly agree (assigned a value of 1) to strongly disagree (assigned a value of 7). Both items in this scale are reverse coded.

Another item, “It is important to do what the police tell you to do even if you disagree with them,” is used to measure student views on respecting police authority. Respondents are

asked to rate this item on a scale of 1 to 5, with "1" meaning "not at all important," "3" meaning "somewhat important," and "5" meaning "extremely important."

The independent variables used measure student sociodemographic characteristics, integration, tolerance and diversity, interaction, and perceptions of campus safety. The main sociodemographic characteristic considered in this study is racial status ("0" = white, "1" = African American); other sociodemographic characteristics used as control variables are gender ("1"= male, "0"=female), age (in years), household income ("less than $25,000" to "more than $200,000, in 8 categorical increments of $25,000), household structure growing up (1=two parent, 2=single mother, 3=single father, 4=grandparents, 5=other family members, and 6=other), current relationship status (1=married, 2-living with my partner, 3=in a committed relationship, 4=dating, 5=separated, 6=divorced, 7= widowed, and 8=single), GPA (0 to 4.00), and political view ("1"= extremely conservative to "7"=extremely liberal).

Integration is measured by 4 items: currently employed ("0"=no, "1"=yes), involvement in extracurricular activities ("0" = no, "1" = yes), number of times attending church in a month, and number of role models one has in his/her life. Items measuring tolerance and diversity include "I am friends with people who are like me," "I would date or marry someone from a different background," "Racial tolerance would reduce violence." All these items are rated on a scale of 1 (strongly agree) to 7 (strongly disagree), with the scores for the latter two items being reversed coded, so that a higher score indicates a respondent has higher tolerance and diversity.

Interaction is measured by three items: "I can easily discuss differences with others," "I am open minded," and "I respect others." These items are rated on a scale of 1 ("always") to 6 ("never"), with the scores being reversed coded, so that a higher score indicates a respondent has higher interaction. Items measuring perceptions of campus safety include "Violence is a problem at FMU," "Bullying occurs on campus," "FMU adequately addresses violence on campus," and "I have called the campus police about violent activity." All these items are rated on a scale of 1 (strongly agree) to 7 (strongly disagree).

In addition to the factor analyses used to create the two scales, descriptive statistics are produced (mean, standard deviation, and minimum and maximum values). T-tests of independent sample means are used to determine whether racial differences in student views about campus police exist and if so, whether those differences are statistically significant. OLS linear regression is used to determine what factors influence differences in views about campus police by race. These results are presented in the following section of the paper.

Results

Table 1.1: Descriptive Statistics and T-tests for Racial Differences in Mean Scores for Dependent Variables

	African American		White American		
Dependent Variables	Mean (std dev)	Min-Max	Mean (std dev)	Min-Max	T-statistic
Interaction with Police	9.58 (3.19)	2-14	9.04 (3.06)	2-14	-1.35
Comfort with Police	10.46 (2.84)	2-14	11.08 (2.48)	2-14	1.80+
Respect Police Authority	4.15 (0.89)	1-5	4.32 (0.86)	1-5	1.46

+ = 2 tailed significance at the $p<.10$ level

Table 1.1 displays the average rating for the dependent variables, Interaction with Police, Comfort with Police, and Respect Police Authority, for African American and White American students separately. For African American students, the mean value for the Interaction with Police variable is 9.58, which indicates they tend to agree that they have positive interactions with campus police. The mean value for the Comfort with Police variable is 10.46, which also indicates African American students tend to agree that they feel comfortable calling the campus police. The mean value for Respect Police Authority is 4.15, indicating that African American students agree it is important to do what the campus police tell them to do.

For White Americans, the mean value for Interaction with Police is 9.04, indicating they tend to agree that they have positive interactions with campus police. The mean value for Comfort with Police is 11.08, which indicates White American students tend to agree that they feel comfortable calling the campus police. The mean value for Respect Police Authority is 4.32, indicating White American students agree it is important to do what the campus police tell them to do.

Comparing these results for African American and White American students, we see the average rating for Interaction with Police tends to be higher for African American students than for White American students, although the t-test comparison of these means is not statistically significant. The average rating for Comfort with Police tends to be higher for White American than for African American students, with the t-test comparison of these means being marginally significant. The average rating for Respect for Police Authority is higher for White Americans than African Americans, yet the t-test comparison of these means is not statistically significant.

Table 1.2: Descriptive Statistics for Independent Variables

	African American		White American	
	Mean (std dev)	Min-Max	Mean (std dev)	Min-Max
% of Sample	0.60 (na)		0.40 (na)	
% Male	0.14 (na)		0.29 (na)	
Age	21.16 (2.11)	17-29	21.57 (4.79)	17-56
Income	2.36 (1.66)	1-9	3.57 (2.12)	1-9
Household Structure	1.86 (1.09)	1-6	1.50 (1.16)	1-6
Relationship Status	5.44 (2.44)	1-8	4.93 (2.51)	1-8
GPA	2.75 (0.53)	1-3	3.17 (0.53)	2-4
Political View	4.36 (1.31)	1-8	3.33 (1.34)	1-7
Integration				
Employed	0.73 (na)	0-1	0.59 (na)	0-1
Involved	0.34 (na)	0-1	0.61 (na)	0-1
Church Attendance	2.92 (3.66)	0-31	2.57 (3.97)	0-31
Role Models	3.92 (2.54)	0-13	4.71 (2.57)	0-13
Tolerance & Diversity				
Similar Friends	2.21 (1.14)	1-7	2.14 (0.94)	1-5
Marry Different	5.99 (1.23)	1-7	5.38 (1.50)	1-7
Racial Tolerance	5.79 (1.27)	1-7	5.58 (1.25)	1-7
Discuss Differences	4.64 (1.04)	2-6	4.64 (0.81)	3-6
Open Minded	5.37 (0.81)	2-6	5.13 (0.73)	3-6
Respect Others	5.69 (0.63)	2-6	5.58 (0.60)	3-6
Perceptions of Campus Security				
Campus Violence Problem	2.72 (1.32)	1-7	3.04 (1.23)	1-6
Bullying Occurs	3.98 (1.75)	1-7	3.91 (1.76)	1-7
School Adequately Address	4.21 (1.56)	1-7	4.41 (1.22)	1-7
Have Called Police	2.14 (1.66)	1-7	2.08 (1.49)	1-7

Table 1.2 displays the descriptive statistics for the independent variables. Turning first to respondent sociodemographic characteristics, sixty percent of the sample respondents self-identify as African American, and 40 percent self-identify as White American. Fourteen percent

of African American respondents and 29 percent of White Americans identify as male. The average age for both groups is 21 or 22 years old.

On average, African American students tend to report household incomes in the $25,000 to $50,000 range. White American students tend to report incomes in the $50,001 to $75,000 income category. Both African American and White American students tend to report that they came from either two parent or single mother households. Students also report some type of single marital status (dating, separated, or divorced status). African American students report an average GPA of 2.75, while White American students report an average GPA of 3.17. African American students tend to identify as "middle of the road" or "somewhat liberal" politically, while White American students tend to identify as "somewhat conservative" politically.

Looking at the factors that measure integration, one sees that 73% of African American students and 59% of White American students say they are employed. Thirty-four percent of African American students engage in campus extracurricular activities, while sixty-one percent of White American students engage in campus extracurricular activities. The average number of church services attended in a month tends to be higher among African American students (mean=2.92) than among White American students (mean=2.57). The average number of role models tends to be higher among White American students (mean=4.71) than among African American students (mean=3.92).

Examining the factors measure tolerance and diversity, both African American and White American students tend to report lower mean scores or disagrees with the item "I am friends with people similar to me" (mean ratings are 2.21 and 2.14, respectively). However, they tend to agree that they would date or marry someone different from them (mean ratings are 5.99 and 5.38, respectively) and that racial tolerance would reduce violence (mean ratings are 5.79 and 5.58, respectively). Both African American and White American students somewhat agree that they can easily discuss differences with others (both groups have mean ratings of 4.64). They also agree that they are open-minded (mean ratings of 5.37 and 5.13, respectively) and respect others (mean ratings of 5.69 and 5.58, respectively).

Lastly, concerning campus safety, students from both groups generally see the campus as safe. The average ratings for "campus violence is a problem" tend to be low (2.72 and 3.04). There is slight agreement that "bullying occurs on campus" (mean ratings of 3.98 and 3.91), but that the "school adequately addresses violence" (mean ratings of 4.21 and 4.41). The average ratings for "I have called the police to report violence on campus" is also low (mean ratings of 2.14 and 2.08).

Table 1.3: Regression Results for Police Interaction Scale

	African American	White American
Independent Variables	B (s.e.)	B (s.e.)
Integration		
Employed	-.34 (.63)	-.09 (.66)
Involved	1.09^{+} (.59)	1.40* (.65)
Church Attendance	.10 (.08)	-.04 (.08)
Role Models	-.08 (.11)	.06[a] (.13)
Tolerance & Diversity		
Similar Friends	.15 (.25)	-.44 (.35)
Marry Different	-.05 (.24)	.06 (.25)
Racial Tolerance	-.05 (.22)	-.05 (.28)
Discuss Differences	.75** (.27)	.70^{+} (.41)
Open Minded	-.20 (.41)	-.08 (.47)
Respect Others	.07 (.52)	.67 (.54)
Perceptions of Campus Safety		
Campus Violence Problem	-.43 (.27)	-.12 (.34)
Bullying Occurs	.02 (.19)	.08 (.23)
Adequately Address	.40* (.18)	.42 (.27)
Have Called Police	.65*** (.18)	.71** (.22)
Constant	4.90	-.69
R Square	.21	.23
Adj R Square	.11	.10

[a] = divide reported coefficient by 10 to see actual coefficient

$^{+}$ means 2 tailed significance at the p≤.10 level

* means 2 tailed significance at the p≤.05 level

** means 2 tailed significance at the p≤.01 level

*** means 2 tailed significance at the p≤.001 level

Table 1.3 displays the regression results for the police interaction scale.[1] Among the integration measures, only extracurricular involvement had a statistically significant impact. For both African American and White American students, extracurricular involvement positively

influenced police interaction, with a slightly larger impact for White American than for African American students (b=1.40 and 1.09, respectively).

Among the tolerance and diversity measures, only the ability to discuss differences with others had a statistically significant impact. For both African American and White American students, the ability to discuss differences positively influenced police interaction (b=.75 and .70, respectively). Two campus safety measures, campus adequately address violence (b=.40) and I have called police (b=.65), have statistically significant positive impacts on African American students' interactions with campus police. Only one campus safety measure, I have called police (b=.71) has a statistically significant positive impact on White American students' interactions with campus police.

Table 1.4: Regression Results for Police Comfort Scale

	African American	White American
Independent Variables	B (s.e.)	B (s.e.)
Integration		
Employed	-.16 (.54)	-.10 (.51)
Involved	-.43 (.51)	.02 (.51)
Church Attendance	.11^{+} (.06)	.04 (.06)
Role Models	.07 (.10)	.04 (.10)
Tolerance & Diversity		
Similar Friends	-.11 (.20)	-.13 (.27)
Marry Different	.62** (.21)	.35^{+} (.18)
Racial Tolerance	.05 (.19)	.09 (.22)
Discuss Differences	-.16 (.23)	.20 (.32)
Open Minded	.13 (.35)	-.05 (.36)
Respect Others	.05 (.44)	.45 (.41)
Perceptions of Campus Safety		
Campus Violence Problem	-.09 (.23)	-.39 (.26)
Bullying Occurs	-.05 (.15)	.04 (.18)
Adequately Address	.50*** (.15)	.81*** (.20)
Have Called Police	.27^{+} (.16)	.05 (.16)
Constant	3.85	2.83
R Square	.24	.28
Adj R Square	.16	.16

[a] = divide reported coefficient by 10 to see actual coefficient

$^{+}$ means 2 tailed significance at the p≤.10 level

*means 2 tailed significance at the p≤.05 level

** means 2 tailed significance at the p≤.01 level

*** means 2 tailed significance at the p≤.001 level

Table 1.4 examines the factors that influence students' ratings of comfort with campus police. Just one integration factor, church attendance, has a statistically significant impact on students' comfort with police and this influence applies to African American students' ratings

alone. Church attendance positively influences African American students' comfort with campus police.

One measure of tolerance and diversity, date or marry someone different, has a significant impact on students' comfort with police. For both African American and White American students, this factor positively influences their comfort with police, with the magnitude of the impact being larger for African American students than for White American students (b=.62 and .35, respectively). None of the interaction measures significantly influence students' comfort with campus police.

Two measures of campus safety, campus adequately addresses violence (b=.50) and I have called police (b=.27), have statistically significant positive impacts on African American students' comfort with campus police. Only one measure of campus safety, campus adequately addresses violence (b=.81) has a statistically significant impact on White American students' comfort with police.

Table 1.5: Regression Results for Police Authority Item

	African American	White American
Independent Variables	B (s.e.)	B (s.e.)
Integration		
Employed	-0.06 (0.17)	-.04 (.18)
Involved	-0.19 (0.16)	.09 (.18)
Church Attendance	-0.02 (0.02)	-.03 (.02)
Role Models	0.02[a] (0.03)	.07 (.04)
Tolerance & Diversity		
Similar Friends	-0.16[*] (.07)	.08[a] (.10)
Marry Different	0.17[*] (.07)	.01[a] (.07)
Racial Tolerance	-.03 (.06)	-.08 (.08)
Discuss Differences	-.05 (.07)	.10 (.11)
Open Minded	-.13 (.11)	.10 (.13)
Respect Others	.33[*] (.14)	.04 (.15)
Perceptions of Campus Safety		
Campus Violence Problem	-.10 (.07)	.02 (.10)
Bullying Occurs	.06[a] (.05)	-.06 (.06)
Adequately Address	.01 (.05)	.15[*] (.07)
Have Called Police	.04 (.05)	.07 (.06)
Constant	2.94	2.68
R Square	.18	.16
Adj R Square	.08	.01

[a] = divide reported coefficient by 10 to see actual coefficient

[+] means 2 tailed significance at the p≤.10 level

[*]means 2 tailed significance at the p≤.05 level

[**] means 2 tailed significance at the p≤.01 level

[***] means 2 tailed significance at the p≤.001 level

Table 5 displays the regression results for the police authority item. None of the measures of integration have a statistically significant impact on police authority, for either group. Two of the tolerance and diversity measures, similar friends and marry someone different, have

statistically significant impacts on African American students' view of police authority. Having similar friends negatively impacts African American student views about the importance of listening to the police (b=-.16), while dating or marrying someone different positively influences students' views on the importance of listening to the police (b=.17).

None of the tolerance and diversity measures have a statistically significant impact on White American students' views on the importance of listening to the police. Finally, only one measure of campus safety, campus adequately addresses violence, has a statistically significant impact on student views about the importance of listening to the police, and this influence is found only for White American students (b=.15).

Discussion

Despite the abundance of media coverage about police shootings of unarmed African Americans and the rise of the Black Lives protest movement against police brutality, results from this study show that African American college students tend to have positive views of the police, feel comfortable interacting with them, and feel it is important to do what the police tell them to do. These results tend to mirror that of Cureton's (2003) study of college students, showing African American students have positive views of the police.

When comparing this study's findings by race (African Americans versus White Americans), there are relatively few statistically significant differences that appear. White American students have marginally more comfort with calling the police than African American students. Having more role models tends to improve White American students' interactions with police, whereas it has no significant influence on African American students' interactions with police. Church attendance improves African American students' comfort with the police but has no significant impact on White American students' comfort with the police. Feeling that the college campus adequately addresses violence has a positive impact on White American students' views on respecting police authority, but no statistically significant impact on African American students' views about respecting police authority.

One reason these results differ from the news stories and other studies of African Americans' views of police is the respondents for this study are college students who came from predominantly rural or small-town settings. People from these areas may be more traditional and conservative in their worldviews. They may embrace those in positions of authority more than those from large urban centers. Hurst (2007) found in a study of teenagers that those from rural areas had more positive views toward police than those in metropolitan areas. Weisheit et al (1994) found rural and small-town police are more likely to engage in community policing than urban areas, having more frequent, non-law enforcement engagement with citizens and are more likely to know citizens personally.

Limitations and Future Directions

This study focused on students' views of campus police, not police in general, who may make extra effort to foster a positive relationship with students. As Wilson and Wilson (2011) argue, the campus police are often called upon to perform non-enforcement activities (such as mentoring, helping with disabled vehicles or room lockouts, and coordinating with other staff and students on student life events) in addition to the more traditional policing activities. A

recent survey of Colorado State University students reported that their campus police interacted well with students. The students not only felt safe, but that the police were "respectful," "listened to them," "answered their questions," and "were fair" in their decisions (Ciaravola, 2017).

Also, while campus police may encounter a range of criminal activities as non-campus law enforcement does, more of the criminal activity occurring on college campuses tends to be theft and substance abuse violations and less violent incidents. From 2001 until 2014, campus crimes declined, with the most violent crimes comprising just a small percentage of campus crime incidents (National Center for Education Statistics, n.d.). On campuses where a high-profile violent incident, especially a police-involved shooting of a student has occurred (e.g., Portland State University in June 2018), student views of campus police may be less favorable (Whitford, 2018).

Moreover, most of the students enrolled in this college are from middle- and working-class backgrounds, who may be trying to avoid negative encounters with the police if possible, knowing that a negative report could affect their academic and future work careers. Ekins (2016) finds the percentage of positive views towards police increases with respondents' income, but that no group (income, racial, gender, etc.) could be considered as antagonistic towards police.

Braga et al. (2014) show contextual factors (i.e., community climate of police relations with the public, respondents' prior experiences with the police) play a role in how police interactions are evaluated.

Finally, the respondents for the survey were enrolled in sociology courses, typically majoring in sociology or a related social science. Including a more diverse group of students from a variety of majors could influence study results (e.g., Mbuba, 2010). Moreover, given the data stems from a convenience sample, future research should consider utilizing a representative sample of college students who are more diverse in their social backgrounds and academic majors. A representative sample will enable the results to be more generalizable and will shed even more light on the relationship between police perceptions and race among college students. In addition, this study focused on differences between White and African American students. This line of research needs to be expanded to include college students of other racial backgrounds as the literature reveals racial minorities, not just African Americans, are more likely to have negative perceptions of the police, have more contact with the police, and experience racial profiling and poor interactions with the police.

Implications

Despite the limitations discussed above, this study contributes to the literature by exploring several predictors of police perceptions ranging from integration in one's school and community to diversity tolerance. More specifically, the current research addresses several gaps in the literature by examining factors that have not focused on racial differences and including other variables not previously studied. How the police are perceived is vital to police relations with the citizens and communities they serve, and this includes college campuses. Negative views, such as perceiving the police as an illegitimate authority, and an unwillingness to cooperate or call the police impedes law enforcement's ability to do their job (Kwak et al., 2019; Murty et al., 1990; U.S. Department of Justice, 2016). It is important to understand as much as possible what contributes to positive and negative views of the police. Such knowledge can help

police foster more amicable and cooperative relationships with the citizens they protect and serve, and this includes students on college campuses.

Notes

The regression analyses performed initially had all of the student sociodemographic variables included in the models. However, the coefficients for none of those variables were statistically significant in any of the models and the variance explained by the models improved once those variables were withdrawn from the analyses. Hence, the results presented in Tables 3, 4, and 5 are the regression results produced once the sociodemographic variables were withdrawn from the models.

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PARAMILITARY POLICE TRAINING: PROSPECTIVES CHALLENGE THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE COMMUNITY POLICING SOCIAL CONTRACT

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Abstract

The effectiveness and tolerance of modern-day policing hang in the balance as the social contract of effective policing in America may be torn. Respect for the social contract relationships has long been established between the police and the citizens served and must remain to support the continued freedom the United States stands for. This paper will examine the historical evolution of modern policing and the emphasis on paramilitary training on police recruits. This examination will also reveal the effects paramilitary recruit training has on police culture and its subsequent impact on the citizens served. Additionally, this review will examine how an adult learning style of instruction may help hone the psychological abilities of our younger police recruits in the development of more vital community orientation mindsets to strengthen the social contract. The goal is to provide recruit training that can be embraced by the student, taken into society, and integrated with more robust positive influences and less negative consequences between police and the public. The positive effects of well-trained and healthy police personnel throughout the officers' careers demonstrate the positive effects on police interactions with their families and the communities they serve. Every police officer should know that the biggest threat to the health, safety, and longevity of a police officer are the dangers police pose to themselves in an adversarial social contract versus the positive community-based orientation of service. As Sir Robert Peel said, "The Police are the Public; the Public are the Police." Hence, it is imperative to engrain police recruits and to retrain veteran officers to resist a mentality of "us against them." Comparing and contrasting these training styles and understanding the necessity for a paradigm shift in training may improve police and community relations in a society pleading to restore trust and respect for the United States police officer.

Keywords: *Community Oriented Policing, Paramilitary Policing, Police and Community Social Contract, Evolving Police Training*

Paramilitary Police Training: Prospectives Challenge the Sustainability of the Community Policing Social Contract

As a law enforcement professional, the author assumes great pride and interest in the current and future reverence and professionalism of policing. The United States police officer is programmed for policing even before they enter the profession by the selected agency the officers will join. The police officer's journey begins in the police academy. Here the recruit will learn the policing framework and soak up their newfound training like a sponge. It should be of great concern to our leaders, police commands, and the public as to what this training looks like, how it will be delivered, and the long-term effects of this training.

Defining Police, Policing, and Police Recruit Academies

It is vital to define the cornerstones of this discussion for the reader to contribute to the focal point of this topic. How are police defined? The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines *Police* as:

1) the department of government concerned primarily with maintenance of public order, safety, and health and enforcement of laws and possessing executive, judicial, and legislative powers; and
2) the department of government charged with prevention, detection, and prosecution of public nuisances and crimes. State and municipal governments employ police officers. The upkeep of public order and the investigation and prevention of crimes are the two primary responsibilities of police officers. The assignment is challenging. The police must decide which laws to uphold and how and when to do so (Harris & Buckley, 2020).

What is policing? Merriam-Webster defines it as follows:

1) to control, regulate, or keep in order by use of police.
2) to perform the functions of a police force in or over.
3) a) to supervise the operation, execution, or administration of to prevent or detect and prosecute violations of rules and regulations.
   b) to exercise such supervision over the policies and activities of.
4) to make clean and put in order.

Most believe the fundamental tenet of policing is that officers uphold the law, ensuring that the "bad guys" are held accountable while the rest of us sleep soundly at night. The stereotype of the "thin blue line" guarding society against anarchy is a long-standing one of law enforcement that the police themselves tenaciously uphold. Patrolling officers deter crime through their presence, the potential to witness an offense in progress, and the use of their purported "sixth sense" to detect oddities in people or circumstances (Waddington, 2014).

The police academy consists of demanding academic and physical courses that prepare future law enforcement officials to manage their profession's demands. Police academies in the United States do not all follow the same curriculum; however, most coursework will be very similar (Police 1 Staff, 2021).

The Historical Evolution of Modern Policing

The 1700s and 1800s European customs and the patrols used to uphold slavery in the American Southlands are some sources of modern American policing. Not just in the fields of criminology and criminal justice, but in all areas where police history is present, there is an institutionalized history of the police and the social contracts that existed then. United States policing was born from Sir Robert Peel's founding of the London Metropolitan Police Service (M.P.S.). M.P.S. was a disciplined, uniformed body tasked with upholding law and order. Peel did not arm his police officers with firearms to set the police force apart from the military force. Hence, the police were established as a civilian entity to help regulate societal norms and those codified into law.

Peel developed the Nine Principles for Law Enforcement to guide police conduct that established legitimacy, later called Peelian Principles. These guiding principles assert that crime prevention is achievable without significant interference in citizens' lives and that the police are the people, and the people are the police (Lewis, 2011). Additionally, these policing principles helped establish an ethical police force with the premise of the police service, often called policing by consent. Peel's M.P.S. model was brought to northern U.S. communities, starting with Boston in 1838, and spread throughout the country (Brucato, 2020). In the United States, policing has changed from a shared duty to an official position with distinct structures and procedures. Theodore Roosevelt had an essential role in American police history. In the latter part of the 1890s, during the so-called progressive era of change, Roosevelt held the position of police commissioner in New York. Despite a period of professionalization that followed in the U.S. and internationally, the police relied primarily on coercive force and violence to perform their law enforcement duties (Hunt, 2021). The evolution of policing has had its challenges and arguments.

Along with decades of semi-reform, racism, social inequality, and general cultural upheaval—especially the tumult of the 1960s and beyond—a "war" on crime arose during the intervening years. In June 1971, President Nixon officially declared a "War on Drugs," stating that drug abuse was "public enemy number one" (History.com Editors, 2019). A long-standing dedication to "law and order" policies that were "tough on crime" at the expense of other principles and tactics like legitimacy and public justification later strengthened a militarized police "warrior" concept. Therefore, despite extensive professionalization initiatives, the conflict has primarily defined the history of policing (Hunt, 2021).

The Arrival of Paramilitary Recruit Training

Police recruit training has changed considerably throughout American history. Police recruits acquired the ins and outs of the profession during the political era of policing (from the 1840s to the early 1900s) by observing other officers rather than through organized police academy programs. It was not until 1907 that August Vollmer founded the Berkeley, California,

Police School and advocated for preservice training for police officers before entering the field (Lynch, 2018). Other organizations copied this strategy and started creating recruit training programs for future police officers throughout the following several decades. During this time, recruit instruction increased, but the core concepts of police work still needed to be better understood by police recruits. In 1967, President Lyndon Johnson's Commission on Law Enforcement Administration of Justice task force report indicated that "many courses are unsophisticated and incomplete and there is far too little discussion of fundamental principles.

The legal limitations on street policing and the proper use of discretion are rarely stressed. Recruits receive too little background like the community and the role of the police" (Lynch, 2018). Due to these worrisome findings, the task force suggested that formal police training programs for recruits should include a minimum of 400 hours of classroom instruction spread over four to six months and a supervised field training program.

The required hours of recruitment training have continued to climb over the decades to help prepare recruits for their chosen profession. Officer safety (defensive tactics) is the prevailing theme in a police academy. Police recruits' aptitude for succeeding under demanding and violent circumstances determines whether they are worthy of entry into the profession (Conti, 2011). Since police academy training includes an explicit and hidden curriculum, the academy setting is the initial stage of professional socialization. Although the explicit curriculum strives to generate professional and competent officers, they contend that it is eclipsed by a hidden curriculum that promotes hegemonic masculinity in recruits by stressing the link between hypermasculinity and police employment (Lynch, 2018).

Police academies have typically been run in a paramilitary manner. The implications are that when learning how to become a police officer, recruits are subjected to a high standard of discipline, comportment, and regimentation. Frequently, academy instructors are equivalent to military drill sergeants, who routinely verbally abuse and even degrade recruits who are not performing well. Report writing, more running, and pushups are utilized as punishment. This training method fosters teamwork and a high degree of esprit de corps, but it tends to have a high dropout rate, which may not bother purists who hold the view that "if they cannot cut it here, they would never survive on the streets." (Blumberg, Schlosser, Papazoglou, Creighton, & Kaye, 2020). Although there is some truth to this (i.e., training should prepare recruits for the most challenging situations they will encounter on the job), this approach also neglects to consider the variety of learning preferences, personalities, and interpersonal abilities among individuals. The ease with which U.S. law enforcement has embraced paramilitary practices is partially attributable to a cultural tendency to view criminal issues via a militarized perspective. Thus, this mechanized approach teaches the recruit to defeat the enemy, our civilian neighbor. This approach is the byproduct of how police departments operate in general. Each police department and police academy have some level of militarization. (Hill & Beger, 2009). The top-down chain of command approach used in the military has also filtered into the civilian world of law enforcement.

Effects of Paramilitary Recruit Training

Police Culture

Despite specific changes in the demographics of the police culture over the past 40 years, fundamental cultural beliefs have remained constant, and together with the officers' occupational reality, police culture changes. Since this specific culture first entered the discourse of academia, two fundamental truths in the field have remained constant. The first is that police in the U.S. are given an impossible mandate: efficient crime control in a democracy. The second is that the police's role in society depends on their ability to use force against one civilian on another's behalf (Conti, 2011).

Consequently, recruits are expected to strive for an idealized understanding of what it means to be a police officer (i.e., strength) to the exclusion of a discredited idea of civilian traits (i.e., weakness) through high-stress paramilitary training as a test of character. The profession believes that recruits must be ready to lose their lives due to their occupational choice of becoming police officers. The use of firearms, arrest and control techniques, weaponless defense tactics, and less lethal force options are all discussed in the instructional units provided to aspiring police officers as part of a survival curriculum. Recruit training emphasizes that failure to use these tactics accurately and effectively could result in losing one's own life or the life of a fellow officer (Lynch, 2018). Sharing war stories by academy staff members can sometimes contribute to negative perspectives undercutting the police academy's curriculum. These war stories intensify cadets' misunderstandings of police work, and instructors' views on what constitutes legitimate police work undermine the formal academy curriculum, promoting a "us versus them" mentality. (Chappell & Lanza-Kaduce, 2010). The police culture often invites indoctrination of bonding, and to assimilate appropriately into police culture, recruits, and officers must play along.

Warrior Mindset

The "warrior mindset" ideal is repeated throughout the training process. Academy staff typically discuss the heart required of a police officer before discussing the brotherhood among officers who were collectively "running towards trouble while everyone else was running away." The academy's curriculum offers recruits many opportunities to show they have a warrior's heart. Recruits must continuously show that they deserve an eventual elevation to the rank of a police officer, from adhering to the most fundamental norms of dress and deportment to meeting the performance requirements for physical fitness, self-defense, guns, and similar skills.

Alternatively, if these qualifications are met, the recruit is deemed fit to carry the policing torch (Conti, 2011). The recruits are informed that the police academy is only a tiny portion of what they may anticipate from a career in law enforcement. As a result, it is an important opportunity for them to start abandoning their civilian traits in favor of those of the ideal police officer. Otherwise, they would be better off staying away from the profession if they were "weak links" and could not meet training standards (Conti, 2011). This warrior mindset is also

encapsulated in coveted positions within police organizations to earn more and be recognized as a particular class within the rank-and-file workforce. Some examples are unique weapons and tactics teams (SWAT), drug enforcement, violent offender squads, and fugitive squads. For some officers, attachment to elite squads carry an extra sense of achievement, pride, and even being “macho,” and this trait can be garnered by the female gender.

One of the primary leaders in the "warrior mindset" concept is retired Army ranger and former West Point instructor Lt. Col. Dave Grossman. Author Steve Featherstone states, "For nearly two decades, he has taught tens of thousands of police officers, sheriff's deputies, and federal agents in every state to cultivate what he calls a "warrior mindset"—being mentally prepared to kill at any moment. For Grossman, the essence of being a police officer is being prepared to die for others. He supports it with numerous allusions to the Bible and historical passages from the Middle Ages; it is a thoroughly Christian ethos. In the never-ending conflict between good and evil, his ideal police officer is a hero whose aggression is justified by the greater good. A true warrior cop kills only when necessary and always has the best intentions, even if he kills the wrong person. Grossman's goal, in essence, is to get cops to think more like soldiers, training them to regard the communities they serve as territory occupied by potential insurgents" (Featherstone, 2017). Featherstone continues to highlight the perspectives and teachings of Lt. Col. Grossman with the sheepdog metaphor:

The sheepdog metaphor valorizes the warrior ethos: The sheepdog does not serve the flock; he protects it. However, without the legitimacy conferred by the trust and consent of those protected, protection is not policing—it is occupation. "Frequently, the modern conception of policing is that cops are outside, or above, or separate from the community," says Seth Stoughton, a law professor at the University of South Carolina and a former police officer. "That is the whole idea of the 'thin blue line.' It is the thing that separates society from chaos, but also separates cops from society." (Featherstone, 2017).

Stoughton contends that the police academy is where the "warrior problem" in law enforcement first emerges. Recruits are taught from day one that anyone they see on the street may kill them at any time, and their training only serves to instill this fearful mindset. Police recruits receive an average of 107 hours of training on firearms and defensive strategies. Still, just 16 hours in crisis intervention and de-escalation of conflicts, claims the Police Executive Research Forum, a think tank for law enforcement (Featherstone, 2017).

Guardian Mindset

The aggressive, trigger-happy warrior and the gentle guardian who believes he can magically de-escalate every scenario are frequently presented as the two choices in the current discussion over police reform. Because all police officers employ force, it is not helpful to frame the debate solely in terms of the use of force. The behavior of a guardian and a warrior in an armed robbery call will be the same. Whether conducting a traffic check or responding to a shooting at a school, an officer's guiding principles matter most (Featherstone, 2017).

The guardian approach is based on collaboration and "protecting civilians from unnecessary indignity and harm," according to Stoughton. The warrior framework, which is built on the ideas of compliance and control, places the police in conflict with the general people. The cop is the one who makes threats to use physical force against anyone who disobeys him. Such conduct is not just offensive and provocative, but it is also poor policing (Featherstone, 2017).

The police, according to academics, should view themselves as "peacekeepers" rather than law enforcers, maintaining close contact with individuals they are charged with policing and devoted to crime prevention using what would later be dubbed proactive, multi-agency tactics (Waddington, 2014). Police academies should present a guardian mindset to help ensure successful policing, no different than providing training for a warrior mindset to help a police officer stay alive. A symbiotic relationship should exist between the two philosophies to equip and protect police officers and their agency's good name and reputation. To be effective, the police officer must adopt a healthy lifestyle to cope and successfully fulfill their daily responsibilities.

Police Health and Wellness

Police officers' mental health may be significantly impacted by policing in the United States of America. An officer's life can suffer from the emotional ups and downs brought on by stress and trauma while working, which can harm its continuity and quality. Regular service calls involving emotionally charged traumatizing incidents are frequently stashed away in the psychological luggage a police officer carries about. Some believe our cops should be able to manage it because that is what they agreed to do. This optimism turns out to have disastrous results.

The Social Impact of a Healthy vs. an Unhealthy Police Officer

Cumulative stress begins to build up on the first day of the police academy and only gets worse over time. Traumatic stress can occur at any time, for example, due to a car accident, a physical injury from force, or being shot or murdered while performing their duties. According to research, stress not only has an impact on our physical health but also on how officers feel emotionally. In addition to being a barrier, the stigma associated with mental health concerns, as they relate to law enforcement personnel, may prove to be a tall order for the police to overcome (Towler, n.d.).

Police officers have little choice but to accept their chosen profession's unique dangers and pressures. Although they do it voluntarily, they rarely are aware of this stress's unforeseen consequences. Difficulty relating to others, difficulty controlling emotion, narrow perceptions of what is good or wrong, increased anxiety and fearfulness, and a decline in reasoning skills are a few examples. Officers' mental health issues must be addressed since failing could erode public support for law enforcement and make them less safe at work (Spence, Fox, Moore, Estill, & Comrie, 2019).

According to academia, police academies can integrate psychological skills into training to prepare candidates for the obstacles modern police officers must overcome. These skills are divided into four main groups: cognitive, emotional, social, and moral. In addition to defining the skills, consideration is given to how particular academic experiences might develop each skill and help teach it (Blumberg, Schlosser, Papazoglou, Creighton, & Kaye, 2020). In cognitive skills, recruits must possess or learn to maintain mental flexibility to combat the mental challenges that policing presents. It is also vital that the academy staff mirror the supervisor and discipline model of the agencies the recruits aspire to work in.

Concerning emotional skills, emotions will likely affect how well and how long an officer will remain in the policing profession. During the academy, the recruits are urged to commit to their wellness and uphold these healthy behaviors throughout their employment. Recruits must practice and rehearse to master social skills; repetition is the key. Integrity is the cornerstone for the success of a recruit or a police officer. Throughout the training, recruits should be prompted to consider their goals and discuss why they want to become police officers (Blumberg, Schlosser, Papazoglou, Creighton, & Kaye, 2020).

Additionally, it was discovered that employee spirituality and ethical decision-making in the workplace are associated. Academies should therefore think about ways to support recruits' spirituality to aid the training of moral police personnel (Blumberg, Schlosser, Papazoglou, Creighton, & Kaye, 2020). Finally, although there may be a great emphasis on classifying people as weak or strong, this dichotomy must capture the complexity of the human experience or the worth of a vocation. People are both weak and strong, not weak, or strong. Moreover, people come in many different forms and always oscillate between these poles and throughout all stages of their lives. Therefore, it is problematic that a profession where social interaction is the core competency maintains a flat understanding of human nature (Blumberg, Schlosser, Papazoglou, Creighton, & Kaye, 2020

A Police Officer’s Most Significant Threat

The most significant threat to police officers in the U.S. is themselves. In 2019, Blue H.E.L.P. reported that for the third year in a row, police officer suicides exceeded all combined causes of line-of-duty deaths. "In 2018, at least 167 officers died by suicide, more than the total number of line-of-duty deaths resulting from 15 other causes such as felonious assault, patrol vehicle accident, heart attack, duty-related illness" (Solomon, 2019). Solomon concludes her article, "taking a real stance on officer safety will require us to address the elephant in the room. Addressing officer wellness, including spiritual, mental, social, and physical health, should be the top priority for each agency head in 2019" (Solomon, 2019). This priority should still be the most critical action item for law enforcement agency heads in the U.S.

Coping Strategies

Environmental stress and the emotional toll experienced by not only police officers but also by police recruits may lead cops to eventual burnout, substance abuse, and other job and health-related issues. The cynicism that leads to isolation by officers is often the byproduct of job burnout. Research indicates that police used three coping mechanisms: support networks, stoic self-help, and self-medication.

First, law enforcement resorted to support networks, where officers spoke with and sought counsel from friends, family, and coworkers. Second, officers used stoic self-help to cope with the situation internally. By having cops "man up" to the challenge on their own, this approach notably reflects the hyper-masculine profession that law enforcement is known for. Third, police officers self-medicated (i.e., eating, smoking, drinking). The fact that officers who turned to support groups or self-help also mentioned utilizing prayer to cope is noteworthy. Self-medicators were less likely to turn to prayer as a coping mechanism (Clifton, Torres, & Hawdon, 2018).

Some coping mechanisms had a more negative impact on motivation than others. The safety of the officers and the public depends on understanding how officers cope and why beneficial methods are not being used to their full potential. There are significant repercussions if law enforcement professionals do not appropriately employ effective ways to manage such incidents. Departments must proactively ensure policies are in place to support their sworn people in managing pressures when motivation has already diminished due to a flood of negative press.

To protect the officers and the public, it is crucial to understand how an officer assesses a situation and what tactics are used to manage distress. Most people are rarely exposed to the pressures that a police officer must be trained to manage. In the first few years of their careers, police officers and many other first responders witness more suffering and hopelessness than we do in a lifetime.

The Underpinned Theory of Social Contract

The social contract theory is the relationship between rules and laws and the justification for society's need for them. People are often willing to give up their freedoms in modern democracies for law enforcement protection from crime. The social contract makes the implied presumption that if a person enters a contract with the justice system, they will be protected against criminal victimization (Auerhahn & McGuire, 2010). This must be balanced with a fair representation of the police as the protectors. The training police receive as recruits, and the actions they display to the public will determine if the fabric of the social contract will tear.

Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau

Thomas Hobbes (born April 5, 1588, Westport, Wiltshire, England—died December 4, 1679, Hardwick Hall, Derbyshire) was an English philosopher, scientist, and historian best known for his political philosophy. "Political authority is justified by a hypothetical social

contract among the many that vests in a sovereign person or entity the responsibility for the safety and well-being of all. His enduring contribution is as a political philosopher who justified wide-ranging government powers based on the self-interested consent of citizens" (Sorell, 2023).

According to Hobbes, living in a society without regulations and laws to control our behavior would be miserable. Hobbes referred to a lawless society as living in a "state of nature." People would behave independently in such a state, with no regard for the needs of their community. In other words, in this type of Darwinian world, only the strongest would survive, and the weak would die (McCartney & Parent, n.d.).

Few political philosophers have had as much of an impact on the canon of American political thinking as John Locke (1632–1704). His writings significantly influenced the development of the U.S. Constitution and the growth of the notion that a political system requires the consent of the governed. However, in political philosophy, Locke stands for a particular tradition of justification; the state of nature and contract-based justifications he employed, which expanded on those of Thomas Hobbes, continue to impact how many people understand politics today (Taylor, 2015). "For Locke, there exists a metaphorical state of nature in which rational individuals form a society; a government's legitimacy is derived from what reasonable individuals would consent to in such a state. Because individuals would join to protect their property, they would consent to no government that would affect in any substantive way their ability to gain and maintain property" (Taylor, 2015).

The Genevan philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) had ideas that inspired a period of political unrest that resulted in temporary democratization. The terms "both Locke and Rousseau use state of nature," "social compact," and others have distinct meanings in Rousseau's theory of society, especially considering justification. While Locke's theory and Rousseau's conception of political legitimacy share similarities, they diverge significantly. Rousseau does not start with natural rights as Locke does. The purpose of government is not to defend inherent rights in the natural world. In his opinion, there are no rights in such a state. Instead, Rousseau suggests that the laws of nature, as described by Locke, do not exist; political and social structures are necessary for the existence of rights. Then, Rousseau shows no natural justification for one person to wield control over another. Convention must be the source of political power for it to exist. The idea of a convention, which comes from a mode of connection that Rousseau refers to as the social compact, shares many similarities with the concept of consent (Taylor, 2015). A concluding quote by Rousseau:

“The problem is to find a form of association which will defend and protect with the whole joint force the person and goods of each associate, and in which each, while uniting himself with all, may still obey himself alone and remain as free as before. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 1762 [1968]” (Auerhahn & McGuire, 2010).

Community Justice Models: Expectations and Ideals

Models of community justice have significantly changed this traditional conception of the social contract. Community justice models call for people to actively ensure their safety rather

than relinquish their rights in exchange for protection. Residents of the community must communicate their goals for safety and directly support the legal system in establishing safe communities by engaging in informal social control. Residents do not automatically relinquish their liberty and obtain protection from victimization under a community justice approach.

The community justice ideal still requires the official criminal justice system to uphold its end of the bargain by meeting residents' demands for public safety, despite hopes for greater involvement from community members (Auerhahn & McGuire, 2010). The interaction and partnership between the community and the police are crucial in all conceptualizations of community justice. Establishing such a partnership and upholding the social contract has frequently proved challenging, particularly in communities where citizens and police have a history of mistrust (Auerhahn & McGuire, 2010).

Police Command and Control

The United States has slowly required a paradigm shift of policing demanded by the citizens served. The lack of trust in the police, media sensationalism of police contacts that go bad, and a rejection of the "war" on crime and drugs model of policing lead many to reject policing, as historically defined. Government, law enforcement, and community stakeholders have started developing ideas on strengthening and repairing ties between the police and the communities served.

As a result, community policing proponents began to gain more excellent traction in the public discourse. *Community policing* is defined by the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance as "a collaboration between the police and the community that identifies and solves community problems."

The goal of community policing is to reduce friction and disdain between the police and the community they serve. It also strives to give the community more authority over conflict resolution (Harris & Buckley, 2020). Training must consider how these trends affect recruits' comprehension of the police mission and how it is conducted. When do recruits or rookie officers seek advice on discretion when the law leaves room for interpretation? Supervisory input is frequently inadequate, and the community offers little direction – some demanding more enforcement and others more tolerance (Fielding, 2018).

Alternative Methods for Recruit Training

Understanding the Concept of Andragogy

Andragogy characteristically refers to the study of adult learning theory and practice. Contrast this with pedagogy, which studies the science and art of how children learn (Graham, 2017). "The term "andragogy" was first coined back in 1833 by a German teacher named Alexander Knapp to categorize and describe Plato's theory of education" (Graham, 2017). Malcolm Knowles (1913-1997) advanced the andragogy hypothesis during the 1970s. Knowles

is recognized as the primary exponent of andragogy. He advocated andragogy as a remedy for pedagogy's shortcomings. He believed that the notion of education's goal, as presented by pedagogy, does not apply to adult education (Bouchrika, 2023). Malcolm Knowles posit his theory.

There are five pillars of understanding adult learners. Pillar one is - A maturing Self-Concept. In other words, as we become older, our freedom and autonomy grow. Pillar two – Increasing Experience. Certain things become intuitive as children grow into adults and acquire more experience. Pillar three – An Increasing Readiness to Learn. Adults assume different social responsibilities as they mature, so their readiness to learn is geared toward those positions. Pillar four – A Shifting Application and Orientation. People apply knowledge more immediately and focus on solving problems as they age. Pillar five – An Internal Motivation to Learn. A child is often externally motivated to learn. Adults have an internal drive to learn. They aspire to improve themselves. They must learn new skills to climb their professional ladder (Graham, 2017). Since its origins, police training in the United States has been chiefly based on the paramilitary framework.

The police training community has only recently shown a general interest in shifting this approach to the andragogy model, also known as the philosophy of adult education and training (Charles, 2000). It is helpful to think about this approach in these terms. The new approach to training emphasizes such engaging activities as role-playing and scenario-based exercises in which the trainee is actively engaged in learning through doing. The emphasis is on the active involvement of the trainee, not passive listening. The goal of the adult education model is to engage the adult learner. Through his or her enhanced involvement in the learning process, the trainee is expected to be better prepared and trained to perform the duties and functions of his or her job as a police officer (Charles, 2000).

Problem-Based Learning Theory

An increasingly popular method for teaching law enforcement students is problem-based learning. The failure to instill critical thinking and practical problem-solving skills while imparting the agency's necessary legal, administrative, policy, and protocol has been one of the current problems with police training (Makin, 2016). "In the 1970s, Egon Bitner offered a critique of police academy training, signified by the ability to train compliant soldier bureaucrats rather than competent practitioners. Over the years, subsequent training models have been implemented, evaluated, and modified to exceed what has been deemed adequate training" (Makin, 2016).

By no means would switching from the paramilitary basic training approach to one that prioritizes adult learning implies that recruits should not undergo challenging testing. On the contrary, it is necessary to create and uphold high standards. Therefore, stress-replicating scenarios must continue to be taught as part of the curriculum for officers. However, developing such training is much more challenging than adding stress to the conventional basic training technique: creativity, flexibility, regular updating, and an efficient strategy (Glenn et al., 2003).

When learning is problem-based, students take on the active role of problem-solvers and are presented with complex obstacles comparable to those they would encounter on the job. The learner-centered model aids in the transfer of knowledge from the classroom to practical situations. Through collective work-group experiences, problem-based learning, when done correctly, fosters collaboration, promotes teamwork skills development, and stimulates leadership skills. Participants then create a plan of action to address issues and assess the learning experience (Glenn et al., 2003).

RESTORATION OF TRUST

Police and Community Commitment

Building bridges between diverse groups and emphasizing greater community unity, collectively, and transparency is paramount to addressing contentious topics and issues. "Community residents identified significant shortcomings and opportunities to address problems and improve police-community relations. Four key areas of improvement are leadership, trust, community policing, and becoming a trauma-informed police department. There is a need to leverage leadership that values transparency, accountability, and restorative justice" (Thornton, Dufelmeier, Amedee, & Perry, 2021).

To strengthen support for vulnerable populations, leadership must create a departmental strategy that outlines the procedures required to oversee training and retraining, accountability, public outreach, and integration with other city/state institutions. According to the community, confidence must be developed not just with the police force but also with the individual officers assigned to patrol the beats in each community. The locals said that police personnel needed to put more effort into cultivating bonds with the communities they serve. An established and engrained community policing ideology that humanizes police and citizens while fostering trust between the public and the police should be incorporated by police agencies into their policing strategies. Police officers should receive humanistic training that focuses on transforming their response patterns to better comprehend and address traumas in their communities (Thornton, Dufelmeier, Amedee, & Perry, 2021).

In his book Professionalizing the Police, Fielding states, "Police legitimacy is the perceived right to hold authority, which underpins public acceptance and cooperation. This is granted when authorities are concerned with the well-being of people in the community and are honest and respectful when dealing with them, enabling the transformation of power into a legitimate authority in a way that generates normative compliance. Public confidence matters because it engenders the trust that facilitates the cooperation with police from which legitimacy grows. Perceived legitimacy and trust increase police effectiveness" (Fielding, 2018).

Media Engagement and Stakeholder Participation

The media plays a prominent influence in developing people's views about their local police because most people only interact indirectly with law enforcement officers through the media. The media's portrayal of law enforcement personnel frequently affects the public's willingness to support police actions (Mullis, 2009). It becomes clear that the media often promotes the idea that the police are ineffective.

This notion may result from the public's belief that police officers are not protecting them from crime due to the horrific events depicted on television. Another possibility is that cops are portrayed either too positively or poorly on television. Real-life contact with police may fall short of the public's expectations if depicted in an overly favorable light. On the other side, if police are portrayed unfavorable, the public may conclude that most police officers are dishonest and unethical. Sadly, media outlets' viewpoints, prejudices, and financial interests will influence how news events involving the law enforcement community are reported (Mullis, 2009).

Police academy staff should consider greater collaboration with community stakeholders when developing training methods and identifying topics. The more involved the community is with its policing, the more likely it will be to support its cops in the good times and the bad. John Vanek identified three critical skills needed for enhancing collaboration with community stakeholders:

- Openness to outside suggestions
- Practicing patience in the process
- Making decisions and implementing them (Vanek, 2015).

Accepting that other individuals and organizations might have valid suggestions about how partners might do things better or differently is the first trait needed for collaborative engagement. It takes patience to allow ideas to be considered and debated, even when they are bad ideas. It also takes patience to put up with several meetings and the work that must be done between them. However, eventually, the discussion phase of the process gives way to implementation. Decision-making abilities are needed at this point (Vanek, 2015).

Conclusion

Policing professionals should continually strive to refine police recruitment training to ensure policing professionalism in the U.S. "In police lore, we often hear the seasoned veteran telling the rookie that the first thing he or she needs to do is forget everything he or she just learned in the academy. The paradox is that police work in a democratic society but are trained and learn their jobs in a paramilitary, punitive, and authoritarian environment. Some experts maintain that reducing the gap between the academy and police work on the street simply requires developing more relevant academy training programs" (White & Escobar, 2008).

The training divisions and academies, together with the police divisions, must make further efforts inside their respective organizations to create a culture that only accepts and demands the highest standards. Many departments work in this area to the best of their abilities, but much more must be done. The honesty of the police officers who work for our country's law enforcement agencies is paramount. This crucial character in our police force needs to be given

meticulous and exacting consideration. Justifying that our police officers are people of integrity by stating that they met police admission qualifications is insufficient. (Charles, 2000).

Professionalism in law enforcement today goes well beyond "just the facts, ma'am," a quote from the popular T.V. show, Dragnet of the 1950s. The primary duty of a police officer is to serve the community. By initially being aware of the needs and demands of the community, it is possible to serve it effectively. Determining the cultures of the populations they serve is crucial for law enforcement personnel (Glenn et al., 2003). Community policing requires a decentralized approach to law enforcement, in which operational and tactical decision-making is encouraged at the lower echelons of an organization. Recruits, therefore, need to be taught how to think independently and make decisions independently. Such training will instill the confidence necessary to initiate problem-solving during interactions with their community (Glenn et al., 2003). Crisis intervention team (C.I.T.) training that strongly emphasizes de-escalation may be tremendously helpful in boosting interactions between officers and community members and guiding attempts to clarify and design further practical de-escalation trainings (Den Houter & Brooks, 2022).

The underpinned theory of the social contract is germane to this thesis because the police derive their power and authority from this unwritten social contract. Additionally, the police exist to safeguard better the rights that come with being a human being, including life, liberty, and property. The openness and willingness of police academics to concentrate on andragogy and problem-based learning with equal veracity as the paramilitary customs and officer safety-driven training curriculum will likely mold a better police recruit.

Trust in our law enforcement is the foundation of society and its people to live in stasis. However, trust is a process that takes time to build, especially when lost. It can be likened to making several small deposits in the banks of police and trust. The more deposits that are made and the more significant effort the police academies, recruits, and officers make at lining up at the bank to make those deposits, the more likely the community will forgive when a withdrawal of trust is made because of the wrong actions of one or more police officers.

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IS THE BLACK VOTE TAKEN FOR GRANTED BY THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY?

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Abstract

Since the inception of America, black Americans voting behavior for the U. S. presidency has been interesting history. With the passage of the 15th Amendment of the U. S. constitution in 1870, black men were given the right to vote. During the 1800's and up to the 1930's black men either overwhelmingly or by majority voted Republican. In the 1930's this trend changed. More blacks started voting Democrat. However, in the 1960's most blacks (including women) began to vote Democrat and by the 1980's until present day, blacks overwhelmingly vote Democrat. How could this be when the Ku Klux Klan was founded by the Democratic Party and used every racist tactic possible to stop Blacks from gaining their freedom from slavery and voting. Liberal programs such as welfare (responsible for the collapse of the black nuclear family by removing the father from the household), and tough on crime policies such as three strikes you're out did massive damage to the black American male. Black American family, and black American progression in the United States. If this is true, why do black Americans still vote Democrat if racists presidents and liberal policies attribute to their demise? Are black Americans delusional for voting Democrat or Is the Democratic Party taken the black vote for granted? This paper analyses the relationship between blacks and the democratic party.

Is the Black Vote Taken for Granted by the Democratic Party?

In his speech to the American people on August 20, 2016, Donald Trump, the Republican presidential nominee, told the audience in West Bend, Wisconsin, that the ‘’Democratic Party Has Failed and Betrayed the African American Community’’ (Live on Air News 2, 2016). Trump’s contention is that Democratic policies on crime, education, and economics have produced more crime, more broken homes, and more poverty. He contends that the Democratic Party has had a strong hold on African Americans and did not produce great things for the African American community. The African American community (as a whole) viewed his words on a broad scale including insulting, insensitive, harsh, straight to the point, tough, and even candid. But are his words accurate? If they are, maybe Mr. Trump has a legitimate point. Trump is suggesting that the Democratic Party has taken the African American vote for granted. Have they?

As Malcolm X said in his speech “The Ballot or the Bullet” in reference to African Americans voting in the presidential elections, …They see that the whites are so evenly divided that every time they vote the race is so close, they have to go back and count the votes all over again. And that...which means that any block, any minority that has a block of votes that stick together is in a strategic position. Either way you go, that's who gets it. You're -- You're in a position to determine who will go to the White House and who will stay in the doghouse (BlackPast, 2010). He goes on to say: You're the one who has that power. You can keep Johnson in Washington D.C., or you can send him back to his Texas cotton patch. You're the one who sent Kennedy to Washington. You're the one who put the present Democratic Administration in Washington D.C. The whites were evenly divided. It was the fact that you threw 80 percent of your votes behind the Democrats that put the Democrats in the White House (BlackPast, 2010). And later he states: When you see this, you can see that the Negro vote is the key factor. And despite the fact that you are in a position to -- to be the determining factor, what do you get out of it? The Democrats have been in Washington D.C. only because of the Negro vote. They've been down there four years, and they're -- all other legislation they wanted to bring up they brought it up and gotten it out of the way, and now they bring up you. And now, they bring up you. You put them first, and they put you last, 'cause you're a chump, a political chump (BlackPast, 2010). In Washington D.C., in the House of Representatives, there are 257 who are Democrats; only 177 are Republican. In the Senate there are 67 Democrats; only 33 are Republicans. The Party that you backed controls two-thirds of the House of Representatives and the Senate, and still they can't keep their promise to you, 'cause you're a chump. Anytime you throw your weight behind a political party that controls two-thirds of the government, and that Party can't keep the promise that it made to you during election time, and you're dumb enough to walk around continuing to identify yourself with that Party, you're not only a chump, but you're a traitor to your race…(BlackPast, 2010). Although this is a long quote, it is too important to shorten or even paraphrase the impact that Malcolm X’s speech had on African Americans voting behavior during the 1960’s and how it relates to African American voting behavior in 2017. Why is there such a parallel? Why are Blacks so loyal to a party the Malcolm X and Donald Trump say betray them? Why is black voting behavior so predictable?

When I turned 18 years old, my mother took me to the City Hall to register to vote. I filled out the Voter Registration form and when it came to me choosing a political party, I asked my mother what box to check. She told me to check Democrat. This is when I started my journey of being a Democrat. Interestingly, though, yet I heard of the Democratic and Republican parties,

and even learned about them in high school social studies and civics classes, I was politically immature to comprehend critically what the two parties stood for and had to offer. So, it should be understandable if I did not know enough about the difference between the Democrats, Republicans, or Independents; the different ideologies associated with the political parties such as liberal or conservative, liberal leaner or conservative leaner; the political issues regarding a particular party's stance on immigration, taxes, abortion, gay rights, the budget, health care, welfare, crime, the death penalty, religious freedom, foreign policy, the environment, etc. In short, I was immature about political parties. Nevertheless, I was a Democrat, a Democratic supporter, and a staunch Democratic voter for a long time. I give the credit of me registering and voting democrat to my mom as all my siblings were registered and staunch voters of the Democratic Party. It was passed down through tradition just like other cultural things like religion. The passing down did not require maturity or critical thinking, just the anointment of my parents.

Fast forward to 2008, I saw Barack Obama give two speeches on national television. He spoke articulately and very elegantly, and his speech was convincing. I never saw anyone speak with as much poise, emotion, and hope. He talked about many issues of which he blamed on the failed policies of George W. Bush. He implied that the 8 years George W. Bush was in office was enough for the American people because the American people were not satisfied and were in need of change. He said that he was going to make America a much better place to live and work than under the previous administration, and that America did not need 4 more years of the present Republican administration. He went on to say that veterans were sleeping on American streets and families slid into poverty while a major American city, referring to New Orleans, LA, was catastrophically ruined by Hurricane Katrina. He talked about George Bush's lack of sensitivity, care, and participation toward New Orleans and other residents affected by Hurricane Katrina. He came across as the presidential candidate who cared and would make the situation better. He spoke about the lack of competitiveness by the HBCU's when compared to PWI's, indicating the fact that if a person had to choose to attend college and the choices were at an HBCU and a PWI, a person would choose the PWI simply because of the resources (i.e. funding, buildings, etc.) available at the PWI's. He spoke about violence in the black communities and how it is time to change the ever-present dynamics, including the poverty rate, gun violence rate, and high unemployment rate; his goal was to lower those things. He discussed many inner-city issues that plagued the black community in a heart wrenching and emotional manner. Just by listening to Senator Obama, there was a sense of sincerity, care, integrity, and hope that the black quality of life would be better. Barack Obama was the face of the Democratic Party. Whatever he said reflected the values and promises of the Democratic Party. In addition, he was viewed by most Black Americans as the candidate who would make the quality of life better for African Americans. Black America had been waiting for a so called ''Black'' man to win the presidency of the United States all their lives and came out in droves to vote for Barack Obama, making sure that this historical feat was accomplished. Barack Obama, the Democratic candidate for the presidency, had African Americans feeling as happy as they felt when they were freed from slavery. They walked around proudly, singing and dancing in the streets. In fact, when Barack Obama won the presidency, students celebrated all night many universities, especially in Winston-Salem, NC. But what has the Democratic Party done for Black people to make them vote so heavily for the Democratic candidate? Why don't whites throw an overwhelming support for a particular political party?

Throughout American history, there have been several political parties established in competition to win the people's vote, mainly to set forth their political party's policies. Since the establishment of the United States, there has been a variety of political parties, including the Federalists, Democratic-Republicans, Democrats, Whigs, and the Republicans. Although those mentioned were the ones with a presidential candidate elected, there have been others, too. Most of them are known as Independents, as many of them eventually faded out. Blacks did not participate in voting when the Federalists, Democratic-Republicans, Whigs, and other political parties up to 1870 were in existence because they were not allowed to vote until 1870. Nonetheless, today the United States has two major parties: the Democrats and the Republicans. The current Democratic Party was established in 1828 at the helm of Andrew Jackson and is a spinoff of the earlier Democratic-Republican Party established by Thomas Jefferson and James Madison in 1791. The party's political platform in 1828 included a decentralized government to run the economy, very similar to what is today. In addition, the Democratic Party in its beginnings and until slavery ended was a proponent of slavery.

Blacks and the Democratic Party

The Democratic Party as we know it today was established in 1828. During that time, it was not the party that supported the Black cause. The Democratic Party did not have to court the Blacks for votes because Blacks were still slaves in the South and the Democratic Party had no interest in abolishing it. In addition, Blacks could not vote in the North and the rest of the United States legally until 1870 with the passage on the 15th Amendment,

Since the establishment of the Democratic Party in 1828 until 1936, it is not hard to argue that Democratic presidents did not do much to help the advancement of Black people. In fact, Blacks were not allowed to attend the Democratic National Convention until 1924 in any meaningful capacity (Jackson, 2008). The first president of the Democratic Party was Andrew Jackson. His presidency was from 1829-1837. He owned slaves himself. Therefore, it would be ridiculous to believe that President Jackson would denounce slavery. As stated in an article entitled *Andrew Jackson: Domestic Affairs*, President Jackson had no moral obligation to do anything to help the advancement of African Americans. As stated: ''There is nothing to show that Jackson ever pondered slavery as a fundamental moral question. Such thinking was not in his character: he was a man of action, not of philosophy. He grew up with the institution of slavery and accepted it uncritically. Like his neighbors, he bought and sold slaves and used them to work his plantation and wait on his needs.'' (Feller, D.,2017). This is enough proof for one to understand the position that the first Democratic President had on slavery, an issue that determines the quality of life for African Americans. Martin V. Buren succeeded Andrew Jackson as president of the United States from 1837-1841. President Van Buren's position on slavery and Black civil rights before, during, and after his presidency was wishy-washy. He spoke as if he was against slavery and for civil rights, but his actions proved otherwise. At one point in his life, while a politician in New York, he spoke against slavery and voted against the Missouri Compromise purposely to not have Missouri admitted to the union as a slave state (Singer, 2008). Simultaneously, he voted not to extend rights of Blacks without property to vote while voting to allow White men without property franchisee. Throughout his political career, he mentioned things that would assume he was for the Black cause. However, in 1836 during his campaign speech, those liberal statements about Blacks and slavery were recanted (Singer,

2008). Before he became President, Van Buren owned a slave named "Tom." He later sold his slave for $50.00 (Singer, 2008; Shade, 1998). Later in his life, while serving as President, Van Buren backed states' rights regarding slavery. He also attempted to play both sides of the fence on the slavery issue by trying to pacify both the North and the South. He did this by openly opposing slavery on the morality of it (which is what abolitionists do), but he also argued that the system of slavery violated the constitutional principles of the states (Singer, 2008). He felt that his support was necessary to keep the union together. During his presidency, Van Buren did not support the annexation of Texas, a move that would have probably extended slavery to the state of Texas. This angered many Southerners. This is probably why he was called the "little magician," one who pulls political tricks out of his hat when necessary. After Van Buren lost the presidency, he helped create the Free-Soil Party whose political platform focused on the abolition of slavery. He ran as their candidate in 1848 but lost the election. Overall, Van Buren did more talking about and using up Blacks to get White votes from black sympathizers, as many other presidents did when the issue was the Black cause. It is very evident that he did not do much to help Blacks. Even with the creation of the Free-Soil Party, critics suggest that Van Buren's intentions to help Blacks was not genuine. He just wanted to get the support of abolitionists to win the presidency.

James K. Polk succeeded Martin Van Buren as president serving from 1845-1849. He was a Democrat and his position on slavery and civil rights for Blacks was clear from the start of his political career. Before James K. Polk was elected president of the United States and throughout his political career, he supported slavery. He, as well as his father, owned slaves. So, there should be no surprise that President Polk would support the same policies regarding slavery and Blacks civil rights as the other Democratic presidents before him. History tells us that President Polk went farther than other presidents who owned slaves regarding negative treatment of slaves. He treated them with an iron fist. He whipped them often because he felt that whipping slaves was the best method to control them. Being quoted, Polk says: "[The slave] dreads the punishment of stripes more than he does imprisonment, and that description of punishment has, besides, a beneficial effect upon his fellow slaves" (Dusinberre, 2003 p25). He sold them to other slave purchasers if they were out of control. Polk was also responsible for separating many slaves from their family. He worked them under harsh conditions. As stated in an article entitled "Mr. Polk's Other War, "More than half of the children among Polk's slaves died before reaching 15 and the overall death rate on the Mississippi was higher than elsewhere in the South" (Dussinberre, 2003). Also, as Speaker of the House, James K. Polk instituted the gag rule. This rule did not allow congressmen to debate the slavery issue (Byrnes, 2001).

Polk's support for slavery won him the Democratic nomination for the President of the United States. Supporting the American expansion of Texas helped. The expansion of Texas gave slave owners reason to believe that non-White indigenous people would move further westward, and slavery could be practiced in the new territory. James K. Polk was a Democratic President that is arguably one of the worst Presidents for the Black cause. If it were up to him, there is a good chance that Blacks would still be enslaved today.

Franklin Pierce served as President from 1853 to 1857. He was a product of the Jackson Democratic camp, too. Like the rest of his predecessors, Pierce was a strong advocate for slavery and its expansion. He supported the Nebraska-Kansas Act of 1854 which allowed for the expansion of slavery to that new territory. It gave citizens the latitude to incorporate slavery into their territory. In other words, it was up to the state to decide if it was going to be a free state or

slave state. This act negated the Missouri Compromise of 1820, which prohibited slavery in land north of the 36 degrees 30 minutes parallel. It is obvious he was a southern sympathizer. He, as well as his father, owned slaves. The signing of the bill was a bold and costly move for President Pierce. The Whig Party split with the Northern Whigs joining the new Republican Party while the Southern Whigs joining the new Democratic Party. It was clear that the newly formed Republican Party, headed by Abraham Lincoln was for the abolition of slavery. The signing of the Nebraska-Kansas Act was arguably the single most important piece of legislation that led to the Civil War, which had been brewing for years.

James Buchanan succeeded Franklin Pierce as President of the United States and served from 1857 to 1861. President Buchanan was considered a southern sympathizer because of the actions he took that led to the Civil War, which was his participation in the repeal of the 1850 Compromise. Buchanan sided with Stephen Douglas, a controversial, fence-hopping (on the issue of slavery), well-known and persuasive senator from Illinois, who pushed for popular sovereignty, in which states could choose whether it wanted to be a slave state or free state (Peck, 2005). This was against the wishes of the Northerners, and Northern Democrats who cared. President Buchanan did this by endorsing the Lecompton Constitution, one that was written by proslavery supporters with the goal of having slavery legal in Kansas and excluding free Blacks from living in Kansas. The legitimacy of the document was highly questionable because of the illegal voting practices at the polls in which voting fraud was prevalent among the proslavery citizens, yet President Buchanan supported it. The voting fraud assisted in the Lecompton Constitution being passed (Garrison, 2016). President Buchanan supported the earlier Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, which allowed bounty hunters and the like to arrest and return runaway slaves who escaped from their masters. There is nothing positive President James Buchanan did before, while, or after his tenure to improve the quality of life of African Americans.

The next Democratic president was Grover Cleveland, who served two terms, 1885–1889 and 1893–1897. He was the first Democrat President elected in 24 years and the first Democratic president who had to deal with America after slavery was abolished. At this point, support for Black civil rights in America was at an all-time low. With that being said, President Cleveland did little to improve the quality of life for Black Americans regarding civil rights or anything else. He did this by letting southerners know that they had a friend in the White House. He felt that Blacks were inferior to Whites. He opposed integrated schools in New York but supported Jim Crow laws, by opposing efforts to protect African American voting rights President Cleveland's hiring of Blacks in the White House and positions in the federal government was mediocre. He did not appoint African Americans to patronage jobs. However, he did let Frederick Douglas keep his position as recorder of deeds. To add insult to injury, President Cleveland appointed two anti-African Americans to his cabinet, a Mississippian named Lucius Lamar and an Arkansan named Augustus Garland. They were appointed as Secretary of Interior and Attorney General, respectively. President Cleveland later nominated (who was later confirmed) Lucius Lamar to the United States Supreme Court. Lucius Lamar was part of the Mississippi Plan, one that was established in 1875 that violently drove Blacks out of politics through voting intimidation, killings, and overthrowing the Republican Party. It is obvious that President Grover Cleveland did very little to help the Black cause. He had 8 years to improve the quality of life for African Americans, but it appears that it was not part of his presidential agenda.

After a 16-year hiatus from the presidency, Woodrow Wilson was elected president of the United States. Woodrow Wilson served this position as a Democrat from 1912-1921. Woodrow Wilson was a known segregationist, racist, and considered by some the most anti-Black President of the 20th century. When he became President of the United States, one thing he did was permitted segregation in federal offices. This is not to say that support for segregation automatically makes a person a racist. President Wilson in his thinking felt that Blacks would be better off segregated from Whites because of the racial tension that existed between the groups. This is one of President Wilson's quotes from a conversation with Monroe Trotter of the Crisis Magazine in 1915 justifying segregation: "Segregation is not humiliating, but a benefit, and ought to be so regarded by you gentlemen. If your organization goes out and tells the colored people of the country that it is a humiliation, they will so regard it, but if you do not tell them so, and regard it rather as a benefit, they will regard it the same. The only harm that will come will be if you cause them to think it is a humiliation" (Dubois, p119-120). It appears that President Wilson convinced himself that he was doing Black people a favor with segregation. However, President Wilson made only nine appointments of Blacks during his first term in office, while the previous president William Taft appointed 31 Blacks to office while he was in office (Katz, 1915). In addition, President Wilson's segregation policies resulted in Blacks not getting federal jobs and using inferior bathrooms. Also, Blacks had to deal with Jim Crow segregation threats and violence at voting polls. Yet, some Blacks still voted for Woodrow Wilson over Taft. Another quote by President Wilson states: "self-preservation [forced whites] to rid themselves, by fair means or foul, of the intolerable burden of governments sustained by the votes of ignorant negroes" (Knapp, 2016 p.1 para 5). President Wilson said this in reference to the South having a hard time dealing the racial policies of the Reconstruction that favored African Americans gaining equal rights. During his presidency, Wilson showed a private screening of a movie entitled "Birth of a Nation" by D.W. Griffith. The movie depicted African Americans as denigrated villains who raped White women while the Ku Klux Klan was portrayed as saviors of the South. President Wilson praised this movie and is quoted as saying: "It is like writing history with lightning, and my only regret is that it is all so terribly true." (Wormser, 2002). This quote says a lot about President Woodrow Wilson's attitude toward African Americans. Even after Wilson's presidency, he continued his racist ways toward African Americans. While serving as President of Princeton University, Wilson discouraged black to apply by telling them they won't feel comfortable in that atmosphere (Cooper, 2015). When he was governor of New Jersey he did not hire any blacks to important positions. It is no wonder why many historians view President Wilson as the most anti-black president of the 20th century. President Wilson was so anti-black that during his second term for presidency, political and social leaders like WEB Dubois recommended blacks to vote for socialist party candidate or not to vote at all.

It was not until President Franklin D. Roosevelt took office that blacks once again felt confident that a Democratic president would fight for their cause. President Roosevelt tenure lasted from 1933-1945. Blacks felt enthusiastic about President FDR because he convinced them that their vote for him will not be wasted. And he showed it. Although President Roosevelt failed in passing the Anti-Lynching law that would have prohibited the KKK and like organizations from lynching black people, he did champion some civil rights legislation and won over the hearts and votes of hundreds of thousands of black Americans. Some researchers argue that it was a given fact and almost daily occurrence that blacks were being lynched by whites throughout the United States, but the lynching was more concentrated in the South. (Chadbourn, 1933). And it was done for racial reasons and misplaced blame for whites not being successful.

President Roosevelt knew of the actions of those lynchers in the South, but he could not risk the passage of his New Deal Economic Plan. He needed the votes of Southern Democrats for his New Deal measure to pass. Writing anti-lynching legislation would have risked the votes of the Southern Democrats resulting in New Deal failing to pass (Leuchtenburg,1963). It was politics as usual. However, President Roosevelt did some things to help the black cause. Because of the New Deal, some blacks faired out much better economically than they did before the New Deal existed. The New Deal boosted the Aid given to everyone including blacks during the depression era. With the help of his wife, Eleanor Roosevelt, President Roosevelt opened the door for black employment, their self-esteem, and self-worth to rise by creating agencies like the Works Progress Administration (WPA), the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), the National Youth Administration (NYA), Public Works Administration (PWA), the Federal Music Project, the Federal Theater and Writing Projects. All these agencies, in one way or another, contributed to blacks improving their quality of life in America (Leuchtenburg, 1963). The actions that President Roosevelt took to help the black cause are much better than his Democratic predecessors and most of the Republican presidents before him. Therefore, it is no surprise that blacks threw their voting support behind President Franklin D. Roosevelt with the black vote ranging from 71% in 1936, about 70% in 1940, and about 70% in 1945. This is not to say that whites did not benefit or benefitted less than blacks from the New Deal. It is to say that most Americans benefitted.

President Harry S. Truman followed FDR as the next Democratic president of the United States. It can be argued that President Truman did more for the black cause than any other Democratic president besides Lyndon B. Johnson (Gardner, 2002, Lewis, 2016). For starters President Truman grew up in Independence, Missouri. His ancestors owned slaves. His environment swayed his political beliefs while he was a kid. He had the attitude of most white youths in his town which was that "white" was better than "black." He was taught many of his prejudices by his family. In fact, his future wife stated that a young Truman said people are of equality if they were not black or Chinese. He believed in these views so much that he eventually paid $10.00 to join the Ku Klux Klan (Trueman, 2013). Yet, it can be argued that the young Truman did not join the Klan. According to the retired President Truman, he could not have joined the Klan in his younger years because he was Catholic. Catholics could not become Klansmen. President Truman also referred to the Klan as "cowards in bedsheets." Although there is controversy in whether President Truman was a Klansman or not, his actions as the President of the United States indicates that he probably was not. If so, he left those days long behind him.

As Harry S. Truman matured, his political views publicly changed. While serving as vice-president under FDR, became experienced on how to deal with civil rights. It appears that President Truman pushed for civil rights just as FDR did when he was president. In 1948 President Truman signed into act two very important pieces of legislation that helped blacks advanced: Executive Orders 9980 and 9981. Executive Order 9980 created the Fair Employment board which oversaw any discriminatory hiring within the federal government. Executive Order 9981 abolished discrimination and eventually led to the desegregation of the military. The signing of these two executive orders was a major step in blacks receiving equality in the military and federal government. As a result of his courage, President Truman was arguably the first president since Ulysses Grant to directly address a major civil rights problem. He is also arguably one of the top ten presidents to fight for black equality on the United States (Grio, 2012). Blacks in America did what only they could have done for President Truman: that is

showed their gratitude by throwing 77% of their vote behind President Truman in 1948 (Jackson, 2008). The black vote solidified President Truman chance to win the presidency that year.

John F. Kennedy was the next Democratic president of the United States. His tenure lasted from 1961-1963. Though his tenure was short, his legacy left a profound and controversial impact on Black Americans. President Kennedy did not necessarily love or viewed black people as equal to whites. In fact, no president cannot stake that claim. The view of most American presidents was about the black vote, not love of black people. Many American presidents, if not all, even Lincoln, felt that blacks were inferior to whites, intellectually and morally. Most U. S. presidents who helped blacks achieve equality in the United States did so because they had to, either for the black vote, or because of their feelings of immorality of the treatment of blacks by whites. Even President Lincoln said that slavery was going to remain in the South if the South did not secede. President Kennedy, although beloved by many blacks and considered the most beloved president by blacks, second to Lincoln, had reluctant feelings toward blacks also. While in the senate, President Kennedy voted against the Civil Rights bill of 1957. The Act allowed for more voting protection for blacks and other minorities and laid the foundation for the federal government to take a more progressive role in protecting already established civil rights for blacks, such as the 1954 Brown v Board of Education landmark case in which the Court ruled that Jim Crow and other forms of segregation was against the law. Again, John F. Kennedy voted against this act. It is not surprising that JFK did not vote for the bill, because he was a northern Democrat who played both sides of the fence to get the black and southern white votes later when he ran for president of the United States. However, John F. Kennedy did do some things for blacks that were much needed and appreciated. While still senator and during the 1960 presidential debate, John F. Kennedy gave Coretta Scott King a sympathy call when her husband, Dr. Martin Luther King was arrested and sentenced to 4 months hard labor for staging a sit-in in Atlanta, GA. Robert Kennedy went a little further and called the judge, resulting in MLK Jr. being released on bail. Blacks throughout the United States were overwhelmed with joy, resulting in Senator Kennedy solidifying the black vote at 68% in the 1960 presidential election (DeShay, 2007). After the election, President Kennedy seemed to have forgotten about blacks or he felt that there were other important pressing issues than civil rights Americans had to deal with. Some issues that President Kennedy spoke about during his campaign run for presidency such as eliminating segregation in housing with a stroke of his pen, he did not do, at least immediately. However, in 1961, President Kennedy created the committee that started the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). He did this by signing Executive Order 10925 which prohibited federal contractors from discrimination based on race, creed, color, or national origin.

Racial conflicts and protests continued to manifest throughout the United States but more in the South than in the North. President Kennedy had no choice but to react to the violence that was the result of those conflicts and protests. He made several moves. One was that in 1961, he ordered the U. S. Marshalls to protect the Freedom Riders---a group of 13 African American and white civil rights activists that were part of Congress for Racial Equality (CORE), whose mission was to integrate facilities in the Deep South. CORE came under attack by white terrorists and terrorists' groups in Alabama for participating in sit-ins, using whites' only bathrooms, and demanding service at whites only lunch counters (History.com, 2023). In 1962, President Kennedy responded to the James Meredith volatile situation by having U. S. Marshalls and federal troops escort Mr. Meredith to register at the University of Mississippi. In 1963, African

Americans throughout the South (but at that time particularly in Birmingham, Alabama), made national television, as violence broke loose. The entire nation saw thousands of black people, including over 1,000 children, who peacefully protested discrimination being arrested, drenched with high pressure fire hoses, and bitten by dogs by the police and other mobs of southerners who opposed the protesters. This was an embarrassing moment in United States history, while other countries around the world witnessed the ill-treatment of African Americans in America. This incident resulted in President Kennedy giving a speech to address the hostility and mistreatment of African Americans by white citizens and the police. The 1963 speech was considered the moral and constitutional framework that led to the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, resulting in JFK being recognized as a champion for black progression, yet he never lived to see the passage of the act. Interestingly, President Kennedy never passed any new civil rights legislation. However, he did enforce previous legislation such as the 1957 landmark case Brown v Board of Education in which the Supreme Court ruled that segregation in public facilities was unconstitutional. He also was instrumental in many blacks getting jobs in the federal government, appointing black federal judges, and inviting blacks to many social events held in the White House. For these reasons, Black people loved John F. Kennedy. Although President Kennedy was and still is loved by blacks, his legislation towards civil rights was scarce but his effort and persona are what blacks remembered about JFK.

Lyndon B. Johnson assumed the U. S. Presidency in 1963 when President John F. Kennedy was assassinated. Some research indicates that Lyndon B. Johnson had the dual personality like a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. He was very controversial. President Johnson was a very well-known racist, yet he was considered as a champion for civil rights. His political career as United States Senator and United States President includes incidents in which Lyndon B. Johnson either made racist statements against blacks or voted against the betterment of blacks but also show that he voted for one of the most progressive civil rights bills that helped blacks. Lyndon B. Johnson used the word “nigger” very often. Even when voting or garnering support from his constituents for the civil rights act of 1957, Lyndon B. Johnson referred to that bill as the “nigger” bill (Serwer, 2014). Even when President Johnson nominated Thurgood Marshall to the Supreme Court, he is quoted as saying: “When I appoint a nigger to the bench, I want everybody to know he’s a nigger.” (Schwartz, 2014). It can be argued that from his words, he was a racist. But from his actions, it is questionable. LBJ had been in politics since 1937. Some research shows that LBJ voted against every civil rights bill presented before him from 1937 to 1957 (Selby, 2014). However, in 1957 LBJ had a change of heart. Although the Civil Rights bill of 1957 was considered devoid of anything important concerning civil rights by some, Senator LBJ garnered support and got the bill pushed through Congress. In 1964, as president, he was very instrumental in getting the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the brainchild of President John F. Kennedy, passed. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 eliminated Jim Crow laws. Segregation had been illegal since 1954 but President Johnson made sure that segregation was dead, at least on paper. He ended segregation in public facilities, and he made segregation by race illegal. In addition, President LBJ tackled the Voting Rights act of 1965. The Voting Rights of 1965 eliminated poll taxes, illiteracy tests, and other obstacles and barriers as well as intimidation methods used by whites to stop blacks from voting. President LBJ sent federal troops to Selma Alabama after blacks were attacked by Alabama State Troopers while peacefully protesting to vote. The protest was delayed from early March to late March because of the brutality from the state troopers on Alabama citizens. The protest continued later in March 1965, President LBJ dispatched 2,500 U S Army troops and 1,900 Alabama National Guards to protect the protesters (Davis, 1998).

President LBJ spoke about the injustice blacks endured during the protest on national television. In his speech entitled "The American Promise," an excerpt from the speech reads: "What happened in Selma is part of a far larger movement which reaches into every section and State of America. It is the effort of American Negroes to secure for themselves the full blessings of American life. Their cause must be our cause, too. Because it is not just Negroes, but really it is all of us, who must overcome the crippling legacy of bigotry and injustice. And we shall overcome." Eventually, President LBJ signed the Civil Rights Voting Act of 1965. This as well as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 were the first major pieces of civil rights legislation since Reconstruction, and both were signed by President LBJ. President Another government program President LBJ was credited for passing in the 1960's was the *Great Society*. The Great Society was a welfare program that many like Thomas Sowell thought damaged many Black American nuclear families by giving women money while keeping the men out of the house. It can be argued strongly that LBJ was a racist and a civil rights hero. I think that blacks would rather have a president who would insult them but still pass important legislation to free and help them become equal rather than have a president who will not insult them and not fight for their cause. That former is President LBJ.

President Jimmy Carter reigned as President of the United States from 1977 to 1981. President Jimmy Carter received 83% of the black vote in 1976 (Roper. 2023). That should be no surprise, based on President Carter's demographics. In an interview given to Oprah Winfrey, President Carter said things that would make an African American think he was (President Carter) African American. As quoted by President Jimmy Carter in an interview with Oprah Winfrey in September 2015, "I was the only white child in the whole neighborhood. We had about 200 African-Americans who lived in Archery Georgia…I was raised by African American women…I grew up in a black culture…All my friends were African American…the people whom I worked in the field with… and wrestled, fought, and went fishing and hunting with were African-Americans…I try to think of the five people, other than my own parents, who shaped my life, and only two of them are white. The other three were African Americans." (OWN, 2015). With this type of exposure to African Americans it would be hard-pressed to believe that President Carter would do anything maliciously to hurt the African American cause. However, overall, some pundits consider President Jimmy Carter as a weak president who did nothing for no one.

William Jefferson Clinton was POTUS from 1992 to 1998. Presidential candidate William Jefferson Clinton appeared on the Arsenio Hall show with a pair of dark shades playing a saxophone. He caught the attention of many black folks, and it appeared that presidential candidate William Clinton won over some black folks. Adding to his credence, Toni Morrison, a well-known black educator coined President Clinton as the "first black president." That title says a lot for a person who is arguably one of the worst presidents for black people not only in the United States but also those from Africa and the African Diaspora. According to Michelle Alexander, the relationship between African Americans and the Clintons have been going on since the early nineties yet it appears that the relationship is one sided with Blacks loving the Clintons and the Clintons love for Blacks being a fallacy. Alexander makes a good point when she says: "What have the Clintons done to earn such devotion?" (Horitz, 2016 p1 para3). According to Alexander, nothing much. In fact, while POTUS, Bill Clinton supported the tough on crime bill signed a tough on crime bill that affected black and brown men the most. The bill increased drug law enforcement and made it tough on drug dealers. The bill allowed for equal

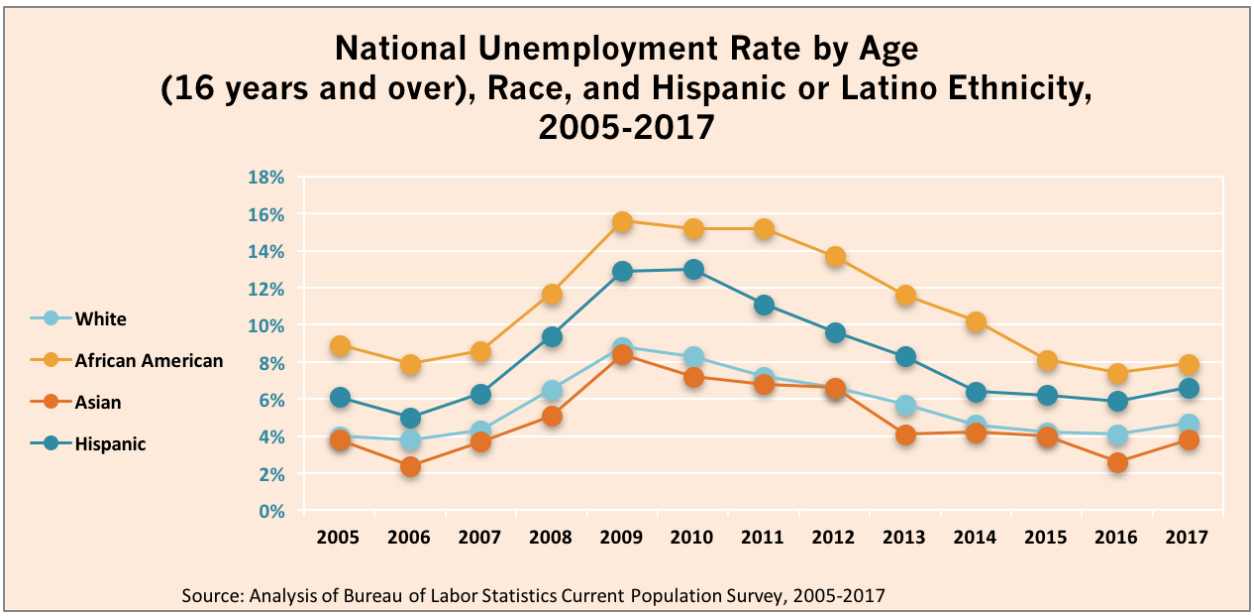
punishment for the 100 (powder cocaine) to 1 (crack cocaine) possession of cocaine penalty. Although powder cocaine is needed to make crack cocaine and both forms of cocaine are highly addictive, blacks were the primary dealers of crack while whites were the primary dealers of powder cocaine (Allen, Latessa, & Ponder, 2012). And only a teaspoon of crack compared to 100 times that of powder will result in the same 5-year sentence. Of course, this is clearly sentencing disparity, but Congress agreed to keep the law as it was, and Bill Clinton was in favor of that law. As POTUS, Clinton promoted the "three strikes" law in 1994. This law mandated life sentences for some three-time offenders who did not commit capital murder. It can be argued that HR3355 the 1994 Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act led to the mass incarceration of many black and brown men in the United States. Again, according to Alexander, when President Clinton term ended in 2001, the United States had the highest incarceration in the world. In addition, 80 to 90 percent of drug offenders sent to prison ((in seven states) were African Americans, yet they were no more likely than whites to use or sell illegal drugs (Alexander, 2016). Not only did the 1994 crime bill do major damage to the black family by incarcerating so many black men, but there was also other questionable policies President Clinton championed that hurt blacks disproportionately. As stated by Melissa Harris Lacewell, besides the mass incarceration rate of African Americans, welfare reform was devastating for black and poor women and the black economy did not prosper as many blacks thought (2008) In short, she argues that the poorest of whites fared much better than the poorest of blacks economically, the richest of the blacks did not fare as well as the richest of the whites, and the median growth between the whites and blacks was significant in favor of the whites. In short, President Clinton, although loved by African Americans, "lulled many blacks into perceptual fog" (Lacewell, 2008). In his defense, after his presidency and sometime during the 2016 presidential election, former President William Clinton admitted that hindsight is 2020 and he thinks that he did do much damage to the black family by signing the crime bill. However, he said that he had an enormous amount of black support.

Although others (i.e., John Hansen, William Clinton, John F. Kennedy), had been given the title as the first unofficial black president in the United States), the only official and recognized black president of the United States was Barak Obama. His tenure lasted 8 years from 2008 to 2006. There was a lot of hope for Democrats, especially black Democrats. There was also a lot of hope among other blacks, too. They, too wanted to see President Obama succeed. I was one of them. I, too, wanted to see President Obama come up with policies that would help all Americans (i.e. equal housing, the creation of more jobs, decrease of discrimination in the work place, and a better plain to help the poor with health care), but targeted policies that would help black Americans (i.e. the allocation of monies to HBCU's, the nomination of a highly qualified black American female to the United States Supreme Court, and an attempt to conquer the crime problem in major cities, especially Chicago, so that community residents could be safe). It is hard to believe that targeted policies that would help the black community was hard to accomplish since our president was in office for 8 years, especially President Obama's first two years when he had a Democratic Congress with the House and Senate being majority Democrat. Critics argue that Barack Obama was the president for all Americans, not only African Americans. But, if President Obama had only tried to do those things and was met with immovable opposition to succeed, I as well as many others who looked at these things as failures in the Obama administration could at least said "he tried." And I think a lot of pro black, regular black people, or critics (even the harsh ones) and even whites who wanted to see the progress of Black Americans would have been satisfied with the effort.

For example, during his tenure, President Obama had three chances to nominate a qualified, articulate, black woman to the United States Supreme Court. He did not. Instead, in 2008, he nominated Sonia Sotomayor. She is of Hispanic descent, was confirmed by Congress, and became the first female Hispanic justice to sit on the United States Supreme Court. In 2010, he had a second chance to nominate a qualified and articulate black woman. Instead, he nominated Elena Kagan. She is of European descent. There was some disturbing controversy that came with President Obama nominating Elena Kagan. One concern was that when she was Dean at Harvard University, she had a very poor record of hiring minorities. As stated in "Fivethirtyeight," the magazine, "[Kagan] hired 32 tenured and tenure-track academic faculty members (non-clinical, non-practice). But when we sat down to review the actual record, we were frankly shocked. Not only were there shockingly few people of color, but there were also very few women. Where were the people of color? Where were the women? Of these 32 tenured and tenure-track academic hires, only one was a minority. Of these 32, only seven were women" (Silver, 2016 p. 1 para 2). This says a lot about diversity. The article continues on and references that Justice Kagan had done nothing different than others in her position when compared to other well-known schools like Yale, Columbia, University of Chicago, and Stanford (Silver, 2010). The third chance that President Obama had to nominate a black woman to the United States Supreme Court was in 2016. Instead, he nominated Merrick Garland, a white European American. What more can be said about President Obama's choices for the United States Supreme Court justice on three occasions? No one wants to label President Obama as the president that looked out for black people (and not all Americans) because he is black. Maybe this is why he did not nominate a black female for the highest court in the land, yet the black vote was the reason why President Obama became president for two terms. However, President Obama will go down in history as the black president who had a chance to make history by nominating the first African American woman to serve on the United States Supreme Court, even if she did not get the approval of congress. President Obama did not realize the impact nominating a black woman would have on his legacy and his community. Let alone the joy that African Americans would have felt if President Obama would have made this history. Nothing, including the now defunct Obama care, the great speeches, the passage of any policies, the signing of any executive order or any other (so called) great accomplishment, none would have been more important than nominating a qualified and articulate black woman to the United States Supreme Court. That black woman would have had a job for life, regardless of the uncertainty of the unemployment rate. What a shame to pass up such a great opportunity! When President Obama was asked to or got the idea to do something specifically for black people, he said he is not the president for black people, he is the president of all Americans. Yet, one can argue that by nominating the first female Hispanic to the Supreme Court, the Hispanics will appreciate that accomplishment for years to come. When President Obama pushed extremely hard for progressing the gay agenda by supporting gay rights and gay marriage, the LGBT community will appreciate that accomplishment for years to come. What can blacks say President Obama did for them that they can relish for years to come? There is nothing that blacks can say that President Obama did for them specifically, while the gays and Hispanics can. All other accomplishments President Obama did was for all American people.

According to unemployment data taken from The Center for Global Policy Solutions, the entire 8 years that President Obama had been in office black employment was worse than any other ethnic group (Manu, 2017). According to the chart, in 2008 when President Obama first took office, black employment rate was right at 12%. In 2009, the unemployment rate rose from

12% to almost 16%. In 2010 and 2011 the unemployment rate of blacks stayed at about 15%and from 2011 to 2016, it made its way back down to where it was in 2007, 8%. This is nationally. But particularly in cities where the crime problem was very bad (i.e. Chicago),



President Barack Obama failed or refused to realize that the black American vote is the reason why he was elected. If black Americans would not have voted in droves for Barack Obama, he would not have won the election, regardless of how the whites and Hispanics voted. So, it is considered an insult by many blacks when President Obama said to black Americans in reference to helping black people that: "I'm not the president of black America. I'm the president of the United States of America…" (Tau, 2012).

One thing that African Americans hold near, dear, and sacred are their Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). During one of Obama's campaign speeches, he compared the discrimination of HBCU's to the predominately white schools in general. His speech gave black students and black educators at HBCU's a lot of hope for HBCU's to receive massive funding to make HBCU's more attractive for HBCU's to compete for students who attend PWI's. But it is fair to say that President Obama scored a bad grade on this issue.

Although some HBCU's were established in the North and before slavery ended, most were established in the South, after slavery was abolished and during Reconstruction. The emergence of HBCUs was the answer to blacks not being allowed to attend predominately white institutions (PWIs) of higher education because of the black codes of the 1800's and enforced segregation during the Jim Crow. For the last few decades, some HBCUs have been struggling to keep their doors open, especially the private ones. This is due to a myriad of reasons including the economy, lack of resources and funding from states and federal governments, mismanagement of funds, low enrollment, lack of donations, and alums not giving back. Of all the reasons given, the costliest reason why HBCUs struggle is lack of funding and resources from state and federal governments. This is where President Obama could have made a huge and

historical impact on the longevity and future of HBCUs. He has the power to allocate monies in the Department of Education's budget in the form of grants and loans. He could have signed an executive order to allocate monies, especially if he felt it was a top priority or an emergency. This is one reason why blacks, vocal and non-vocal, conservative, and liberal, Democrat, Republican and Independent depended on and was hoping for Obama to look out for our sacred treasures. We wanted him to look out for us like we look out for him with the black vote turnout in both elections. He had the ability and power to do it. But why did he not?

Critics of the Obama administration argue that Obama did less for black colleges and universities than most Republican presidents, and the current Republican president, Donald J. Trump, yet Trump is touted by many in the black community and among black liberal commoners, commentators, students, media outlets, pundits, educated elites, and presidents of HBCUs, as a racist president who does not like black people. How could this be if Obama cared about black people and their sacred mainly southern treasures? In an article entitled "Has Any President Done More to Damage HBCUs Than Barack Obama? The author Yvette Cornell says no. She makes the point that the Obama administration made a unilateral decision to change the credit requirements for the students' parents receiving the Parent-Plus loans which affected black students disproportionately. The requirement change made it harder for parents to qualify for the loan. Many parents did not meet the credit requirements and denied the loan. The loan approvals were cut in half from the previous year (2010) resulting in 28,000 to 30,000 students not being able to attend school (Hayes, 2013). This was a major blow to HBCUs enrollment and HBCUs lost over 150 million dollars in revenue. Michael Lomas, president of the United Negro College Fund said that the Obama administration had a nasty surprise for black people. He states, it (the Obama administration) "has begun denying student loans to disproportionately large numbers of black parents because of blemished credit histories." (Milloy, 2013 p1 para 2). In another article entitled "Barack Obama & the $300 million War on HBCUs", the author Jarret Carter argues the same point Cornell does. That is that the decrease in federal funding of the parent plus loans hurt HBCUs drastically from 2011-2013. He states: "Six years and two elections later, presidents and advocates at historically black colleges and universities are quietly expressing outrage with the Obama administration over a perceived lack of interest and engagement toward the institutions. Decreases in federal grant funding to HBCUs and changes in the Parent PLUS Loan Program have cost black colleges more than $300 million in the last two years, one of the worst stretches in history for public HBCU support" (2013). And lastly, in an article entitled *"The Ethnic Cleansing of Historically Black Colleges and Universities in the Age of Obama: How HBCUs are Turning White,"* Jahi Issa makes the argument that Barack Obama is contributing to the fall of HBCUs, too, with the cuts from his administration. Issa contends that in 2007, the last year President George Bush was in office, he proposed an $85 million cut for HBCUs that would go into effect the 2008-2009 fiscal year. President Obama continued the Bush cuts but increased spending for Hispanic schools up to $200 million, yet the black vote was the reason he won the presidency. The cuts to HBCUs continued during Obama's second term. In 2012 Howard University, considered by many as the Flagship HBCU, lost over $7 million while another well-known HBCU, Hampton University, lost over $6 million. The cuts were so devastating to those schools as well as other HBCUs that black leaders threatened to sue the Obama administration.

Critics also contend that some Republican Presidents have done more for HBCUs than Barack Obama, yet those presidents were considered racists toward black Americans. Literature shows that Ronald Regan was more generous to HBCUs than Barack Obama. In an article

previously mentioned entitled "The Ethnic Cleansing of Historically Black Colleges and Universities in the Age of Obama: How HBCUs are Turning White," Jahi Issa contends that HBCUs was appreciated financially by the Republican president Ronald Regan. He was more generous to HBCUs that Barack Obama. Also, according to Issa, the Regan administration, under Executive Order 12320, created federal efforts to strengthen HBCUs. Issa also contends that it was the Regan administration that created the first advisory board to deal with HBCUs specifically. Issa makes another point that is important for readers to hear (Issa, 2013). In an article in *Campus Reform* entitled "Democrat prof: Reagan did more to help black education than Obama" Professor Jahli Issa states "African Americans need to know that it was the Republicans, it was conservatives, the father of contemporary conservatism. He goes on to say that "it was President Ronald Reagan, who signed for the protection of HBCUs...He did that. It wasn't the liberal Democrats and Republicans need to point this out…" (Lit, 2014 p.1 para 2). Another president who is considered by many as a racist gave more money to HBCUs than Barack Obama. That was President Donald Trump. President Donald Trump took office in 2016. Media outlets including CNN, MSNBC, CBS, and other liberal organizations, as well as, the Huffington Post, the Root, the New York Times, and the Washington Post consistently paint the narrative that President Donald Trump was and still is a racist who does not like black people. If those commentators and journalists for those media outlets paint the negative narrative that Donald Trump does not like black people, what is the point if he gave more money to HBCUs than the so-called black President Barack Obama? Seems like the case is closed. In a news story broadcast by WUSA9 an CBS affiliate out of Washington, DC entitled "Verify: Has Trump Given More Money to HBCUs than any Other President? verify if that statement is true. According to this story, with documents from the U. Department of Education Budget Service, the statement is true (Block, 2018). In addition, on February 28, 2017, President Donald J. Trump signed an executive order known as the White House Initiative to Promote Excellence and Innovation at Historically Black Colleges & Universities. This initiative makes HBCU's a top priority for the White House. Specifically, though, the executive order gave solidified permanent monies to HBCUs. Known as the Future Act, HBCUs permanently receives $255 million in annual funding. Trump also increased funding for the Federal Pell Grant program. The so-called racist towards blacks President Donald J. Trump gave the most money to HBCUs than all his predecessors, including the non-racist President Barack Obama.

There were many critics of President Obama, and rightfully so. Many of them sung the same song: Obama did nothing for black people in America, yet black Americans set voter turnout records in 2008 and 2012 to secure Obama's victory in the White House. One critic was Thomas Sowell. In a YouTube video he stated that Obama was the worst president ever. (LibertyPen, 2016). One critic was Tavis Smiley. In his book entitled "*The Covenant with Black America: Ten Years Later*," Tavis Smiley argues that since Barack Obama became president, blacks have lost ground every major economic indicator category, black America has lost ground. He argues that he is not sure why the bottom fell out in black America, but he contends that deference, indifference, obstruction, and lack of interest played a major part. According to Fox news, in 2012, 94% of African Americans voted for Barack Obama while 6% voted for Mitt Romney. This is an extremely lopsided vote. This should also be an indication that blacks in America, especially Democrats, are doing much better than they were in 2008 when Barak Obama received 95% of the black vote according to the Roper poll at Cornell University. This is not necessarily true. According to the National Labor Statistics, in January 2009, black employment was at 12.7%, but in 2013, the black unemployment rate was at 13.5%. In 2009,

almost 8,000,000 blacks needed food stamp assistance while in 2011 over 10,000,000 blacks participated in the food stamp program. In 2009 almost 10,000,000 blacks were living in poverty but in 2011, almost 11,000,000 blacks were living in poverty. It is easy to argue that President Obama did nothing to improve the black cause. These statistics show he made it worse for the black cause. However, one can argue that President Obama did plenty for the LGBTQ community. In 2012, he supported same sex marriage and nominated justices to the U. S. Supreme Court who had the same views. In 2015, he repealed the Don't Ask Don't Tell policy which allowed lesbians, bi-sexual, and gays to serve openly in the military. And in 2017, President Obama rescinded the policy that banned transgender people from serving in the U. S. military. There is no doubt that the Obama administration did tremendous things for the LGBQT community. Hispanics could argue that President Obama did a historical thing for their people, too. In 2009, President Obama nominated Sonia Sotomayor, the first Hispanic woman to the U. S. Supreme Court. Some critics argue that Obama had the right to nominate Justice Sotomayor while others felt that Obama sold the black race out. This is because black Americans came out in droves and voted for Obama with the expectation that he would nominate the first qualified black female to the U. S. Supreme Court. Of course, Obama did not feel for blacks the way blacks felt about him. Overall, President Obama according to Thomas Sowell and Tavis Smiley argue that President Obama did nothing that stood out for black in America. However, the LGBTQ community and the Hispanics may feel otherwise.

In November 2020, Joe Biden defeated President Donald Trump for the POTUS. Joe Biden became President if the United States in 2020, defeating Donald Trump. He received the most votes in American history, garnering over 81million (Lewis, 2020). Joe Biden had been vice president for Barak Obama from 2008-2016. Besides being a Democrat, being the vice president for the first official black president of the U. S. was Joe Biden needed to get the black vote. A whopping 90 percent of black Americans voted for Joe Biden (Stafford, 2020). This percentage of the black vote solidified Joe Biden's victory for the U. S. presidency. The pattern for the Democrats getting the black vote continued, even though Joe Biden had a questionable and controversial past with black Americans while he was a U. S. Senator. There is evidence that every person who became U. S. president as a Democrat exhibited racism toward blacks in either their actions or language or he was a liberal. It can be argued that President Joe Biden fits both categories. In an article entitled "Will Black Voters Still Love Biden When They Remember Who He Was?," author Eric Levitz writes that as U. S. senator, Biden said racist things about blacks and voted for several policies that harmed black progression in the United States ranging from school bussing to referring to black men as predators, to writing and voting for policy (such as the Biden Crime Bill) that contributed to the mass incarceration of black men with the war on drugs. As stated by Levitz: "Joe Biden once called state-mandated school integration "the most racist concept you can come up with," and Barack Obama "the first sort of mainstream African American who is articulate and bright and clean." He was a staunch opponent of "forced busing" in the 1970s, and leading crusader for mass incarceration throughout the '80s and '90s. Uncle Joe has described African American felons as "predators" too sociopathic to rehabilitate — and white supremacist senators as his friends…(2019). And, as of this writing, a plurality of black Democrats wanted him to be their party's 2020 nominee. Obviously, that was not enough proof of racism from Joe Biden for black Americans to disavow him because blacks went out in droves and voted for Biden when President Trump did so much for blacks while he was president including allocating more money to HBCUs than any other president, fully forgiving about $3million to HBCUs for past disaster loans, allowing faith based HBCUs to receive federal

funding. President Trump also signed the Future Act which allowed for HBCUs to permanently receive $255 million annually and an increase of scholarship monies and grants. While Biden was a U. S. senator or serving as vice president of the United States under President Obama, HBCUs did not receive this amount of funding. As president Joe Biden did not surpass what President Trump did financially for HBCU's. Another point necessary to make is about his role in the mass incarceration of black men. While Biden as a U.S. senator wrote and supported the 1994 crime bill (aka the Biden Crime Bill) which led to the mass incarceration of black men in the 1990's, President Trump signed the First Step Act, a sweeping landmark criminal justice reform policy which allowed for first time nonviolent offenders who was sentenced harshly under Joe Biden's crime bill a chance to be released and a become a productive citizen in society again. Obviously, this was not enough proof for blacks to disavow Joe Biden because as I mentioned earlier, black Americans went out in droves and voted for him over President Trump, yet clearly President Trump did more positive things for blacks in four years than Joe Biden did for Blacks as a U. S. Senator, VPOTUS, and POTUS.

Conclusion

Since the inception of the United States, there have been a myriad of political parties vying for citizens votes. Some of those parties include the Whigs, Federalists, Democratic-Republicans, Republicans and Democrats. There is also a myriad of Independent political parties such as the Green and Libertarian, but the United States is known as a two-party system. Currently, the two systems are the Democrats and the Republicans. Democrats were established in 1828 while the Republicans were established in 1860. The voting behavior of Black Americans is quite interesting. In 1870, the 15th Amendment of the U. S. Constitution gave Black men the right to vote. In 1920 the 20th Amendment gave Black women the right to vote. From the 1870's to the 1930's Black Americans overwhelmingly voted Republican, and this made much sense because the Republican party ran on the platform of abolition of slaves. But in the 1930's Black Americans began to throw their support behind the Democratic candidate. But why did Black Americans begin to vote Democrat when that party wanted to keep them enslaved only 60 years earlier? Why would Black Americans begin to vote Democrat when that party denied them of their basic Constitutional rights including the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments? Why would Black Americans begin to vote Democrat when that party clearly exhibited racism towards them and tried to diminish their quality of life whenever possible by creating liberal policies like welfare that destroyed the black nuclear family, the Biden crime bill that contributed to mass incarceration of black men and the demise of the black nuclear family. I guess the Democratic party has figured it out: Black Americans will vote Democrat regardless of how they are treated.

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EXPLORING ADMINISTRATORS AND TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES ON FALSE ACCUSATIONS OF SCHOOL PERSONNEL LEVIED BY STUDENTS

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Abstract

The problem is school systems may lack detailed guidelines on how teachers make physical contact with their students and protect themselves from false accusations of inappropriate behaviors. An exploratory case study was conducted on the perceptions of administrators and teachers on the school district's policies on appropriate physical contact with students. Through the triangulation of the data sources, a list of five major categories emerged: physical contact (any questions and responses about the topic), district policies (perceptions, what are the policies, how are they communicated, and accountability), experiences with false accusations (personal or not, and how they were managed), training (annual and mandatory), and support for teachers. Educational leaders may use the findings to improve the protection of school personnel by developing clearer policies.

Exploring Administrators' and Teachers' Perspectives on False Accusations of School Personnel Levied by Students

The National Center for Education Statistics (2022) revealed students as well as teachers are victims of violence in schools. The effects of violent acts can be significant and long-lasting for both students and teachers. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2018), United States schools should offer a secure natural environment that guarantees teaching and learning occur free of crime and violence. On many occasions, the misconduct of students, teachers, or outside intruders can interrupt the expected sanctuary of school environments. The interruption of the educational process impacts all individuals involved, the school, and the community (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018). Although there has been an increasing desire to protect students from instances of bullying, gun violence, sexual assault, assault, and battery, teachers need to be protected also.

Malone (2020) proposed that most teachers behave morally. When teachers perform acts, such as cheating, plagiarism, inappropriate treatment of students or colleagues, and fabricated data/test scores, these behaviors indicate that teachers may need intentional ethical training (Malone, 2020). While much attention has been paid to the effects of teacher transgressions against students, the pressure from society seems to be mounting concerning questionable actions of teachers, and the incidences must be checked because teachers are viewed as moral agents (Campbell 2006; Grant, Shakeshaft, and Mueller 2019). Public interest in teachers' misconduct against students being abused sexually and physically has heightened because of media scrutiny. A Canadian Centre for Child Protection (2019) report indicated 70% of the total cases of sexual abuse committed against children by K 12 school personnel for the last past 20 years were publicized in the media.

Bradley (2011) posits there is no central database documenting false accusations because most of the cases are overseen at the local level without national recognition. Thus, the official efforts to quantify the dilemma are hindered by the lack of information (Bradley, 2011). Crimes against teachers such as violent acts, slander, and false allegations by students occur which may lead to detrimental consequences for an educator. A worst-case scenario of a teacher being falsely accused may result in death. According to "Rights Watch: Falsely Accused"(2006), Ron Mayfield Jr., a Virginia teacher, and NEA member was falsely accused of hitting a wheelchair-bound middle school student and he ended his life by jumping off a bridge. Sadly, the news that Mayfield had been found innocent of the charges was not relayed to him ("Rights Watch: Falsely Accused", 2006).

In 2019, an instructional coach, assigned to assist new teachers with instruction and behavior management practices observed the interactions between the students and first-year teachers. The instructional coach offered the teachers suggestions on how to redirect students to form a queue before exiting the classroom for recess. Based on the events that transpired after the suggestions, the instructional coach was accused of assault and battery of the student who was the que leader; however, an investigation by Child Protective Services concluded that the incident was unfounded. The instructional coach's "nightmare" did not end there as she was later arrested, charged, and found guilty of a misdemeanor by the local law enforcement officials and court. The district court of appeals dismissed the case in March 2020.

In this qualitative exploratory case study, one teacher gave the following account of being falsely accused by a student:

- T1 stated:

> "I was accused of pushing a kid who I was encouraging back to his seat. He was sitting in the wrong seat to be near a friend, and I allowed it for the first part of the class. When I asked the student to return to his seat, he refused, argued, and eventually stood up. That is when I gently encouraged him by putting my hands on his shoulder guiding him in the right direction. Unbeknownst to me, the administration got stories from other students and determined the student was making it up. It does not happen often to my knowledge and typically admin manages it diplomatically by getting eyewitness accounts. It is unclear what happens to the students that make up the false accusation and I am not aware of any policies in place to oversee a situation like that."

According to Cruickshank (2020), future research should explore how to best educate teachers and members of the school community about what is contained in the policy document.

Statement of the Problem

The problem is school systems may lack detailed policies on how teachers make physical contact with their students and protect themselves from false accusations of inappropriate behaviors. The information discovered may help school administrators and other relevant stakeholders with developing strategies that could better educate leaders and teachers about this phenomenon with the hope of reducing cases of false accusations levied against them by students. This exploratory case study method was utilized to explore the perceptions of administrators and teachers within school districts in the southeastern region of the United States who have been exposed to incidents of false accusations of student abuse levied against them to gain their perspectives on how schools and schools districts educate them about the policies relates to this phenomenon.

This qualitative exploratory case study based on an exploratory research design seeks to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: How do school-based administrators perceive the school district's policies related to physical contact with students and the extent to which these policies protect them from false accusations of inappropriate behaviors?

RQ2: How do teachers perceive the school district's policies related to physical contact with students and the extent to which these policies protect them from false accusations of inappropriate behaviors?

Administrators' and teachers' accounts of this phenomenon will hopefully shed further light on the problem of false accusations levied against teachers by students and policy changes that may need to be implemented to curtail such incidences.

Significance of The Study

This study may contribute to the body of knowledge concerning school-based administrators and teachers' perceptions of the inadequate school districts' policies on false accusations that have an impact on teachers' professional careers, teachers' ability to effectively promote a good teacher-student relationship, and teachers' misconduct, as well as the parallel constructs of the teacher-student relationship for effective academic progress for students. In addition, this qualitative exploratory case study may contribute to the understanding of exploring

challenges found in school district policies related to teachers being falsely accused by enhancing a more comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon.

Educational leaders must ensure the information included in policies and teachers' awareness of the policies and practices as it relates to students. Cruickshank (2020) opined that the lack of conversation on the topic may contribute to teachers' lack of knowledge of the contents or shortcomings which leads to the appropriateness of teachers' actions. Chamber Mack et al. (2019) suggested that the shortage of teachers has put a strain on school communities to recruit, replace, and train new educators for the vacated positions. According to (Sutcher et. al., 2019), the teachers' positions with high vacancies or math, science, and special education. Hash supported the claim, and suggested shortages are severe among minority teachers, in urban and rural areas as well as for special education, mathematics, science, bilingual instruction, and music teachers.

(Chamber Mack et al., 2019) identified two reasons teachers quit the profession workplace conditions and the desire for a better career. On the other hand, the data analyzed by (Sutcher et. al., 2019) identified four factors for the teachers' shortage: 1. Decrease in teacher training registrations; 2. An attempt to return to pre-recession course offerings and class sizes with lower pupil-teacher ratios; 3. Increasing student enrollment; and 4. High teacher attrition. Hash (2021) suggested the teacher shortage adds to the inequality in P–12 education because fully certified professionals leave under-resourced schools for positions offering higher salaries and improved working conditions. (Sutcher et. al.) proposed the focus of policymakers on recruitment needs to shift more to attrition by reducing attrition to half may increase the national shortage, and the policies need to be addressed at all levels of government.

Literature Review

Hedges (2002) defined false accusations as "an allegation in which it is not possible to establish a direct and clear causal link between actions or inactions" (p. 494). Individuals who are falsely accused are secondary victims of criminal misconduct and could be harmed by social stigma, stress and anxiety, unwarranted threats and violence, imprisonment, and other negative and life-changing experiences (Rumney, et al., 2017). In addition, family members and other close acquaintances may be subjected to similar negative life-changing experiences that could prevent them from feeling safe within their communities (Brooks & Greenberg, 2021). This highlights the need for individuals in authority to ensure that systems are in place to protect members of their organizations from being victims of these false allegations of misconduct or abuse.

Researchers have argued that the lack of a central database or available statistics on false allegations levied against teachers makes it difficult to ascertain the number of false allegations being made against teachers (DeLeon, 2017). Compounding this lack of available statistics is the reality that it is difficult to identify false allegations if there is limited or no evidence available to determine that an allegation is false. Dorrell (2009) reported the results of an Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) survey of 1,155 ATL members including support staff, teachers, department heads, and school leaders in state and private schools located in the UK. The findings from the ATL survey were 28% of the school staff had been victims of false accusations by a student, 17% had false claims levied by a student's family member, and 50% of the staff stated either them or their peers had been falsely accused by a student or their family member (Dorrell, 2009).

Hoyle et al. (2016) opined that false allegations could cause a victim to actively withdraw from their social circles, feel alienated from others, lose their confidence, mistrust the criminal justice system and social services, feel depressed, and entertain thoughts of self-harm. Moreover, these false accusations could create several physiological and psychological health risks such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), loss of appetite, fear, withdrawal from friends or co-workers, and loss of jobs, homes, and retirement pensions (Brook & Greenberg, 2021). Student false accusations against teachers could deter individuals from pursuing a teaching career (Burnette et al., 2017).

Gender and False Accusations Levied Against Teachers

Students make false accusations against both male and female teachers. These claims range from teachers being accused by students and parents of being unfair to more severe accusations of physical and sexual harassment (Bradley, 2011). Research, however, indicates that male teachers are at a greater risk of having false accusations levied against them across a wider range of wrongdoings than female teachers (Rumney & McCartan, 2017). Cruickshank et al. (2021) suggested that men may face gender-related challenges related to uncertainty surrounding physical contact in school experiences, questionable sexuality, negative perception of male teachers, and social isolation in the female-dominated field.

School Administrators Roles in Addressing False Accusations

School administrators are key figures in determining the safe climate of schools as well as the motivation and commitment of teachers (McMahon et al., 2017). McMahon et al. argued that the lack of support teachers feel they receive from administrators as well as the violence enacted against teachers highlights the need for improved policies at the school, district, city, state, and federal levels to protect school personnel who are victims of false criminal allegations. Earlier research indicated school administrators were quick to penalize faculty and staff once students levied allegations of abuse against them and suggested that more should be done to provide teachers with fair chances to prove their innocence (Vaughn, 2009). Rumney and McCartan (2017) stated that remaining silent on the controversial topic of false accusations because of myths or ignorance further harms teachers. Two myths Rumney and McCartan cited were: a person discussing the issue of false rape allegations may feed into societal myths regarding women as dishonest or malicious liars; Another myth claimed that discussing falsity may lead to a repercussion against believing the victims. Thus, the issue of false accusations against teachers may need to be addressed at the local, state, and national levels.

Conceptual Framework

Bolman and Deal (1991) proposed in the conceptual framework that structural leaders respect the analysis of data, watch their bottom line, establish clear guidelines, hold people accountable for results, and try to solve organizational problems with new policies and rules through reorganization. Fruehauf, et al. (2015) examined Lee Bolman and Terrence Deal's analytic tool Reframing Organizations for understanding an organization which was broken down into the following frames: The Structural Frame defined as an organization's rules, roles, goals, policies, technology, and environment. The Human Resources Frame includes the needs, skills, and relationships or the human element of any organization. The Political Frame holds power, and the perception of power is at the center of this frame. The Symbolic Frame was presented as part of a company's vision. According to Al-Omari (2013), the structural frame was

founded on the common ways of thinking about organizations and was rooted in the principle that organizations should be created for the highest level of efficiency. This study was informed by the Structural Frame because of the principle that organizations should be created for the highest level of efficiency, and the perceptions of school-based administrators and teachers may uncover a need for a higher level of efficiency in the organization's policy related to appropriate physical contact between students and teachers.

Methods

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory case study was to explore how K-8 administrators and teachers understand policies and protect themselves. A qualitative case study approach was used to determine how policies address false allegations and work to protect both teachers and students in grades K – 8. In this research study, the targeted population consisted of administrators and teachers from one southeastern region school division in the United States which consisted of approximately 292 school-based administrators and 2,825 full-time teachers who have 58 practiced in the field for at least one year. All genders, ages, and races were invited to participate in the study voluntarily.

Participants

Participants included school-based administrators and teachers who had engaged in interactions with children, either in an informal or formal capacity, for a least a year. Purposive and snowball sampling method was used to select participants for the study. The primary method of sampling strategy was purposive sampling, and the second method was the snowball sampling method.

Recruitment

A recruitment flyer about the study was posted on the researcher's personal LinkedIn and Facebook pages. Participants who expressed an interest either called the number on the flyer or emailed the address about the study. The participants who met the criteria were sent an email with the informed consent and questionnaire attached. Once those documents were returned, the participants were contacted to arrange convenient times to schedule their semi-structured interview session as well as their desired format because the interview could be conducted face-to-face, by phone, or virtually. The participants were informed that the audio recordings would be transcribed following the interviews and that the transcriptions would be used to conduct this study. Although the researcher's goal was to recruit ten participants, the combination of the emails and recruitment flyer yielded nine participants. To achieve the targeted sample size for the study, prospective participants were encouraged to refer individuals who were employed with school districts in the southeastern region of the United States. Two participants were gained through this process.

Data Collection

Data was collected using archival documents on school policies, questionnaires, and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire and semi-structured open-ended questions were developed based on the literature about the phenomenon as well as the research questions. The questionnaire consisted of ten open-ended questions written to invoke rich in-depth thought and responses from the participants' general perspective of school policies. Semi-structured interviews were conducted virtually through Google or Zoom meetings and/or by phone.

Interviews were 45 to 60 minutes in length (Moser & Korstjens, 2018) and were audio-recorded. After the recordings were transcribed, the participants were asked to verify that the information contained in the transcript of their interview was accurate. The participants also had the opportunity to include additional information that they might not have shared during the interview.

Archival Data

A specific district in the southeastern region of the United States was studied. The researcher accessed District A's school board policy through a publicly accessible website. The researcher analyzed the archived school board policy to triangulate the data and to determine similarities and differences on the topic of physical contact with children and how educators can protect themselves from false accusations levied by students against teacher misconduct against students.

Data Analysis

At the onset of the study, the researcher developed initial themes based on the participant's responses to the questionnaire and the interview questions. For each data source, word queries were formulated in the NVivo, or a list of words was tabulated that included some of the following words: school board, policy, physical contact, corporal punishment, false accusation, policy, district leaders, lack of support, and disciplinary. The previous words listed were placed in categories created based on the initial concepts that were corroborated in the investigation process. The data revealed overarching themes from the collection of data sources until saturation was reached. Through the triangulation of the data sources a list of five major categories: physical contact (any questions and responses about the topic), district policies (perceptions, what are the policies, how are they communicated, and accountability), experiences with false accusations (personal or not, and how they were managed), training (annual and mandatory), and support for teachers.

Results

In this qualitative exploratory case study, the researcher explored how K-8 school-based administrators and teachers understood the school/school district policies about physical contact with students and protect themselves from accusations of inappropriate behaviors levied against them by students. A total of three school-based assistant administrators and six teachers from the southeastern region of the United States were. The problem is school systems may lack detailed policies on how teachers make physical contact with their students and protect themselves from false accusations of inappropriate behaviors.

RQ1: How do school-based administrators perceive the school district's policies related to physical contact with students and to the extent to which these policies protect them from false accusations of inappropriate behaviors?

RQ2: How do teachers perceive the school district's policies related to physical contact with students and to the extent to which these policies protect them from false accusations.

Questionnaire and Semi Structured Interviews

A total of nine participants were interviewed in one-on-one sessions. Though there was an option for a face-to-face interview, one participant chose a phone interview, another one chose to be faced time, and the other participants agreed to a virtual meeting either through Zoom or Google. The responses on the official questionnaires supported the responses from the interview sessions. Five themes emerged from both data sources (questionnaires and interviews). As a result of the coded information, a condensed version of the five themes were:

1. Perceptions of appropriate and inappropriate physical contact varied
2. Knowledge about the policy on physical contact was limited in general
3. Experiences or knowledge of false accusations surfaced
4. Lack of professional development on appropriate physical contact
5. Teachers not feeling supported by the district or administration.

Perceptions of appropriate and inappropriate physical contact varied

Zarra (2016) proposed districts and schools addressing what is proper and educational between teachers and students are being proactive rather than reactive. A dilemma or controversy exists concerning the use of physical contact with children (Sanatullova-Allison, 2010). Based on the participant's responses in the current study, their perceptions of appropriate and inappropriate physical contact varied at times. However, they agreed that acts like forcefully grabbing, hitting, unwanted touching, sexual acts, and others were forms of inappropriate physical contact. Their perceptions of the district's policy on these inappropriate acts also varied.

- AP1 recalled the following account on policy:

  "I do not remember seeing anything for adults, but I do remember conversations about rights and responsibilities for students. I do remember a principal each year going over that with the teachers each year. Though it was for the students, they would gloss over what the expectations were for the teachers. Not in full details but insinuated. Don't be alone, avoid hugging, be careful how you hug, and keep touch to a minimal and things of that nature. It is kind of glossed over." AP1 also commented on the limited information included in the district manual. No manual with details about physical contact. Just conversation.

- AP2 stated:

  "In my school district, they have given us some new professional academies. As a former special education teacher, I was trained in physical contact with students. As an administrator, I was trained in crisis prevention and intervention. Our district has made it clear. If a staff member witnesses an incident, certain protocols must be followed as well as certain types of holds must be used to protect themselves from litigation with parents. However, most of the staff in the district are extremely uncomfortable with putting their hands out to help a child."

- T3 stated:

  "I was not sure about the district policy, but I remembered a former principal who referred to an incident where a parent saw a teacher who grabbed a kid's arm or something. He called a meeting and said, "Listen, I'm gonna tell you right now, do not

touch these kids. Whatever you do, keep your hands off these kids.”” To further substantiate the claim that most of the participants' perceptions about the district's policy were unclear.

- T4 stated:

  “When I tried to figure out what the policy was, I went to the school district's website looking for the information and could not find anything about conduct and teachers overseeing of children in the employee section or parent section.” The participants were not able to refer to specific policies cited by the district on guidelines or regulations for interacting with students.

Cruickshank, 2020; Sanatullova-Allison stated some male primary teachers are highly aware of the dangers of having physical contact with students because of the perceptions of other educators and parents about male teachers' physical contact with students being harmful to children. Johansson et al. (2021) argued the issue of physical touch between children and educators is complex and can encompass positive effects of touching as well as have negative outcomes which may arouse the improper aspect of touching. Mania-Singer (2017) claimed the lack of interaction between members of the district central office and principals resulted in a centralized network structure that may prevent the transfer of knowledge and communication which could hinder school-level improvement efforts.

Thus, the participants in the study validated the finding of a lack of understanding of school policy on inappropriate or appropriate physical contact with students because of unclear communication methods between the schools and district. Mania-Singer suggested that district-level leaders should create a formal structure for the communication of information and facilitate collaboration among people to share their expertise interchangeably between both entities. The data collected from the participants highlighted the need to have concise policies on appropriate and inappropriate physical contact with students which could provide better protection from false accusations levied by students about abuse. However, some teachers do abuse children which is usually managed at the school or district level, and some accusations may be true, but many of the accusations have proven to be false or are unsubstantiated teachers (Sanatullova-Allison, 2010).

Knowledge about the policy on physical contact was limited in general

Cruickshank et al. (2020) argued there was an obvious omission from the policy document on physical contact because none of the participants clearly expressed the policy that contributed to their fear and uncertainty about making physical contact with their students which demonstrated a lack of conversation on the topic. A pervasive attitude of uncertainty prevailed among the participants of this case study. Some of the responses about the policies on physical contact were as follows: assumptions there is a policy or not sure if they ever heard of a policy on appropriate physical contact. According to Cruickshank et al., there were inadequacies in the policies determining the appropriateness of their actions because most participants cited unofficial policies or unwritten rules relating to behaviors on physical contact. Generally, most of the participants' communication about the policy on physical contact was vague such as a known fact not to touch children inappropriately. Fruehauf et al. (2015) suggested the Bolman and Deal four frames model provided an in-depth analysis of the organization and could promote greater success within the organization by attaining transformation in management and workflow

because people in the system were accepted for a defined role and could offer their expertise to improve the organization. Several participants expressed a lack of knowledge of the policies involving physical contact.

In this qualitative exploratory case study, several participants cited the Department of Education webinar on seclusion and restraint as district policy.

- AP3 stated:

  "I am new to the district, and I am not that familiar with their policy, to be very honest, the only policies that I am aware of are the restraint and seclusion policies because of the training that we had to undergo at the beginning of last year and through Department of Education." T1 also mentioned teachers had to complete that seclusion, and restraint training.

- T1 stated:

  "This was the first time in all my years that I had ever seen a policy regarding how to oversee students. I believe when I was out with my children, I missed some of the policy changes or even actually when I started back because I didn't have any information on policy really when I restarted my career again."

- T5 stated:

  "I understand, my district does not want you to touch the kid, but I always find it strange that female teachers seem to get away with a little bit more than male teachers because I've seen female teachers touch kids sometimes. Well, you know, just rub them and it's OK. However, I can't do that. Although the restraint and seclusion webinar were mandated by the State Department of Education, it was not a policy from the district, but it was cited by most of the participants as being district policy."

Several participants expressed a lack of knowledge of the policies involving physical contact. One participant searched the school district's website in which no information was teachers managing children in the employee section or parent section. Cruickshank et al. (2020) acknowledge there was a challenge of inequity that existed in the teaching profession related to gender which included the male teachers' perceptions concerning physical contact, workload, and isolation. For instance, the only male participant in the current study found it strange that female teachers seem to get away a little bit more with interacting with students than male teachers because he witnessed it firsthand. Byer and Salcedo (2007); Zarra (2016) argued policies should be adopted by schools to implement training for teachers, coaches, and administrators to provide professional development vital to their careers.

Experiences or knowledge of false accusations surfaced

Bradley (2011) proposed many cases of false accusations were reported on the local level but never received national attention; there is no central database to keep track of the incidents. Although there is no central database to track incidents, all participants in the study described a situation of being falsely accused of inappropriate physical contact with a student or knowing of someone who had experienced being falsely accused. During the analysis of the data, a few

participants (AP3 and T5) did not note on their questionnaires about accounts of either knowing someone who encountered being falsely accused or experienced it personally.

- AP1 purported:

  "Yes! I know a teacher who was in the situation, and she was given some support. The student accused the teacher of shoving him and pushing him down. Some witnesses could attest that was not true. It was determined to be unfounded, but because the child's parents and lawyer tried to sue the district and were ugly about it, the news media focused on the negative. The news media interviewed the kid and their parents. Since we are instructed as an educator not to talk to the media, the media displayed the teacher in a negative light. Even though it was unfounded, she was not allowed to return to that school. She was transferred to a new position, not school based. She worked out of a department for grant writing or curriculum writing, not back in the classroom. I sort of felt like she was punished or maybe forced to resign. I did not think that was right."

- AP3 stated:

  "I have heard of a person who had an encounter with a student who was not being honest about being inappropriately touched by the teacher, and not only was the student being dishonest, but the parent was also on board in the deception. In my view, it's very unfortunate. I do feel like just as districts have policies to deal with inappropriate touching by teachers of a student. There should be something in place regarding students' consequences for ultimately almost ending a teacher's career over an allegation that was false. T5 described two accounts of being falsely accused by students. In the first account, the teacher reported being accused of inappropriate physical contact after he was attacked by a student."

- T5 stated:

  "They [Cafeteria Monitors] were letting the kids leave the cafeteria from breakfast to go back to class. The little girl was almost as tall as I am. I said to her, "Baby walk on the other side of the hallway." Well, that was the wrong thing to say to her that day because she jumped on me. Wow! I remembered what they showed us in class on restraining students. The principal said, let her go and I said, she is going to hit me. I held her until the principal got there."

Bradley (2011) proposed students' accusations are usually considered to be true accounts because of the belief kids do not lie, and school boards, unions, and educational stakeholders need to make improvements to the policies. When the participants who had not directly experienced being falsely accused explained knowing about another person's plight with the phenomenon, their feelings were mixed. However, for those who had directly experienced the phenomenon feelings were expressed in a definitive type of way such as disbelief. Hoyle et al. (2016) suggested people who have been falsely accused may feel when the error is corrected, others may still believe they are guilty which may leave them feeling stigmatized by what others believe, and this may affect how they feel about themselves. As the number of accusations being made against teachers continues to increase more teachers will begin to leave the profession (Strauss, 2015).

Although some cases of false accusations have been unfounded, teachers' reputations and careers may be damaged regardless of the findings. de Leon (2017) described Dan Domenigoni case, a teacher, who after 5 years won a $70,000 lawsuit against students and parents for defamation of character as well as a not guilty verdict; however, Roger Tally received an innocent verdict, but The California Board of teaching revoked his credentials. According to Jacobson (2004), one district formulated a committee that was made up of teachers, administrators, parents, and other district employees, and the committee recommended employees placed on administrative leave because of an accusation of misconduct should be given an update on the investigation every three to five days. A policy like this may give educators a certain level of support because of being aware of what is happening with the investigative process. Some of the participants in the study felt like they had no voice in the process and did not know what was happening.

Lack of professional development on appropriate physical contact

Honig (2013) postulated the implementation model of bureaucratic policymaking does not provide an appropriate guideline for principals or supervisors in buildings to ensure the mandated policy was put into practice because of the top-down approach. Honig proposed utilizing a collaborative education policy in which one of the focuses would be central office administrators enabling and supporting the implementation of school sites' collaborative decisions making. In general, all the participants believed that increased professional development is warranted to accurately determine appropriate physical contact with students.

- AP1 stated:

  "They [the school district] need to put a clear policy in place and have a committee over the summer to review the current policy." The committee should consist of faculty and staff across the district, not just the principals. A survey should be sent out to get feedback on the topic. During the preservice week, staff should be required to review the policies on the topic. The school district should have online modules ready for school personnel to take that would hold individuals accountable. This is an excellent topic and something that needs to be discussed. Make sure the policy is clear and it was eye-opening because I reflected on the districts that discussed this. I had to pull out some of my manuals and handbooks from previous districts. The topic was kind of glossed over."

- AP3 recommended:

  "The district should make sure their staff, principals and teachers know about policies. Bring it to the front and talk about it. Professional development about it that can be brought back down to the school level and gone over a lot with the teachers as well as other staff members in the building about what is appropriate and what can be viewed as inappropriate, depending on the sex of the teacher. If it's a male or female teacher where the touching happens or the grab or the assist with your hand. So just bring it to light and not let it be in the shadows until something happens."

To support the claim for the need for professional development,

- T6 expressed the following three points:

1. “I think the district leaders need to have a solid policy on appropriate physical contact with students.”
2. “They (district leaders) need to produce ways to educate principals and teachers about the policies relating to the issue.”
3. “Just like the blood pathogen training, social-emotional learning is mandated yearly. There should be annual training on physical contact with students and the proper protocol principals as well as teachers should follow when having physical contact.”

In general, the participants' perceptions of physical contact varied, but most mentioned a requirement by the Department of Education (DOE) for all educators in the district to participate in a webinar on proper restraint and seclusion of students as a district policy; however, this was a DOE webinar mandated by the state not a district policy. Nguyen (2019) defined a policymaker as a member of a government department, legislature, or other organization who is responsible for making new rules, and laws; however, educational policymakers are accountable for formulating legal documents that guide or instruct students, teachers, educational managers/administrators, educational institutions, and other stakeholders. Professional development on appropriate and appropriate physical contact with students may alleviate some of the uncertainty educators have about the issue. Nguyen (2019) explained the purpose of implementing professional development is to enhance an individual's competencies in their role and to help educational leaders and policymakers develop new skills necessary to effectively improve the educational setting which inevitably impacts students' learning. The finding indicated the educators wanted professional development on appropriate and inappropriate physical contact to be proactive rather than reactive to a situation. An assistant principal participant claimed the study was eye-opening because the topic of inappropriate and appropriate physical contact had been glossed over. Hence, questions related to a school system's management and finance capabilities have the propensity to make people doubt the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization (Dupriez & Maroy, 2003).

Teachers not feeling supported by district or administration

Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017) hypothesized the lack of administrative support was cited as one reason teachers left the profession especially if they strongly felt their administration did not support them. A teacher participant who had not directly been accused of misconduct expressed disdain for the lack of support teachers had received from the district and administrators and has embarked on a mission to speak monthly at school board meetings to encourage teachers through poems or letters. Some of the participants in the study gave the following accounts:

- AP2 stated:

  “Sometimes administrators do know parents who could be volatile, and I think that information should be shared with the teacher." I know sometimes people don't want to share that information from year to year because they want it to be the start of a new year. This support from administrators may help eliminate problems that may arise later.”

- T2 stated:

  “The district doesn't seem to be willing to stand up for the teacher. They don't see it. For instance, I am basing my observation on how a young lady, was nearly despaired from

teaching because she was assaulted by a student who had wreaked havoc in grades K -2. The young lady came in saying she was going to have the student arrested. She did call the police, but she ended up getting into trouble and having something put in her jacket (personnel file). This was the teacher's first year, and she had a Title I background currently working a Non-Title I school which is scary because it is two different worlds."

- T3 stated:

"In my opinion, I don't feel like the district cares about us because they're sending us to school with this virus. I feel like everybody's out for themselves, and people are trying to work their way up. If you take a side with somebody and you're anti that person, then you're like blackballed from getting a job as an administrator downtown."

Gonzalez et. al (2008), proposed factors that influenced a teacher's decision to leave the profession were lack of administrative support and difficulties with student discipline. Hence, public school districts, superintendents, administrators, and principals should take note of the findings which include teachers' perceptions of not feeling respected or appreciated based on their contributions to society and take action to improve the culture of the district as well as the schools. Von Bertalanffy (1972) proposed a system consists of various parts and their associations known as the relations systems law, and the interaction and behaviors of the parts with other entities form the organizational relations (Hofkirchner, 2019). When addressing concerns of teachers and administrators being a part of the entire system (school district), educational leaders should involve all stakeholders in the process of revising policies about appropriate and inappropriate interactions with students. The data in the study supports the need to address the feeling of the teacher not feeling supported by administrators or the district.

Conclusion

The questionnaire and interview data revealed that school-based administrators' and teachers' clarity on the school policies on physical contact with a student was unclear overall. The interviews revealed that K-8 teachers perceived the policies need to be more concise and should include a collaboration of all stakeholders to revise the existing policies. Once the policies are revised, mandated training should occur annually holding all educators accountable for knowing what was included in the policies on appropriate physical contact with students. A definite claim cannot be made that all stakeholders are aware of what was contained in the policies regarding physical contact. The data indicated that proper training on the policies was needed, and teachers, school-based administrators, central office personnel, and policy make policymakers collaboratively developed an action plan to create efficient policies regulating appropriate physical contact with students to eliminate or reduce the risk of educators being falsely accused by students of inappropriate contact.

Limitations

The limitations in the form of challenges the researcher experienced while conducting this study were evident. A limitation the researcher encountered was dealing with a national epidemic (COVID-19) which shut down the schools in early March 2020 and impacted the day to activities of Americans. In the southeastern region of the United States, many schools were closed to individuals not employed at the school. After the Approved with Conditions Letter on July 23, 2021, was granted from the UOPX IRB, permission was sought to conduct the study

from District A and the principals. The district granted permission for the study on August 23rd. However, a difficulty occurred trying to gain permission from the three principals who the district's research representative allowed to be involved in the study.

Recommendations for Future Research

This research study explored the perceptions of K-8 school administrators (principals/assistant principals) and teachers who perceive the school district's policies related to physical contact with students and protecting themselves from accusations of inappropriate behaviors. The insights gained from this qualitative exploratory case study were important but further research is needed into the revision of school district policies related to appropriate physical contact between students and teachers. A quantitative research study on the correlation between K-8 school-based administrators and teachers' perceptions of the school's district policies on physical contact with students and protecting themselves from accusations of inappropriate behaviors may provide proof of a connection. Finally, more research is needed to determine what to include in the policies on how to precisely identify appropriate physical contact with students, and to develop effective training for school administrators and teachers to reduce the chances of litigation because of false accusations levied against them by students.

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EXPLORING POSITIVE COGNITIVE GUIDED INSTRUCTION STRATEGIES IN THE CLASSROOM

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Abstract

Elementary teachers in California were tasked to use cognitively guided instruction (CGI) strategies in mathematics classrooms, but it was uncertain if they had the self-efficacy, confidence, resources, and support to do so consistently. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to investigate K-5 teachers' perceptions about their self-efficacy and confidence in using CGI strategies in the mathematics classroom and what resources or support they felt needed to implement CGI strategies successfully. Bandura's social cognitive theory, which emphasizes four sources of self-efficacy, was used for the framework analysis. Research questions supported teachers' self-efficacy and confidence by participating in CGI in K-5 mathematics classrooms. Data was collected through online interviews with 13 elementary mathematics teachers. Informational notes gathered from these virtual interviews and transcriptions of the interviews were organized, reviewed, and coded. The result indicated that participants were confident using CGI strategies in the classroom, and participants indicated that the strategies are effective in helping understand mathematical problems. This study contributed to social change by providing instructors and educational leaders with a deeper understanding of teachers' pedagogy in the classroom in implementing the CIG strategies.

Keywords: Cognitive Guided Instructions, Self-Efficacy, Strategies, Cognitive

Exploring Positive Cognitive Guided Instruction Strategies in the Classroom

The traditional approach to teaching places much emphasis on teacher-guided instruction. The teacher assumes the primary role of finding ways to help students understand a particular concept (Black, 2015; Conowal, 2018; Guerrero, 2014; Lopez-Agudo, 2017; Sutton, 2018; Rishor, 2018; Walters, 2018). The student's responsibility is to follow the recommendations and guidance of the teacher to learn how to solve a problem through multiple strategies (Carney et al., 2016; Conowal, 2018; Phan, 2017; Sutton, 2018; Turner & Drake, 2016). By contrast, CGI takes a different approach by granting the student autonomy and power to guide the learning method.

Cognitive Guided Instructions (CGI) is an approach to teaching elementary school mathematics in which classroom instruction is guided by what students previously know (problem-solving skills) and helps students with their understanding and thinking related to solving mathematical problems (Biolatto, 2019; Black, 2015; Carpenter, Fennema, et al., 2017; Conowal, 2018; Guerrero, 2014). The students use natural problem-solving skills and what they already know about a mathematical problem to build their understanding of the related problem-solving concept (Carpenter, Frank, et al., 2000, 2017; Guerrero, 2014; Iuhasz-Velez, 2018; Munday, 2016; Nesrin, 2015; Phan, 2017; Walters, 2018). As a result, classroom instruction is often guided by the individual thought processes of the students.

The teacher devised strategies or approaches that ensured a deeper understanding of a given mathematical concept by understanding how children think. CGI was introduced in the late 1970s and early 1980s when a comparative study was conducted to identify whether students' performance in mathematics would improve if teachers tried to understand how they think (Carpenter et al., 2000). Teachers are often encouraged to introduce symbolic computations in their classrooms and get students to process this knowledge into fundamental problem-solving skills (Carpenter, Franke et al., 2017). Carpenter (2017) indicated that instruction in mathematics in the early grades might be critical to assist students in being successful in math. He also believed teachers needed to understand how young children intuitively solve problems. Carpenter, Franke, et al. (2017) discovered a need to integrate what has been discovered about kids' thinking when learning math from a research environment into an actual classroom setting.

Understanding students' mathematical thinking processes and problem-solving strategies enable researchers to learn how these processes and strategies can link to students' conceptual knowledge; CGI capitalizes on the student's innate problem-solving skills (Carpenter, Fennema & Franke, 2017; Iuhasz-Velez, 2018; Medina, 2019; Noviyanti, 2020). The teacher takes a step back from the leading role in the teaching process and becomes a facilitator of student learning (Guerrero, 2014; Iuhasz-Velez, 2018; Lopez-Agudo, 2017; 2016; Medina, 2019; Munday, 2016; Nesrin, 2015; Noviyanti, 2020).

Mathematics contains complicated concepts requiring students to think critically and understand each concept's intended aspects (Black et al., 2017; Candela & Boston, 2019; Myers & Cannon, 2018; Norton, 2017; Stoehr, 2017). Using cognitively guided instruction (CGI) helps teachers guide students in constructing a robust conceptual understanding of mathematics (Conowal, 2018; Diamond et al., 2018; Guerrero, 2014; Jacobs et al., 2017; Kirschner, 2017; Munday, 2016; Noviyanti, 2020; Walters, 2018).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate K-5 teachers' self-efficacy and confidence in using CGI strategies in the mathematics classroom and what resources or support they perceive

necessary to implement CGI strategies successfully. Implementing CGI may be challenging to accomplish if there is any lack of efficacy, confidence, and resources.

This research contributed to Bandura's (1977, 1986, 1997) social cognitive theory to understand teachers' self-efficacy and confidence in using CGI methods, which may positively affect engagement in math classrooms, improve academic progression, and increase conceptual understanding of mathematics. At the time of data collection, researchers have done numerous studies on curriculum, instruction, assessment, and CGI (e.g., Andrew, 2006; Black, 2015; Carpenter et al., 2000; Moscardini, 2014; Sinquefield, 2016; Walters, 2018), but little academic work has been done on teachers' perceptions of using CGI.

Current research indicates the need for additional investigation into the underlying reasons for inconsistencies in teacher confidence (see de la Cruz, 2016; Guerrero, 2014; Iuhasz-Velez, 2018; Moscardini, 2015; Walters, 2018). This paper contributed to the field of professional development for a better understanding of teachers' role in promoting CGI by investigating these issues further and filling the gap in the current literature.

Research Question

Research questions for this analysis were established from the objective problem statement of the study and attached to the purpose statement. To study the problem and phenomenon, the following research questions were addressed:

RQ1: What are the challenges faced by teachers in using CGI in K-5 classrooms?

RQ2: What support or resource was needed to improve their self-efficacy in using CGI strategies more consistently in mathematics classrooms?

Significance

This basic qualitative study was significant because it provided information that educational institutions could use to implement effective CGI strategies in mathematics classrooms. For this purpose, teachers perform CGI with K-5 students, and what resources they use to support better implementation of CGI were explored. Understanding teachers' self-efficacy and confidence allowed schools to implement processes to gain more confidence for CGI strategies among their educators, along with essential equipment and support. Baker and Harter (2015) and Conowal (2018) found a need to understand better teachers' role in promoting CGI strategies in math education. The results of my study may empower teachers to implement CGI to advance students' conceptual thinking in mathematics regularly.

Educational institutions could use this information to implement mechanisms encouraging teacher confidence in CGI. The conclusions could make CGI comprehensible for teachers and provide a positive social change in mathematics strategies. The teaching practice would be better as schools would know exactly what needed to be done to motivate teachers when using CGI strategies in the classroom. The findings of this study could make learning more accessible and engaging for students while also improving their performance in mathematics among teachers by empowering them to teach mathematics more enjoyably through CGI.

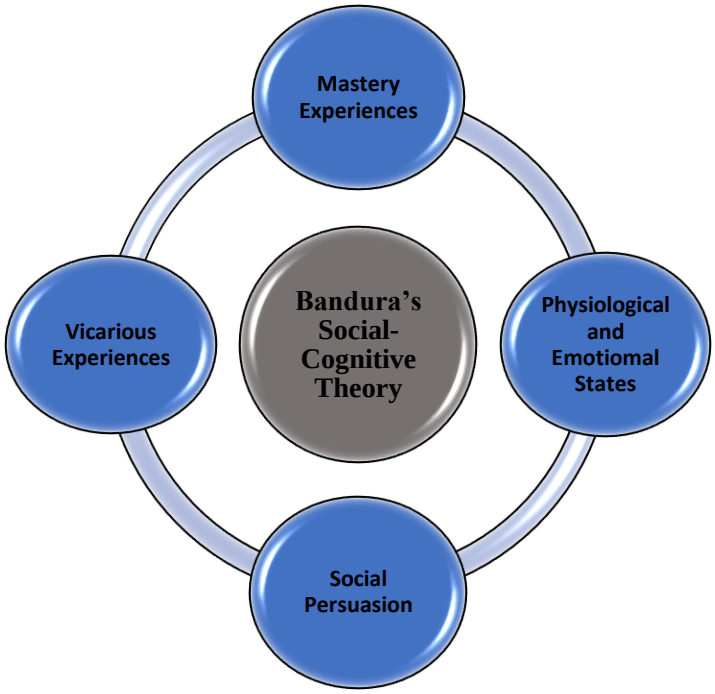
Conceptual Framework

Bandura's Social-Cognitive Theory

Self-efficacy originated from Bandura's (1977b) social learning theory, but it later evolved into the social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986), which explains the processes of human learning and functioning. Bandura's (1977) social cognitive theory is discussed in four primary

sources that shape individuals' self-efficacy through mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and emotional and physiological states. Reflecting on this theory provided the foundation of this analysis and led the way to derive the methods used for this investigation. The following section focused on sources of self-efficacy.

Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory of Learning



Sources of Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is a central hypothesis highlighted in the social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1997). This concept is also articulated as self-efficacy perception, belief, or conclusion (Diamond et al., 2018; Huang & Mayer, 2019; Steven & Gosia, 2019). Bandura (1977, 1986, 1994) has expressed self-efficacy as individuals' self-beliefs about the capability to create determined behaviors on the actions that affect their daily lives. According to Bandura (1982, 1989, 1994), the philosophies of the persons, the outcomes of their actions on them, and their activities depend on what they believe rather than the actual situation

If teachers believe that their efforts on CGI are successful, then the belief that they would succeed in similar or related tasks increases (de la Cruz, 2016; Diamond et al., 2018; Black, 2015; Guerrero, 2014; Phan, 2017). If teachers fail to create the desired effect in the classroom, the belief that they can be successful in similar situations may decrease. Bandura (1994) defined four primary sources that shape individuals' self-efficacy: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and emotional and physiological states.

Literature Review

Perception influences individuals' beliefs, attitudes, and actions (Lazarides et al., 2018; Nolan & Molla, 2017; Norton, 2017). Nurlu (2015) noted that teachers with positive self-efficacy and strong confidence in their instructional strategy are attentive to students' individual needs.

Lazarides et al. (2018) further explained that positive teacher perceptions of self-efficacy and confidence help teachers to have greater enthusiasm toward a subject. When teachers have a positive attitude toward a proposed strategy or change, there is more incentive to accomplish a given task (Conowal, 2018; Gadge, 2018; Miller et al., 2017; Nolan & Molla, 2017; Schoen et al., 2017).

Teachers must exude confidence in their practice to become effective. In their study, O'Keeffe et al. (2019) indicated that teachers' perceived belief directly influences how effectively they deliver culturally responsive pedagogies. This is the case with CGI, as the teacher's confidence guarantees successful outcomes (Larkin, 2016; Mccullouch, 2016; Nolan & Molla, 2017). Lazarides et al., 2018) quote the expectancy-value theory, which states that "the behaviors and beliefs of socializers (for example, teachers and parents) influence the motivation of adolescents.

Confidence also impacts teacher knowledge about CGI strategies and how they can be used to boost student performance in the mathematics classroom. O'Keeffe et al. (2019) established that professional development for teachers goes hand-in-hand with their confidence. The more a teacher feels that they understand a particular subject, the more confident they are when teaching it in the classroom (de la Cruz, 2016; Nielsen et al., 2016; O'Keeffe et al., 2019).

De la Cruz (2016) affirmed this in a study where a teacher participated in a CGI professional development workshop, and her proportional reasoning changed for the positive. She believed in the abilities of CGI strategies after being provided training in a workshop that showed her exactly what she needed to do to understand her students' thinking processes (Bailey et al., 2017; Dixon et al., 2014; Nielsen et al., 2016; Walters, 2018). Knowledge about CGI is vital as it shapes teachers' perceptions about its implementation in the mathematics classroom. When teachers thoroughly understand CGI strategies, they are more confident and better equipped with all the necessary skills to use them successfully.

CGI Strategies Used in Implementation

The actual strategies teachers adopt when implementing CGI matter a lot because they determine whether there can be positive or negative outcomes. They also affect how teachers plan their mathematics lessons. Fuentes (2019) conducted multiple qualitative case studies to establish how the implementation of the critical elements of CGI impacted the mathematics lesson plans. He also assessed how these elements were integrated into the instructional practices used by teachers in their classrooms. Customizing CGI to address students' needs required meticulous planning to execute successfully. The study also found that teachers used conceptualizing, articulating, questioning, and scaffolding as the primary strategies to plan their CGI lessons (Fuentes, 2019; Noviyanti, 2020).

Knowledge about CGI is vital as it shapes teachers' perceptions about its implementation in the mathematics classroom. When teachers thoroughly understand CGI strategies, they are more confident and better equipped with all the necessary skills to use them successfully. Caparas and Taylor 2019 and de la Cruz (2016) discussed CGI as one of the approaches that can be applied to enhance professional development for teachers allowing them to be more effective at teaching mathematics.

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to investigate K-5 teachers about their self-efficacy and confidence in using CGI strategies in the mathematics classroom and what resources or support

they perceive necessary to implement CGI strategies successfully. According to Ashraf (2020), teaching mathematics can be daunting, and it is a challenging subject, and many students often experience problems understanding some of the concepts taught in the classroom (Ashraf, 2021). It is the teacher's responsibility to ensure that the teaching strategies to teach this subject enhance all students' comprehension levels, especially those that struggle in certain areas (Alqurshi, 2020).

Research Design

A basic qualitative design was employed. The goal of basic qualitative is to develop an understanding or belief of a particular person or group that has experienced the phenomenon, to understand better and deduce that experience or phenomenon (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Merriam, 2009; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). It serves to understand a person's beliefs, attitudes, or ideas to investigate actual experiences rather than provide a causal explanation of those experiences (Francis, 2015; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Williams, 2019).

Participants

Participants were from the southern part of California. California was chosen as the research area because California adopted CGI standards in both English Language Arts and Mathematics in 1997 to help teachers understand the conceptual thought processes of students' learning requirements. The sampling technique for the selection was purposive sampling. The purposive sampling technique is a nonrandom technique that does not need underlying theories or a set number of participants.

Recruitment

A list of school districts that were adopting CGI was made. After selecting possible participants' schools that met the requirements were emailed. An invitation for participation was sent to two local school district superintendents through email. The purpose of the study and the importance of the outcomes was stated. After getting approval from district superintendents, collaboration with school principals to request permission and teacher emails from school administrators was done. Participants' emails were requested when asking for permission to conduct the study from the school administration. The administrators approved the request for the study. For confidentiality, an initial code through school districts or the school's name is to identify all prospective participants. The main list of the names of the participants and the initial matching code separate from other research records was maintained.

Data Collection

To complete the research, school principals within the district were immediately contacted to find the best way to reach out to participants. More than 500 individual emails were sent out to prospective participants with no response in the first week. After the second week, emails were sent to participants, after which four participants were recruited. The snowball sampling strategy was applied to obtain additional participants. Participants provided their colleagues' names and contact information who met the inclusion criteria, after which the consent letter was emailed for their review. After the consent form was sent back, an interview was scheduled with each participant. This procedure continued until 13 participants were recruited.

It was anticipated that the interviews would take 45 minutes; however, some interviews took approximately 30–45 minutes, and one exceeded the 2-hour limit. All questions were asked

in the same manner and order for all participants and allowed for open discussions throughout the interviews. Probes were used, which helped to clarify or requested participants to elaborate more in eliciting additional responses. The data collection process was completed within eight weeks. After conducting interviews, they were transcribed and reviewed by listening to the recordings for clarity. A copy of the transcribed interviews was sent to each participant to obtain transcript validation.

Data Analysis

Transcripts were read and reread to understand each interview's content and confirm insights recorded in the research's journal, after which manual coding of the data where text segments were identified and labeled. The transcripts were then uploaded into the NVivo 12 plus software, a qualitative and mixed-methods research software specifically used to analyze the unstructured audio, text, image, and video data from surveys, interviews, or focus groups. The NVivo 12 software was helpful in the organization, analysis, and visualization through the classification, sorting, and displaying of data to identify patterns and themes. The transcripts were subsequently auto-coded based on a paragraph style, organized in heading styles, and a numbered code was generated for each paragraph. The interview questions were formatted into heading style one and answered in 'Normal' font before importing the documents for organization purposes. Nodes were created from connections in the transcripts. Nodes were examined several times for similarities, after which they were labeled according to categories. Each node was placed into a category based on relationships. Table 2 below displays the categories of essential and redundant nodes after coding. These categories and nodes are aligned with the research questions.

Findings

The analysis of the findings from the study is discussed in this section. Codes were identified using a thematic data analysis approach to indicate a data segment's meaning. It was revealed that some participants responded to interview questions interconnected to other interview questions. It was necessary to follow the flow of their thinking rather than stick rigidly to the order of my interview questions. The research questions used in this study were:

RQ1: What are the challenges faced by teachers in using CGI in K-5 classrooms?

RQ2: What support or resources do teachers need to improve their self-efficacy in using CGI strategies more consistently in mathematics classrooms? Probing questions also allowed participants to get back on track with the interview flow.

Theme and Subtheme Alignments with Research Question One

Five themes and two subthemes were identified in analyzing the data and aligned with the research purpose, research question, and interview protocol. Three themes and two subthemes were aligned with research question one, and two were aligned with research question two. The first three themes and three subthemes are portrayed in Table 1 below. These themes and subthemes are in alignment with the first research question. Also included in Table 1 are the codes connected to the first three themes and subthemes in the first research question.

Table 1: Themes, Subthemes, and Codes Aligned to Research Question One

Themes	Subthemes	Codes
Theme 1		
Cognitively Guided Instruction Strategies in the Classroom	Cognitive Guided Instruction Effectiveness	different strategies, strategy use, kids strategies, book, teacher strategies, study strategy, successful strategies, sharing strategies, overall strategies, Number: sense, talks, routine, number, building activities, digit, string books, set, line, pieces, choices, strong numbers, open number line, whole numbers word problem today, word problem math, posing word problems, keywords, sample word problems
Theme 2		
Teachers Self-Efficacy	Improving Confidence	self-efficacy, teacher self-efficacy, self-value, teacher experience, student experience, ongoing experience, math experience, support teacher experience, grade level, fourth-grade level, normal level, confidence level, certain level, success level
Theme 3		
Challenges With Cognitive Guided Instructions		Student success, Ph.D. student, student experience, student names, student engagement, whole student, telling student, student kinds, student needs, student work, struggling student

Cognitively Guided Instruction Strategies in the Classroom

The first recurring theme that emerged after coding and categorizing the data was Cognitively Guided Instructions Strategies in the Classroom. This first theme portrayed teachers' different strategies when teaching guided, instructed math in the classroom. To answer this question, participants were asked to reflect on the various strategies used when imparting instructions in the classroom. Probes were used when necessary, which helped solicit, clarify, or request more elaboration, allowing for a more open discussion. There were different views from participants on strategies used in the classroom. For example:

- Participant (003) mentioned initially reverting to the CGI method was frustrating. However, after much patience and hard work, everything fell into place and made sense. Participant (003 spoke about the strategies used in the classroom:

  "I think one of the main ones is a share-out. Picking students that have maybe not as a sophisticated strategy. Still, it is the one most kids use, and then pick a kid with a more sophisticated strategy or just a different one. And then, we compared the two. It gives confidence to the kids I picked because their strategy was used; moreover, all the kids know that any way somebody wants to solve it is acceptable. Sometimes when they see one student do something, they think of a different way to do it, like a little bit in their way to create new strategies. I think that helps them learn strategies, but also helps them learn that there are, how can I say, like, respected, and they are important to the math learning in the classroom."

- Participant (013) stated that cognitively guided instruction is life-changing for students and teachers because it improves mathematical thinking and can be applied to multiple areas.

- Participant (006) adopted a daily routine where the day starts with a 10 to 15 minutes oral discussion. The children would do a presentation of their choosing, after which a discussion would be held. Participant (006) also mentioned that the students are encouraged to participate as there are no right or wrong responses. Every child adapts to the classroom culture where they are free to express themselves. The children develop a rapport with each other as they interact while doing their classwork. It is very important that the children feel comfortable and free to ask questions. The teacher then becomes the guide on the side.

- Participant (002) also gives children time to collaborate while doing their classwork. Children turn and talk as they share t strategies. Another strategy used by participant (002) is to get the children away from the traditional classroom environment and take them to sit elsewhere. Participant (002) feels that a more informal environment allows the children to connect and be more effective with their work.

- Participant (012) stated:

  "For me, as far as, you know, strategies that I use daily, I guess I just mentioned them, you know, I have to think about what problem I am going to pose to have the kids solve, so then I get to get a window into their thinking as they are solving it. Another strategy would be unpacking the word problem because that would be another CGI strategy. Unpacking the word problem means we discuss the problem, not focus on keywords. None of my board problems have keywords in them. So, a true understanding, like what is the context of the word problem math, like, if I do not give them a word problem? They are sad. They are like, 'Oh, you are going to provide us with a word problem today.' Yeah, so, like, every day is a word problem. They love it. So, the idea of even like them sharing how they solve the problem, they notice as they solve it, either in a similar way or maybe something completely different. Sometimes they realize one like they made a mistake, and sometimes they made a mistake, and they still think they are right. You know, and see how the other students are saying no, but I love that discussion, you know, so yeah, I do not know if I am answering your question."

Cognitive Guided Instruction Effectiveness

- Participant (010) believed that the CGI strategies are effective at the fourth-grade level because the children learn how to add as they need to have a strong number sense. Participant (010) continued to say that to be successful with CGI. Some students may need extra support or intervention to help build a stronger sense to support with CGI participant (010).

- Participant (009) said it was so effective that she used it with her son, who was in middle school and struggling in math. So, she would sit down at home and look at the problems. She would ask him questions about it. She used the CGI strategies with him at home and

saw everything change. So, from that one case, she knows intimately how well CGI works. She just knew it had to work in her classroom, so CGI has become a great part of her teaching. She mentioned that children are coming to her, and they are so much more open to sharing and talking about their strategies and admiring each other's strategies. she always agreed with whatever strategy they used and asked them to tell her more about them. She felt that not only is it helping them build their math skills, but it is also improving their collaboration skills. It improves their creativity and their social skills because they have to learn how to interact with one another.

- Participant (009) and participant (006) also said that it would be very effective with the lower kids because it allows them to demonstrate different strategies, especially with children with disabilities.

- Participant (012) believed that the children are becoming stronger in their skills because they have an opportunity to be flexible. They do not feel compelled to do math in a set way but can explore and develop different strategies to do the math, which is a success.

Teachers' Self-Efficacy

The second theme, "Teachers Self-Efficacy," is aligned with research question one. The question asked how teachers improve their self-efficacy using CGI strategies in the classroom.

- Participant (003) stated that it is the same because she is pretty competent in her math skills, and it was just a new way of looking at it, which she thinks is better because it provided a better conceptual understanding of math. It is especially beneficial. She added that when the children go to higher-level math. They will understand more about what they are doing and why they are doing it, not just following a procedure.

- Participant (006) responded by saying:

  “That is all I use. 100% I am very comfortable with it. I have been using it for probably 13 years now. I am very confident that I do not teach math any other way. I know that some of the teachers on my team are not comfortable or confident enough. They feel like they need control. As I said, they need to be the stage on the stage where I am the guide on the side. I said here is the problem. Here are some. You figure out how you would show you do best, then share your strategies, and then they teach the class. So that is shared is a very important component. Explaining their thinking is very important because we want to hear how everyone thinks differently yet arrives at the same solution.”

- Participant (004) was asked how her self-efficacy was different, and she replied that the district's curriculum was different because student engagement is much higher than CGI's. She believed that CGI should not be seen as the lens through which math is taught. However, She thought that it was tactile for them because they could touch things and explore and manipulate numbers in the way they could see in front of them. She believed that having a lot of just numbers they have to add together without necessarily having a context for it might not all be beneficial, especially to a younger child.

- Participant (011) stated that she feels comfortable using the CGI strategies.

Improving Confidence

This subtheme, *Improving Confidence*, derived from the second theme, is also aligned with research question one. Participants were asked how confident they felt in implementing the CGI strategies. Most participants indicated that they are very confident, and this could be because participants have many years of teaching experience.

- Participant (001) said that:

  "I feel very confident right now, but this is my sixth year, so I am confident. In my first year, I had no idea what I was doing, and I had to trust the process. I was very frustrated at first, but now I know how the students think before they think, and so as long as I know my goal, whenever I teach math. If I have that goal in mind, I know where I want them to go. I feel very confident, plus I have seen the various ways that students think after six years, so I can start making connections between solving problems with area models or the standard algorithm. So, I show the progression to students and show them what t their goal is. I am confident in knowing my standards."

- Participant(012) enthusiastically responded,
  "I am 100% confident now, yeah. Oh, yeah, definitely. Yeah. I do not have any problem with implementing the CGI strategies". She continued to say that the biggest element was the district because the district has a fabulous math lead.

- Participant (004) stated:

  "I feel pretty confident for the most part, and it is something I have been doing for a while, and I have seen other teachers do it. And I think a big part of my confidence comes from knowing that I am on a learning journey as I am in CGI and that there is always going to be a new practice that that might work better for students that I am always going to have students in my classroom that you know, this particular strategy might not work for and but that there is also resources for me to tap into to support that student. I must say that my confidence has improved greatly."

  When asked about confidence level in teaching CGI:

- Participant (011) said she is still learning because there is so much more to do. She feels that every year there is a new bunch of students, and you start over. She continues to say that it is exciting every time a new concept is introduced to a new set of students. She still believes that more coaching is needed to offer support, like a math coach, to talk through and observe the lesson.

Challenges With Cognitive Guided Instructions

The third theme is Challenges With Cognitive Guided instructions. This theme provided insights into the challenges faced by participants in the classroom when implementing CGI

strategies. Participants' responses were mixed as some did not feel there were challenges while others did. For example:

- Participant (008) mentioned that she no longer feels challenged. However, when she started, it was different just because of the unknowns and not knowing because no one could tell what the kids produced. A teacher who always wants to know the next step can have difficulties dealing with this. She continues to say that planning cannot be done in advance because it is dependent on the day's lesson with the children. She incorporates engaging games to develop their math skills.

- Participant (001), on the other hand, stated that she does face some challenges. She said:

  "There are always those students who are not making sense of the problem, which can be challenging. I have students making sense of it and those who do not understand it all. For example, this year, one of my students kept cutting everything in half with fractions. And so that is a challenge when there are those little gaps. But for the most part, in terms of my teaching, what can be challenging is that we do not have a curriculum. We have to develop everything, including word problems. This is done daily. So, I would say the challenge is that the fact that you know, there are no curriculums. We kind of have to create our own on a day-to-day basis, see what the successes and what the needs are."

- Participants (009) and (007) also felt that parents are a huge challenge because parents know the standard algorithm.
  "So, they expect us to follow the standard way of teaching but fail to understand that this is a different teaching method." So, the parents would teach the children the standard algorithm before they are ready to learn it. So, to alleviate this problem, she talked to the parents about the program and asked them not to confuse them by introducing other strategies to the children.

- Participant (010) commented, "The biggest challenge I have faced is when the students have a weak understanding of place value, but especially if they do not have a certain level of automaticity with their facts. That can slow down their thinking, and they get stumped."

- Participant (012) believed that the biggest challenge is management. She feels that management does not provide adequate seating arrangements for the children and that children learn best in a non-traditional classroom environment.

Theme and Subtheme Alignments With Research Question Two

The second research question asked what support or resources teachers need to improve their self-efficacy in using CGI strategies more consistently in mathematics classrooms. From this question, three themes were developed. Below in Table 2 are the Themes, Questions, and Codes Aligned to Research Question.

Table 2: Themes, Questions, and Codes Aligned to Research Question Two

Themes	Subthemes	Codes
Theme 4		
Cognitive Guided Instructional Resources		math coach, elementary coach, instructional coach, coaching piece, class coach, instructional math coach
Theme 5		
Expanding Cognitive Guided Instruction Implementation		Math: classroom, class, talk, problem, time, coaches, experience, specialist, routine, book, facts, skills; teaching math, word problem math, traditional math, entire math book, elementary math coach, district math team, hating math, fifth-grade math
Theme 6		
Cognitive Guided Instruction Professional Development		professional development

Cognitive Guided Instructional Resources

The first theme for the second research question is Cognitive Guided Instructional Resources. Participants were asked what support and resources they needed to teach and needed to improve their self-efficacy or confidence in using CGI strategy in the classroom. Most participants agreed that they received lots of help from the district, while some felt that the support was inadequate.

- Participant (001) commented:

  "Wow, I mean, we receive a lot of support. So, I think that is part of why I feel comfortable and trust in the process. Because here at our district, they support you overly support you. Someone from the district came and showed me what I needed to do and then observed me doing it. I appreciate that now. But it was not like that before. They never used to tell you what you did wrong. But it is different now. We even did CGI through zoom. It was amazing. I did not think it was going to work, but it worked. Once we figured out how to maneuver all these apps and have the kids share their work and breakout rooms. I have gotten much support, so I think I have trusted the process and appreciate it."

- Participant (003) answered the question by saying that there are apps that can help to meet struggling children. She said she enjoys watching people teach different strategies, whether a video or otherwise. She continued to say that the district has a support person who assists with questions if needed. She added:

  "They are good at providing resources or creating little things we can use, like slide decks with number talks or number strings. And then, if they find something new, they share it with us, but it takes us as a teacher. The willingness to look for that stuff."

- Participant (006) constantly reaches out to her instructional coach, sometimes in person and virtually. The district provides the resource, and some teachers take advantage of it while so do not. Participant (006) always reaches out to other teachers for teaching ideas.
- Participant (002) also said she has many resources and support. She has a lot of help and support. She has several books and has developed a book club. The books are based on CGI kind of strategies.
- Participant (013) believed that the district does not have enough support coaches. The district was downsized from three to one coach that served 13 schools. Instead of waiting until she can see the coach, she uses outside resources to assist her.

Expanding Cognitive Guided Instruction Implementation

The findings from this theme indicated that teachers with manipulatives work well with children in the classroom. They also mentioned using online resources as supplementary resources to assist them when implementing cognitively guided instruction in the classroom.

- Participant (005) mentioned that teachers collaborate to develop best practices for their children. They would put together books and other supplementary materials to use when they needed them.
- Participant (003) also worked with other teacher to implement the CGI strategies in her class. She compiled math problems and other number sense materials from online websites.
- Participant (013) implement the CGI strategies using the state standards:

  "Yeah, I am number one when it comes to standards. That is where I start. That gives me help because specific standards lend themselves to certain activities. I also use lots of books and amazing websites with materials to help teachers.

- Participant (006) stated that she used many manipulatives and links given to her where she could find the necessary resources needed for her class. She mentioned that CGI is very important for children struggling, and it is nice to see new teachers coming into the program using the CGI strategies. She mentioned:

  "I noticed there are a lot of new incoming teachers already come CGI trained. So, kudos to the universities with credential programs because many teachers come in that way and come in strong with those strategies. It is the existing teachers who have not gone through the training and only go through just the PDS."
- Participant (009) used online resources to help implement CGI In her classroom. She also has the support of other teachers who can bounce ideas off each other. She believes that if you are creative, you don't need a lot of tangible materials, and the most important would be a whiteboard and a document camera.

Cognitive Guided Instruction Professional Development

The findings from this theme indicated that teachers would appreciate some professional development training within the year.

- Participants (005) and (003) stated that they like the CGI training the district provides, and they feel that the training should be at least once per year and that it should be more intense and informative.

- Participant (013) recommends professional development concerning CGI, and she stated that it is important even though some teachers do not like to attend. She also stated that having professional development about four or five times a year would be beneficial.

- Participant (006) said:

  "We have quite a bit of professional development already, but they are after school, and teachers are not required to attend because they are not paid to do so. To add to this, they are done on zoom, and this becomes problematic because they are not aware when there is something new then."

- Participant (002) also corroborated that professional development was held regularly, but due to the pandemic situation, they are now held on zoom but are not mandatory. She continued saying that she would like to go back in person and have the math coaches that were previously available. She reiterated that professional development and having enough resources always impact your teaching practice.

- Participant (009) believed that professional development is essential, and she believes that some one-on-one coaching should be provided. She added:

  "Yes. Some basic professional development is where I can see teachers' recordings and have someone else see my kids and watch me teach lessons, and it helps me understand where to go and how we get to the next level. So professional development is great, but there needs to be that coaching piece where I can talk face to face with someone, and they can come into my room and help me specifically with my needs in my classroom."

- Participant (010) stated that in her district, there is a cohesive team at the district that evaluates resources. There is lots of professional development, support, and videos of successful teachers performing it, which all made her feel confident. She continued to say that before Covid, her district gave three yearly professional development training. However, because of Covid, it's been a little different.

- Participant (008) stated that she feels that professional development should be done as often as possible. Before, her district used to have it every other month, but the hope would resume after the pandemic.

- Participant(012) felt that professional development is needed, and she continued to say that the program cannot be implemented effectively without it.

Conclusion

The findings indicated that participants are dedicated to implementing CGI strategies in the classroom. Despite feeling challenged at the onset, they are now confident in using the CGI strategies in the classroom. Findings revealed that participants viewed using the strategies as effective due to the visible progression of the children. In relation to RQ 2, the results indicated that participants are given adequate resources and support from their peers and the district to implement the CGI strategies in the classroom. Participants also reverted to supplementary resources to assist with materials needed through online sources. Findings also showed that some teachers do not actively participate in implementing CGI strategies in the classroom.

Finally, results revealed that professional development is needed to implement the CGI strategies. They agreed that professional development specific to implementing CGI strategies would assist them in developing additional strategies and provide guidance in lesson plans and best practices. Chapter 5 discussed the interpretation of the research findings. Also discussed are the limitations of this study and recommendations for future studies. Additionally, the recommendations for action and implications for social change are presented along with the study's conclusion.

Limitations

While the purpose of my study was accomplished, the following limitations could affect the interpretation of the results. The first limitation ensued because of the Covid-19 pandemic, which allowed for limited in-person visitation to the school compound. Therefore, interviews were done on zoom. These interviews were done between lunchtime and outside instructional hours; therefore, home responsibilities sometimes distracted teachers.

The second limitation resulted from recruiting participants from only four schools in the district. Participants who responded to the email were recruited through the snowballing procedure. Participants recruited through the snowballing procedures were mostly from the same school campuses. Therefore, they had similar experiences when answering the research questions. The third limitation was conducting this research with a small group of participants. There are over 1,500 teachers in this district and interviewing 13 participants may not be a valid representative of the schools in the district as qualitative interview studies have typically reported a minimum participant sample size of 20.

Finally, my personal bias as an educator was a limitation because of my experience in observation and classroom teaching management. However, my experience as a teacher helped me to understand the teachers' perspectives and referred to my researcher's journal to record my biases as I redirected my focus. My researcher's journal was used to record feelings and emotions to ensure my bias did not affect the research findings.

Recommendations for Future Research.

Conclusively, the results and the overall findings of this qualitative research on using Cognitively Guided instruction in mathematics teaching are highly beneficial in K-5 classrooms. This is evidenced by the fact that most students significantly improved their mathematics performance. This was also emphasized by the fact that almost all students in the participating classrooms reported improved attitudes concerning learning mathematics (Becker, 2021). Additionally, numerous teachers showed improved self-efficacy toward their overall teaching attitudes. In essence, many participating teachers had positive remarks about using CGI in teaching mathematics. A common perspective among the 13 participants of this study was that CGI was beneficial and offered much direction and planning support to students in K-5

classrooms. Amidst these positive remarks concerning CGI, I recommend that future research widen the scope of the study to establish if CGI could be as effective in other levels of mathematics learning. Finally, future research should examine if Cognitively Guided instruction could be applied to other fields of education and not just focus on its application in teaching mathematics. Findings from such future research could also help determine this phenomenon's transferability in other fields.

Furthermore, research to explore the impact of CGI on learning in other subject areas needs to be conducted. Although the study concentrated on mathematical strategies, it would be interesting to see the implementation in other subject areas. It is recommended that the research be extended to include a larger number of representatives from each school in the district. This study's findings represent participants' views of the four schools represented only and may not be that of the entire district. The results of a study of this nature could be beneficial to schools as students constantly struggle with math which is a recurring dilemma in the classrooms.

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TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHING IN REMOTE AND HYBRID SETTINGS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to investigate challenges teachers at a rural public 9-12 grade high school faced when implementing strategies, curriculum, and technology during the transition to remote and hybrid learning during the pandemic. The conceptual framework of Bandura's theory of self-efficacy guided this qualitative case study. The research question guiding the study is: "What challenges do professional teachers at a rural public 9-12 grade high school face regarding strategies, technologies, and curriculum as they transition to remote and hybrid instruction in the 2020-2021 school year during the COVID-19 pandemic?" Semi-structured interviews were conducted of seven educators who taught at a rural high school during the 2020-2021 school year. Data analysis revealed five themes. Themes related to challenges including continuously changing expectations, lack of student engagement at home, discrepancies between structured curriculum and freedom to choose curriculum, and mixed feelings involving technology self-efficacy. The fifth theme revealed a success in that teachers demonstrated pride and resilience through their pandemic teaching struggle.

Teachers' Perceptions of Teaching in Remote and Hybrid Settings During the COVID-19 Pandemic

After the national emergency school shutdown due to COVID-19 in March 2020, public school instruction went through various transitions including fully remote, hybrid, in-person, no instruction, or a combination of instructional delivery methods. These transitions, during the 2020-2021 school year, resulted in challenges faced by teachers when asked to rapidly change their curriculum and instructional strategies. Lieberman (2020) noted the rapid shift between instructional modalities and the duality between teachers who felt overwhelmed by new instructional technology demands and those who adapted well to the pedagogical shift.

Emergency remote teaching (ERT), also referred to as emergency distance learning, affects curricula and instructional methods employed by teachers, especially involving technology. Because rapid shifts in educational delivery methods in schools may happen in the future, it is necessary to understand the perceptions of teachers who engaged in emergency remote and hybrid instruction during the 2020-2021 school year.

Problem Statement

The problem is that rural U.S. high school teachers faced challenges when adapting to teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the West State School District (pseudonym), a small rural public school district in a western state, the COVID-19 pandemic required teachers to rapidly transition between remote online and hybrid instructional models during the 2020-2021 school year. The district adopted a new online curriculum to teach both remote and in-person hybrid models simultaneously. Hybrid models are defined as teaching both in-person and remote students simultaneously. The district reasoned that the online curriculum would allow teachers to transition to and from hybrid and online models if needed.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of the qualitative case study was to investigate challenges that certified high school teachers in a rural western public school district faced as they implemented strategies, technologies, and curricula when they transitioned to remote and hybrid instruction during the 2020-2021 school year. Data were collected via semi-structured interviews of West High School (pseudonym) teachers and were related to current research through analysis to gain a deeper understanding of teachers' self-efficacy in ERT.

Research Question

The research question addressed by this qualitative case study is:

RQ1: What challenges do professional teachers at a rural public 9-12 grade high school face regarding strategies, technologies, and curriculum as they transitioned to remote and hybrid instruction in the 2020-2021 school year during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Significance

The COVID-19 pandemic has been the first global health crisis to occur in the digital age (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020). When teaching in remote or hybrid environments, technology is a vital tool to help educators stay connected to students. Identifying challenges K-12 teachers faced during rapid transitions to remote instruction can better prepare them for future educational transitions due to emergency situations. Knowledge of teacher experiences will inform school leaders of potential challenges educators must be trained to address in order to persevere in the

post-pandemic educational landscape. This study aims to understand the perceptions of teachers at a small rural high school who faced challenges teaching in remote and hybrid settings during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic school year.

Conceptual Framework

Bandura's theory of self-efficacy was used to support and frame this study of ERT during the pandemic. Bandura (1993) noted that the more a teacher has belief in their abilities, the better they can help students achieve progress in learning. Therefore, the more teachers know about teaching during emergency remote and hybrid instruction, the greater the chance for student success with online and hybrid learning. Through overcoming challenges, such as those faced during ERT, teachers can build upon and strengthen existing self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977; Trust & Whalen, 2020). Teachers can also hinder beliefs in their own ability when mastery is not achieved. Identifying pandemic teaching challenges is a step toward facing and overcoming them to build mastery and strengthen self-efficacy.

The more that is understood about how teachers understand their ability to approach challenges amid adversity, the better school leaders can understand the realities educators faced during ERT. Bandura (1977) noted that building skills will increase mastery experiences that, in turn, increase self-efficacy. However, if success is not achieved in novel situations, self-efficacy may be diminished with each perceived failure (Bandura, 1977). Emergencies require abrupt adaptations to new situations using only existing efficacies. These efficacy-altering experiences can help to understand a teacher's perceptions of their own abilities, as well as build an understanding of how these perceptions affect their work, and how their work ultimately affects student behaviors and achievement.

Haverback (2020) noted that mastery teaching experiences grow the teacher's perceived self-efficacy when they provide a lesson deemed as successful. Teachers in emergency remote instruction do not have previous mastery experiences upon which to access efficacy; however, as time passes and teachers adapt to the new teaching models, they will again experience efficacy-building mastery. Haverback (2020) concluded that the emotional strain on a teacher due to pandemic-related factors, such as nervousness, fear, and feelings of inadequacy, can negatively affect their self-efficacy. The important notion is that efficacy can be grown with a positive mindset and successful experiences (Bandura, 1993).

Literature Review

ERT has made it difficult to achieve efficacy in that the transition to online and hybrid learning is challenging for teachers (Haverback, 2020; Santi et al., 2020). Self-efficacy, which grows with more time in the classroom, re-sets in emergency remote contexts (Haverback, 2020). Teachers had to re-start their quest for self-efficacy during the transition to online and hybrid teaching environments during the pandemic years. Themes emergent in teachers' self-efficacy during the pandemic are their ability to adapt to the constant changes in instruction, curriculum, and technology (Martinez & Broemmel, 2021).

Instructional Strategies

Whether fully remote or in a hybrid model, emergency situations cause teachers to reinvent their methods of pedagogy and change the way they approach the art of teaching (Naamati Schneider et al., 2020; Santi et al., 2020). Whilst long-term planning for the future and more permanent online and hybrid models of education are being considered, the short-term act

of ERT can be pedagogical triage in that it is meant to salvage existing instruction (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020). Continually experimenting and learning from trial and error can set educators up for online teaching success if they view this new style of teaching as a growth experience (Carlson, 2020).

However, an apparent challenge is that many teachers lack the knowledge of digital applications needed to implement instruction with technology (Ferri et al., 2020). Because of low technology self-efficacy, teachers are often uninvolved and unmotivated to fully embrace the possibilities of remote learning (Santi et al., 2020). There is a further digital divide between newer teachers, who grew up with technology in education, and veteran teachers (Martinez & Broemmel, 2021). With emergency hybrid instruction, however, teachers do not have the opportunity to choose whether to incorporate technology; rather, they are mandated to use technology to service students (Trust & Whalen, 2020).

Another challenge with ERT involves the level of engagement of students. Teachers in online settings find it difficult to gauge the physical and emotional presence of their students (Flynn & Noonan, 2020). Real-time interactions and personalized feedback seem more difficult in online settings, especially when many synchronous lessons are recorded (Flynn & Noonan, 2020). Although the COVID-19 pandemic has allowed some students to adapt to new teaching methods with resiliency and flexibility (Patston et al., 2021), many are unable to adapt to the more autonomous learning needs resulting from ERT.

Curriculum

Teaching subject content in a remote and hybrid platform is different than traditional face-to-face instruction. Teachers may be provided a pre-written online curriculum and learning management system, whilst other teachers may need to create their curriculum as they teach, making it up as they go (Martinez & Broemmel, 2021). The emergency transition to remote instruction did not allow sufficient time for teachers to engage with students in high-end learning at the onset (Korkmaz & Toraman, 2020). However, as teachers continue to engage with students in the online format, they will grow in their ability to find, create, and use interactive and adaptive online learning opportunities for their students (Flynn & Noonan, 2020).

Because of the likelihood of future emergency educational shutdowns (Whittle et al., 2020), teachers must be prepared to shift between fully online, hybrid, and face-to-face instruction by ensuring a sequence of curriculum and resources that will allow students to maneuver through the content in various instructional environments (Lieberman, 2020). Teachers must embrace the idea of providing quality technology-assisted instruction to 21st century students (Trust & Whalen, 2020).

There must also be a social-emotional component to an emergency remote curriculum in that students often experience trauma or loss because of the emergency (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020). These soft skills are needed to navigate social-emotional learning, including flexibility and resilience, which teach students to cope with the changes in their world both in the 21st century global community and in any emergency situation (Naamati Schneider et al., 2020). Emergency remote instruction creates a challenge in building collaborative teachers-to-student and student-to-student relationships because of limited in-person contact and social distancing (Ferri et al., 2020). Teachers in emergencies must modify the existing curriculum to include empathy, caring, and sharing of feelings, not just the study of content (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020).

Technology

Teachers often have low efficacy in their ability to incorporate higher levels of informational technology into their classrooms. If an emergency arises where technology is required, teachers with low technology efficacy may not utilize optimal pedagogies and may exhibit passive teaching strategies (Cai & Gut, 2020). Over time, teacher motivation and enthusiasm for teaching may decrease due to the lack of face-to-face interaction in remote learning (Rasmitadila et al., 2020).

These challenges can be further exacerbated by inequities that exist involving remote connectivity and device availability (Ferri et al., 2020). Students without technology access and who are not accustomed to autonomous learning need additional support and constant communication to ensure equitable learning (Shim & Lee, 2020). Asynchronous opportunities for learning can bridge the digital divide allowing students with connectivity issues to work at their own time and pace.

Methodology

Transcripts of seven semi-structured, open-response interviews of state certificated teachers at West High School provided the qualitative data used in the thematic analysis of this case study. Interviews were conducted during the late spring and early fall 2021 with teachers who had to abruptly change their teaching methods during the 2020-2021 school year due to educational requirements of the pandemic. With the interview transcripts, the challenges educators faced in using instructional strategies, technology, and curriculum skills during emergency remote and hybrid learning were analyzed via qualitative thematic methods.

Participants

The participant population consisted of 17 possible state certificated teachers at West High School which serves approximately 275 students 9-12 grade in the rural West State School District. Purposive convenience sampling was used to solicit interviews from teachers at West High School who met the selection criteria. Prior to receiving an email and paper invitation, participants met the following criteria: (a) taught at West High School during the 2020-2021 school year, (b) taught at West High School prior to March 2020, (c) taught both remote and hybrid students during the 2020-2021 school year, and (d) were asked by administration to utilize new curriculum and technologies during the 2020-2021 school year.

Recruitment

Teachers at West High School were presented with the opportunity to participate in the study via both paper flyers in their faculty mailboxes and an email invitation in June 2021. After agreeing to informed consent via e-mail, online correspondence with participants was used to set up interview times. Teachers also verbally agreed to informed consent on the audio recordings of each interview.

Setting

West High School resides in a rural city with a population of approximately 3,800 citizens. In March 2020, the school closed its doors to in-person learning due to the spread of the COVID-19 virus in the country and community. These teachers began teaching at home via remote platforms as well as providing paper packets that were distributed via mail and courier to students. All participants were full-time classroom teachers at the time of the March 2020 school closing and began the 2020-2021 school year teaching fully remotely in their classrooms at

school in August 2020. In late October 2020, some students returned to their cohort teachers' classrooms in-person for half days, 4 days a week. A fifth half-day was added in April 2021. Half-days were in the mornings. Afternoons were required for teachers to prepare video lessons, use the learning management system to differentiate instruction, and to contact the students in their cohorts.

When the 2020-2021 school year began, teachers at West High School were provided with a new learning management system, including a preloaded curriculum they were not previously using. Students were in small class sized cohorts with one teacher during the school day. However, in-person students were on computers and taking different classes with different teachers throughout the day. Teachers were required to manage their in-person cohorts while simultaneously instructing their online students, many of whom continued learning from home, while other online students were in various in-person cohorts in other classrooms.

Instrumentation

The interview questions were adapted from Trust and Whalen's (2020) *ERT Survey Protocol.* The survey was adapted by the researcher into an interview protocol to include dates of 2020-2021 and eliminate multiple-choice answers, ensuring the protocol was open-ended. Interviews ranged from 24 to 49 minutes and, though a semi-structured protocol was used, participants were allowed to take tangents and to provide additional personal insight into the phenomenon.

Data Collection

During interviews conducted via Zoom, interview questions appeared on the screen while read aloud by the researcher. Probes and clarifying questions were also used by the researcher to deepen understanding of the research question. Field notes were taken by the researcher during synchronous interviews. After each interview was audio recorded, they were transcribed verbatim utilizing the Microsoft Word 365 online transcribe function. Each transcript was verified and edited for accuracy through multiple encounters by the researcher and member checks from some of the participants. The transcripts were then used in coding, categorizing, and thematic analysis process. In all, seven participants were interviewed and transcripts from all seven participants were included in the data set.

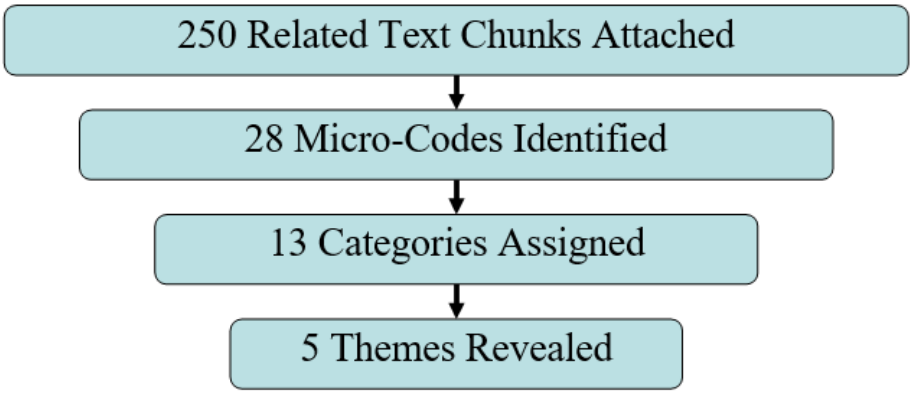
Demographics

Participants' experience in the field of education spanned between 3 and 21 years. Participants taught a range of subjects in grades 9-12. All seven participants were assigned an in-person cohort for the 2020-2021 school year with 0 to 10 in-person students and 4 to 13 at-home students. All protocol questions were answered by all seven participants, providing a thorough and complete data set. To maintain confidentiality, participants were randomly assigned the following alphanumeric identifiers: T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, and T7. Other demographic information has been omitted to maintain the anonymity of the participants.

Data Analysis

In the first cycle, inductive coding was performed in that chunks of relevant text were assigned a micro-code which were created as revealed through the text itself. Twenty-eight initial micro-codes were identified and attached to 250 related text chunks. In the second cycle of coding, text

chunks relating to each micro-code were defined and assigned into 13 distinct categories. These categories were then grouped into five overall themes.



Findings

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to deepen understanding by addressing the research question:

> What challenges do professional teachers at a rural public 9-12 grade high school face regarding strategies, technologies, and curriculum as they transitioned to remote and hybrid instruction in the 2020-2021 school year during the COVID-19 pandemic?

The first two identified themes describe the challenges associated with instructional strategies. Theme three addresses curriculum challenges whilst theme four addresses technology. Theme five addresses the efficacy portion of the research question and was a key finding in teachers' perceptions of the experience of teaching during the 2020-2021 school year.

Theme 1: Changing Expectations

The theme *Changing Expectations* encompassed 73 coded pieces of text in three categories: expectations of teachers from administration, expectations of students from administration, and expectations of students from teachers. The resulting theme statement revealed by the data is that *unclear expectations for staff created ambiguity in expectations for students, which led to lack of student engagement during the emergency remote and hybrid setting.*

Expectations of Teachers from Administration

During the initial school closure in March 2020, very little information was conveyed to teachers about their instructional expectations (T1, T6). Participants indicated the expectations were "unclear" (T5, T6). When the 2020-2021 school year began, the learning management program took time to schedule and load, so the expectations were "staggered and uncertain" (T3) resulting in a "lack of clear expectations" (T6). T6 said:

> "We didn't have any really advanced training. I didn't feel like we had enough advanced training, so it was hard to learn how to use it and then all the kids were kind of stressed about it and we were stressed about it. So, I just felt that kind of created a negative start to the school year and then it was kind of hard to rebound from that with a lack of clear expectations at the beginning of the year, so that was hard. Uhm, consistency was hard

there and follow-through because everything was changing, and we were still learning how to use the technology and the best practices to use."

Expectations of Students from Administration

The majority of West High School students remained at-home (T1, T2, T6) and in-person learners attended half-days in the mornings. Students were expected by administrators to work on schoolwork in the afternoon, though most students "kind of took the afternoons off, which they weren't necessarily supposed to, but did" (T2). Students were not required by administration to attend synchronous video conferencing lessons (T2, T3, T4, T5) and teachers would only have 2-5 students in the required two half-hour live synchronous lessons (T1, T7). The expectation was for the students to do work asynchronously. T2 said:

> "I think scheduling could have been improved. The leaders do not necessarily giving a choice as far as synchronous and asynchronous for our high school students. So have a scheduled time and make sure they're there. You know there's always giving some lenience. Everybody's situation is different, but I think if you set up the expectation that they have to be there at that time. That would be more helpful, and we would have more engagement."

T1 and T4 also mentioned that graduation requirements for the seniors was ambiguous in that "they did not know what grades and classes they needed to graduate" (T1) and "it changed, you know, from higher up, what we were supposed to do to get them [the students] through" (T4).

Expectations of Students from Teachers

During synchronous lessons, the teacher had to both monitor in-school cohort students while simultaneously teaching and recording the live online lesson (T5, T6). Teachers employed tactics to keep in-school cohort students engaged by allowing frequent breaks (T2), making to-do lists for students to move through the curriculum (T1, T2, T4), and using small group documents for collaborative work (T4). Yet, it was unclear whether students were participating in the synchronous sessions as many of the students did not turn on their cameras or microphones (T2, T4, T5). T4 noted "not knowing if students are really like, if some students would turn off their cameras after the beginning and then walk out of the room" indicating students would log-in, but not participate or be present in the synchronous sessions. T4 noted:

> "Not knowing if students were actually being honest about the work they were doing or if they were simply checking in, because that was technically all that was required of them. But you can't act on that suspicion, of course, you have to assume good intent and so it was just stressful."

Interpretation of Theme 1

Participants in this study referred to challenges related to their ability to adapt to changes with regards to technology, expectations for staff, and requirements of students resulting from conditions during the pandemic. Martinez and Broemmel (2021) found that teacher self-efficacy during the pandemic may be influenced by their ability to adapt to constant changes. T6 said, "consistency was hard there and follow-through because everything was changing, and we were still learning how to use the technology and the best practices to use."

Malleability of both teachers and students is needed for adequate learning to occur during ERT. Instructional challenges found in study data include unclear expectations for asynchronous and synchronous learning, difficulty monitoring students not in synchronous sessions, and being

unsure of student attendance in both synchronous sessions and asynchronous work. Confusion regarding expectations can cause low teacher self-efficacy, which can result in lack of student engagement.

Theme 2: Lack of At-Home Engagement

The theme *Lack of At-Home Engagement* encompassed 35 coded pieces of text in three categories: in-school learners vs. at-home learners, contact and engagement of at-home learners, and teacher-student relationships. The resulting theme statement to explain the data was that *at-home learners and families were less engaged and more difficult to contact, whereas in-person teacher-student relationship thrived*.

In-School Learners vs. At-Home Learners

In-school learners expressed to teachers that they enjoyed being at school where they could socialize with their friends (T3, T5). However, for teachers, having in-person learners "wasn't as personable" (T3) as students were "physically in the classroom of another teacher" (T7). T2 stated, "Actually, our cohort, when we were hybrid, was not in our classes that we were teaching, so we were teaching at the same time as they were doing other things, and that was challenging, I think."

Most teachers related that there was little engagement, interaction, and feedback from students during synchronous sessions (T1, T4, T5, T6), although some students who showed up to synchronous sessions did engage well online (T7). Some teachers found it "easier to connect" (T1) through the synchronous sessions with students "in a one-on-one setting" (T2, T6) or "with small groups" (T4). T1 said:

> "Keeping the students on-task during live lessons was, uhm, sometimes more challenging than I would have thought. Uhm, it's interesting to see one of the things, uhm, how much growth the ones in person made versus the ones who were all online. Uh, they, the ones in person, seems to make quite a bit more for you know, obvious reasons in my opinion."

Teachers with in-person cohort students were able to monitor progress, and better support their students' academic and social-emotional growth; however, it was difficult to engage remote students when they participated asynchronously.

Contact and Engagement of At-Home Learners

All participants found that contacting students in their cohort was challenging. T3 said of some students, "I couldn't get ahold of or couldn't get ahold of very often. They weren't like checking in or being able to understand the work." Parents or guardians were also difficult to contact. T4 said, "the majority of the time I would not reach anyone." Because it was difficult to reach parents and students of at-home learners, there was inconsistent information about each student's individual needs (T2, T3, T4). Teachers had to consider every student and remember that everybody's situation is different (T2). T2 noted:

> "Just also understand that not every kid is going to be able to concentrate as much at home. They're not going to be able to always access the stuff on time because they have three siblings, and they all need to be on a live session at once and they can't do that."

With home situations in mind it was difficult to receive feedback from students (T4, T6, T7) and families. T7 noted the difficulty:

> "That was probably the most difficult thing to do was to build that communication ability so that I could get feedback from my students… so I think the biggest struggle through the whole thing was keeping kids engaged in contact."

Teachers used various tactics to contact students including emails, surveys, post mail, and even home visits (T1, T2, T4, T6, T7).

Teacher-Student Relationships

Regardless of whether a student was easy to contact, teachers wanted what was best for the student. T5 stated that they "Enjoy having kids in my room." Teachers were concerned for the social-emotional well-being of the students and wanted to make sure they were safe, okay, and dealing with anxiety appropriately (T1, T3, T4). Cohort teachers valued the connections they made with in-person students. T4 stated:

> "Uhm, connections with students, being able to build that relationship. Which I mean you already heard about it, but last year it was really lived for most of us, I think. Uhm, knowing that education really can sometime, I don't want to say take a back seat, but it's not as important to impart the knowledge as it is to impart your care and compassion."

Some teachers felt a special relationship with their in-person cohorts. T5 said:

> "The kids who were physically in my room, because after they were done with their online classes, we would take breaks. We played volleyball and ping pong. We'd walk, we played games with each other. That was honestly my favorite part of last year was I got to really bond with those students in a way that I've never been able to. Because they were literally with me all day, you know half a day, but still. And we were like family. So that was fun. I liked that."

Interpretation of Theme 2

Teachers at West High School noted a lack of engagement from at-home learners and even some in-school learners. The challenge of engaging students in participation of online and hybrid learning is echoed by current literature on the topic (Ferri et al., 2020; Korkmaz & Toraman, 2020). Emergencies may also cause students to be internally unmotivated to participate in class activities, as they are preoccupied with outside events (Carlson, 2020; Martinez & Broemmel, 2021). T7 noted that lack of engagement may be due to having to care for siblings or having a part-time job.

At West High School students had not previously been exposed to the rigorous online curriculum and had not gained the skills needed to be autonomous online learners. Learners not accustomed to online instruction often fall behind (Whittle et al., 2020). The lack of students' prior autonomous skills may have led to lower student engagement in academic content during online learning in the pandemic.

Constant communication and additional support from teachers is needed to ensure equity in learning environments because students are not accustomed to autonomous learning in ERT (Shim & Lee, 2020). Lieberman (2020) said, "the students who are at home full time could easily get lost in the shuffle if teachers don't put in extra work to engage them" (p. 5)

Also affecting teacher self-efficacy was lack of relationships with online and hybrid students. T5 said:

> "You know when we first shut down, when I did have more freedom, I knew those kids already and we had already had almost a year together, so those relationships were

already built. I felt like they continued. Last year was hard because I didn't know what any of my students looked like."

Theme 3: Freedom vs. Structure of Curriculum

The theme *Freedom vs. Structure of Curriculum* encompassed 41 coded pieces of text in two categories: freedom to choose curriculum, and use of structured curriculum. The resulting theme statement to explain the data was that *while some teachers enjoy the structure of a pre-loaded curriculum during hybrid teaching, most prefer the freedom to choose which content to deliver in the online format*.

Freedom to Choose Curriculum

From March through June 2020, teachers at West High School were requested to continue their current curriculum in an online format and in weekly sent-home packets. Some teachers found that adapting resources and putting them online took a considerable amount of time (T2, T4, T7). Teachers also found it a challenge to prioritize content to consider realistic expectations of student engagement (T1, T2, T7). Teachers were challenged with the task of finding relevant and hands-on learning activities that students could perform in the home environment to further their understanding of content (T4, T7). Mostly, teachers enjoyed the freedom of having control over the content to deliver fully online (T2, T3, T5). All teacher participants avowed that they were taking on the task of adapting their current curriculum to the online format with fidelity and creativity.

Some teachers in emergency learning shift or modify existing curriculum to include social-emotional learning aspects (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020). T5 said "even though you know they missed a lot of content, there were other skills they got that I observed, and I was impressed with them." ERT during the pandemic made most of the teachers in this study aware of the duality between student content knowledge and student social-emotional well-being.

Use of Structured Curriculum

During the 2020-2021 school year, the West State School District adopted a learning management system and pre-loaded online curriculum that was new to West High School teachers. However, there was very little notice of or training for the new program prior to implementation. Once the curriculum and learning management system were operational, teachers "were told to explicitly use" (T5) the program without adequate training (T7). Some teachers used other resources to supplement their courses (T3, T5) but were instructed to "use a small number of apps and not overwhelm students with too many things" (T7). Teachers had to maneuver a new video conferencing program and struggled to record and create videos to teach the content (T4, T7). The curriculum was full of reading passages that were "dry" (T4) and "boring" (T5). On the other hand, some teachers also found the sequence and list of units and subunits in the curriculum was "easier to follow" (T4), had a "nice flow" (T1) and was easy to "track progress" (T7).

Not every teacher saw the benefits of the new program and curriculum. T1 said, "I feel like it could have been sequenced a little better… it's not as easy to make the pre-made material and content do that." T1 and T5 found there was no curriculum to match the courses they were to teach and T6 had a course that was outdated and catered to older standards rather than newly adopted standards (T6). T6 said:

> "And I found myself kind of moving away from the curriculum that was put in the system and kind of creating my own based off what I felt the students were capable of doing and were emotionally able to do as well."

T3 agreed by saying, "we had to follow a curriculum that we didn't always agree with," others tried to create "student buy-in" (T4) by adding content to synchronous sessions "just to try to make it not so boring" (T5).

Interpretation of Theme 3

ERT can cause teachers to reinvent the way they employ teaching strategies and content (Naamati Schneider et al., 2020; Santi et al., 2020). The freedom allowed in March 2020 of participants in this study to shift their current teaching and content to an online format was an impetus for reinvention and creation of a new style of engaging curriculum. With that freedom to re-imagine teaching methods, is the burden of time commitments. T2 said "curriculum, you know, it's just time, but taking curriculum and making it conducive to both online and offline students" took a great deal of time to manage.

Because of teaching an unfamiliar curriculum on a previously unused learning management platform, teachers at West High School may have seen a shift in their self-efficacy. Haverback (2020) echoed this notion in that "the COVID-19 pandemic has created a situation in which usually efficacious teachers may not feel efficacious now" (p. 3). Content knowledge must also be enhanced with the teacher's ability to navigate technology-infused learning environments (Cai & Gut, 2020). Teachers need to be efficacious with regards to both content and the ever-changing educational technology landscape to engage 21st century students in active online and hybrid learning.

Participants felt the need to introduce a hidden curriculum in social-emotional and soft skills. Soft skills, such as adaptability, utilization of technology as a learning aid, and two-way communication feedback looping are part of the hidden curriculum taught because of the instability of emergency teaching conditions (Whittle et al., 2020). Flexibility and resilience are another set of soft skills learned by 21st century students that separate in-school content knowledge from real-world attributes (Naamati Schneider et al., 2020). Soft skills learned during remote teaching in the pandemic could be an impetus for teachers and students to grow in their ability to adapt to changing situations in the future.

Theme 4: Technology Efficacy

The theme of *Technology Efficacy* encompassed 55 coded pieces of text in two categories: teacher technology self-efficacy and student use of technology. The resulting theme statement created to explain theme four is *though teachers have mixed feelings about their ability to implement technology during ERT, all agree that student efficacy with technology is an important element of future education.*

Teacher Technology Self-Efficacy

Teachers agreed that learning technology and using it in the classroom will benefit teaching in the future. T2 said:

> "And I also think that there's a lot of great strategies and techniques that you learn through remote teaching, which you can implement into your class so that gives you a basis for technology in the classroom, so I felt pretty good about implementing it."

The new learning management system made it difficult "having to learn how to use that platform as the students were" (T6). T1 said, "if I get a chance to play around with it a little bit first, I'm one of those who has to learn by doing." Although, many teachers also admitted that training of the new program was inadequate (T2, T3, T7), newer teachers with less than six years of teaching experience were more positive about their ability to learn new technologies quickly. T6, a newer teacher, felt "pretty comfortable, I feel like I'm from a generation that's okay clicking around until I figure it out, whereas I know not all generations are comfortable with that." Veteran teachers found it more difficult to adapt to the new technology. T7 noted "a learning curve involved in just using the technology and being able to get a handle on using it."

Student Use of Technology

Accessibility was a problem perceived by teachers. Initially, many students did not have internet access at their homes. Each student in the high school was assigned a Chromebook, but many were unable to connect at home (T1, T5, T7). Then, when hotspots were delivered to student houses, there was limited bandwidth (T7), which caused problems for students to watch videos made by teachers (T6, T7) or to open websites to learn content (T3). The learning management system, which became accessible to students in October 2020, required students to be on the program for hours at a time, burning up bandwidth and access time. Also, multiple students were using the same hotspots and could not access the internet at the same time as their siblings.

That said, there are positives to students' use of technology. Once hybrid instruction began in October 2020, some students aided teachers in troubleshooting the new learning management system (T2, T6, T7). T5 said:

> "Students really had to adapt in many ways that felt kind of important. You know they were writing way more emails than they ever had. They had to communicate in different ways. They were helping each other out with technology. They were helping teachers out with technology. And the fact that they were learning how to be adaptable, resourceful, and collaborative, I think I was impressed with them."

Though not all students engaged fully in online learning, some thrived in the environment (T4, T6, T7). T4 said "there were components of what happened that year that really did work better for students in their learning abilities." Participants noted the importance of using technology in the classroom in the future to give students the skills needed to succeed in today's world.

Interpretation of Theme 4

While most teachers in the study would have liked more training, they felt that they were able to learn the technology by trial and error, rather than reading instructions or participating in online professional development. There was a disparity between the perceptions of novice teachers and experienced teachers regarding technology efficacy. Cai and Gut (2020) said "educators' digital problem-solving skills tend to decrease as their age increases" (p. 197). While teachers with fewer than six years of experience at West High School claimed they could learn by doing through trial and error, veteran teachers seemed to note "a considerable learning curve" (T7) and "as I get older, some things are harder for me to pick up" (T5). T5 said:

> "Some teachers are people you know, and they're great with kids and when kids are in their classrooms are engaged and it's awesome and they have great lesson plans and projects. But technology was not their wheelhouse, and those are the teachers, I think, that struggled the most, uhm, with remote because they had to, you know, jump into a

> pool they didn't know how to swim. So in general, I think, it'd be good to develop those technology skills so that if we have to transition again… it won't be as hard for those teachers."

Theme 5: From Struggle to Resilience

The theme *From Struggle to Resilience* encompassed 46 coded pieces of text in three categories: preparation, struggle, and resilience. The resulting theme statement to explain the data was *Preparation did not diminish the struggle of ERT, however, persevering through the year created a sense of pride among teachers.*

Preparation

At the onset of the initial March 2020 school closures, many teachers engaged in online professional development covering topics for engaging students in content through online means. T5 said:

> "I went to the training to get Google certified, so I was already trying to kind of up my game and my skills in terms of online resources and using technology in the classroom, so I think that helped me adjust."

T5 said, "felt a little more prepared for it because [they] had gotten professional development in those tech tools." T5 also suggested that future teachers be trained in "just how to infuse technology in your classroom and best practices" so if teachers are required to make the transition again to fully online, they will be more prepared. T1 suggested professional development, "where you can even like, look at your own weaknesses and say, oh, I need to learn more about this type of program, or I need help with this."

Struggle

The lack of technology efficacy during the initial school closure in March 2020 made teachers feel like they were "juggling and keeping those balls in the air" (T7). Technology and the ability to troubleshoot technology made teachers feel "frustrated" and "stupid" (T4, T7). T4 mentioned "feeling like I wasn't really teaching. Feeling like I was more of a babysitter. The term used was facilitator. We were specifically told we were facilitating and not teaching." T4 felt "like I am stuck on stupid island, and I am trying to swim out to the boat that's going to shore. And I would revisit that island quite often throughout the year" (T4). All teachers voiced that there were struggles, frustrations, and lack of self-confidence in their teaching abilities at some point during the 2020-2021 school year.

Resilience

Despite struggles, teachers were able to come out of the 2020-2021 school year with a renewed sense of pride. T7 said they "also learned how to collaborate with the teachers who had my students in their in-school cohorts." T4 agreed that "we definitely relied on each other as a staff to be able to" get through the year. T6 expressed their renewed pride and strength:

> "Well, even though last year was really exhausting in a whole different way than has ever been before… Like I felt like I accomplished a lot and I dealt with what I could to the best of my ability. And I felt like I tried my hardest to get through to kids and I was proud of myself for being able to do all of that. And I really felt like I was actually not only like surviving, but actually like kind of thriving."

All seven teachers voiced that collaboration with colleagues was a contributing factor to making it through the school year. T5 said:

> "And I felt like there was a bit of camaraderie, of bonding. You know, I kind of like soldiers who go through boot camp together. It's like we had went through something really tough and it bonded us."

T3 noted that teachers need to "keep working on resilience" because "teachers need to be flexible so that when students are asked or forced because it's out of our control" so both teachers and students can adapt.

Interpretation of Theme 5

Both students and teachers at West High School were noted to have grown in perseverance because of struggling through the 2020-2021 remote and hybrid school year. Participants felt positive changes in efficacy. T2 said, "there's a lot of great strategies and techniques that you can learn through remote teaching, which you can implement into your class, so that gives you a basis for technology in the classroom," indicating that they learned through the experience and will be able to transfer that knowledge to future instructional situations. Flynn and Noonan (2020) indicated their teacher respondents had more communication with colleagues, benefitted from building new expertise on a variety of online pedagogies, and "that engaging with colleagues during the crisis was beneficial to assuring best practice, gaining advice, and practical tips from colleagues during the transition to remote teaching" (p. 12). Patston et al. (2021) noted that ERT has allowed both students and teachers to adapt resiliently and flexibly to new methods of learning.

Limitations of the Study

Limitations of the study include reduced generalizability, limited sample size, non-transferable interview protocol, and geographic location. Generalizability of findings in this study were limited to one rural high school who taught using a hybrid model during the 2020-2021 school year, and the small sample size of seven teachers. However, the thickness of data and thematic analysis of commonalities between participants may have increased possible transfer to similar settings. The interview protocol was adapted to fit the needs of the study and therefore may not be transferable to other studies. Another limitation was the researcher's closeness to the study, as they taught in the same district, though not at the same school level. Reflexive journaling and transparency were utilized to minimize bias, but researcher bias may still have influenced results. Though limited in scope, the findings and recommendations may be relevant to teachers who face a future of remote and hybrid learning environments.

Recommendations for Future Research

Reflection on the thematic findings of this qualitative case study concludes there are questions still to be answered and further attention needed in examining teaching during the pandemic. There is an emerging set of literature on teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic in the US, but still more research on the 2020-2021 school year and its lasting effects on education are needed to keep research current. More research is needed on the challenges and successes of ERT, students' perspectives on ERT remote and hybrid environments, use of learning management systems, and perceived growth in self-efficacy through various measurements of resilience.

This study, while adding to the existing and growing body of literature on pandemic teaching in the rural areas of the United States, does not fully address the challenges that teachers may face or the perceived self-efficacy of the majority of teachers. More empirical studies are needed to fully understand the COVID impact on education. The hope is that this study will encourage teachers who continue to face challenges as new interruptions to the educational landscape are presented. From this study, teachers may find commonalities or differences to their own experiences and learn vicariously through the perceptions of other teachers.

Conclusion

Challenges related to instructional strategies included uninformed teachers, unclear expectations, lack of student engagement in online synchronous and asynchronous learning, and reduced teacher-student communication during the pandemic. West High School teacher challenges related to curriculum included the lack of freedom in using pre-loaded lessons, lack of student ability to learn autonomously, and the need for a social-emotional learning component. Technology challenges, including inadequate training in the learning management system, affected how teachers viewed their ability to provide adequate education for students. Holistically, the perceived self-efficacy of West High School teachers during the school year was mixed, whereas the end of the school year saw perceived growth in efficacy in the guise of success and pride.

The more teachers understand about their perceptions and abilities to approach challenges in adversity, such as due to the pandemic, the clearer they can view the problems and solutions to ERT. Self-efficacy begins with perception, grows through struggle, and results in strengthened ability (Bandura, 1977). Though self-efficacy may be difficult to measure, analyzing the challenges, successes, and readiness of teachers as they navigate a new situation can inform research of teacher perceived self-efficacy.

The knowledge that the West High School district and other similar districts can gain from this research on teaching during the pandemic can help school leaders to understand what faculty and students have faced throughout the years and help better prepare for future emergency educational shifts. The challenges at West High School, when faced as a faculty, brought camaraderie, collaboration, and bonding among the staff. Though the struggle lasted throughout the year of pandemic teaching, the result was a renewed sense of ability and purpose among teachers at West High School. The reality is that ERT will happen, and technology will be a tool to maneuver through it. T4 said:

> "And as far as moving forward, I mean there is so much technology that I still feel like I don't know what that is out there could help me in my classroom now. I could apply it not just to remote or emergency remote teaching, but I could use it to help my students. And really give them a leg up in the world. Because the world is not going to stand still on technology. It's going to keep pushing forward."

The same could be said about teachers who faced online and hybrid models during the pandemic; they're going to keep moving forward.

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS AND READING PROFICIENCY: A CAUSAL-COMPARATIVE QUANTITATIVE STUDY

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Abstract

The problem is that an achievement gap may correlate to socioeconomic status, race, and school access to financial resources. A causal-comparative quantitative study was conducted to explore reading data from students in grades third through fifth using statewide assessments to discover if there is a correlation between socioeconomic status, demographics, and the schools' access to financial resources. The study aimed to show how reading proficiency is affected across socioeconomic areas, racial demographics, and school-accessible financial resources. The results revealed a correlation between socioeconomic status and reading proficiency. Students in high-poverty areas were less likely to be proficient in reading, with most students in high-poverty schools being African American or Hispanic. Educational leaders may use this research to address educational systems that create barriers in high-poverty schools and research preventative measures that can address the achievement gap.

The Relationship Between Economic and Demographic Factors and Reading Proficiency: A Casual-Comparative Quantitative Study

Racial inequalities in public schools still exist even after attempts to end segregation with Brown v. Board of Education (Ashford-Hansford et al., 2020). Ashford-Hansford et al. (2020) noted that African American students have limited functioning facilities, student support, poor school quality, and a lack of political power to change. Despite efforts to end the segregation of schools, many schools are still separate, and equality among all students does not exist (Ashford-Hansford et al., 2020). Opportunity gaps like the discrepancy in educator quality and training, challenging curriculum, school funding, and the digital divide are causing the discrepancy between urban and suburban school districts (Milner, 2013). Thompson & Thompson (2018) research revealed that many urban schools lack qualified teachers, resulting in lower performance on statewide assessments. Quality teachers directly affect academic success, but urban schools often need more quality professional developments that assist with growth as instructors in the urban setting (Thompson & Thompson, 2018). The push for higher-order thinking and problem-based instruction is evident in suburban schools but needs to be improved in many urban schools (Thompson & Thompson, 2018).

Despite the implementation of initiatives such as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and the Department of Education's Race to the Top Initiative of 2009, research reveals that urban schools consistently score significantly below the basic level in all subjects compared to the rest of the nation, as evidenced by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (Sandy & Duncan, 2010). Teachers have expressed that working in urban schools is challenging because of violence, cultural differences, and high classroom demands (Gaikhorst et al., 2015). In urban schools, the quality of instruction is usually set aside to focus on disruptive behaviors and maintaining control of the classroom (Gage et al., 2018).

Sandy and Duncan (2010) shared that students in urban schools face limitations beyond their control, creating barriers that prevent students in urban settings from meeting grade-level expectations. Third grade is essential in a child's education, especially reading because students shift from learning to read to applying reading skills to learn new concepts (Hernandez et al., 2011). Early reading intervention is critical before the end of third grade, and intervention has been found less effective after third grade (Hernandez et al., 2011). Hernandez et al. (2011) share that students who are not reading proficiently by the end of third grade are more likely not to graduate high school on time.

Theoretical Framework: Critical Race Theory

Recent work in Black Geography reveals how embedded racial coordination plays a role in the arrangements of neighborhoods, cities, and counties (Christian et al.,2021). The work in Black Geography would explain the higher concentration of African American and Latino families in poverty areas where urban schools exist (Welsh & Swain, 2020). The theoretical framework which supports this research is the Critical Race Theory. The Critical Race Theory focuses on the social science of racism in America and how it has fueled desegregation and oppression throughout history (Lynn et al., 2013). Camera (2021) defines Critical Race Theory as a movement by legal scholars who challenge the thinking about race-based discrimination, arguing that racism exists in the foundation of the United States legal system and society. The embedding of racism in the United States is prevalent in all aspects of life; health care, housing, education, and economics (Camera, 2021).

Recent racial gaps in oppression and inequalities in all aspects of life have given the Critical Race Theory movement a push in the United States (Camera, 2021). Even though the Critical Race Theory is controversial, education scholars have used this theory to say that school curricula and inequities reflect structural racism (Christian et al., 2021). Appling et al. (2021) claim the labeling of African American males as underachievers is the effect of the engrained structure of institutional racism in the United States. Research shows that African American males are often labeled as "at risk" or "unmotivated" based on barriers such as peer affiliation, acceptance, social injustices, parental support, and teacher perception (Appling et al., 2021).

Problem Statement

The problem is that an achievement gap may correlate to socioeconomic status, race, and school access to financial resources. Students in urban schools are consistently underperforming in reading. The discrepancy in reading scores across urban and suburban schools creates significant achievement gaps and inequity for students of lower socioeconomic status (Tate, 2021). Students from poverty score significantly lower in reading and writing compared to children from middle and high-income backgrounds (Teale et al., 2007). There is a higher concentration of African American and Latino families in poverty areas where urban schools exist (Welsh & Swain, 2020). Research shows that students who are not reading proficiently by the end of third grade are four times more likely not to finish high school than proficient readers (Hernandez et al., 2011). The specific problem is limited research compares various ranges of socioeconomic groups to see if a correlation exists between socioeconomic status and reading proficiency. Dolean et al. (2019) stated that there is a need for more studies that include children in poverty with severely disadvantaged backgrounds and moderately disadvantaged children to investigate the role of socioeconomic status on reading development.

Research shows that students who attend more profound districts are more likely to obtain proficiency in reading (Henderson, 2021). Holec & Marynowski (2020) suggested that well-designed learning environments geared to teaching styles that are appropriately responsive to students and focused on engaging learning strategies can help increase academic achievement. Research also shows that teacher approach and classroom setup directly affect engagement in the classroom, which generates academic success (Holec & Marynowski, 2020). Urban schools have a larger population of low-income students and fewer qualified teachers, which contributes to learning environments that could be more conducive to academic success (Sandy & Duncan, 2010). Newton (2018) stated that many urban students desire a good education but struggle with poor academic achievement for several reasons, such as teachers needing more training to meet the needs of students in low socioeconomic areas.

This causal-comparative quantitative study seeks to explore the following research questions:

1. Is there a correlation between the socioeconomic status of students and reading proficiency for third through fifth graders?
2. Is there a correlation between the demographics of schools and students' reading proficiency for third through fifth graders?
3. Is there a correlation between the schools' accessible financial resources and students' reading proficiency for third through fifth graders?

H_1: There is no significant correlation between socioeconomic status and reading proficiency of students in third through fifth grade.

H_{1a}: There is a significant correlation between socioeconomic status and reading proficiency of students in third through fifth grade.

H_2: There is no significant correlation between the demographics of schools and the student's reading proficiency in third through fifth grade.

H_{2a}: There is a significant correlation between the demographics of schools and the students' reading proficiency in third through fifth grade.

H_3: There is no significant correlation between the schools' accessible financial resources and the students' reading proficiency in third through fifth grade.

H_{3a}: There is a significant correlation between the schools' accessible financial resources and the students' reading proficiency in third through fifth grade.

Significance of Study

This study explored the relationship between reading proficiency, socioeconomic status, race, and school-accessible financial resources. Identifying reading proficiency gaps between more affluent and high-poverty areas will create further research on improving reading instruction structurally and systematically in urban schools to increase reading proficiency before the end of third grade. Thompson & Thompson's (2018) research stated that the lack of intervention would cause urban schools to struggle with academic achievement compared to their suburban counterparts. This study aims to identify a correlation between reading proficiency and socioeconomic status.

Illiteracy among adolescents and adults worldwide continues to be a growing problem that can affect communities politically, socially, economically, and health-wise (Durda et al., 2020). Literacy is essential in ordinary activities encountered throughout the day, but research shows that 20 percent of U.S. adults are functionally illiterate (Kte'pi, 2018). The achievement gap in education continues to be a significant concern, and the disconnect in achievement in urban education continues to be an ongoing issue (Tate, 2021).

Literature Review

Thompson & Thompson (2018) stated that a poor education system significantly impacts a community because poorly educated school systems produce poorly educated workforces that do not yield or attract new businesses. Despite efforts to end the segregation of schools, many schools are still separate, and equality among all students does not exist (Ashford-Hansford et al., 2020). This review aims to share the historical background of school reform in the United States and explore how a caste system has theoretically prevented educational success for all. This literature review will examine the effects of socioeconomic status, racial demographics, and the school's access to financial resources on the students in the education system. The literature review will also share the history of Critical Race Theory and how the ideas and opposition of Critical Race Theory have shaped education today.

Brown v. Board of Education (1954)

Brown v. Board of Education (1954) abolished segregation in public schools, demanding integration, and equality throughout the educational system for all students, no matter their color (Wraga, 2006). There was a failure in the court case Brown v. Board of Education (1954) because although it called for equality in education, many students still experienced inequality, leading to achievement gaps (Dadisman, 1994). Wraga (2006) cites the vagueness of Brown v. Board of Education (1954) contributes to the ongoing issue in today's educational system. The

vagueness of Brown v. Board of Education (1954) allowed many schools to exploit the ruling and find new ways to promote noncompliance in the school system (Wraga, 2006).

An example of this exploitation is that it took ten years after the order of Brown v. Board of Education (1954)for desegregation in public schools to take place across the United States (Young et al., 2015). Although many other cases have addressed equality in the school systems since the ruling of Brown v. Board of Education (1954), the Supreme Court has not addressed K-12 school segregation since the 1995 case, Missouri v. Jenkins (Young et al., 2015). The lack of urgency to provide equitable opportunities for all students illustrates a disengagement in equal education and the desegregation of schools. This lack of speed has caused the current struggle in the United States with the resegregation of schools in the public school system (Frampton, 2004).

Equity in Education through Reform

Recently, political figures have poured billions of dollars into massive efforts to improve the education system. However, a significant gap exists between the wealthiest and the poorest students (Wexler, 2020). Since the 1980s, there has been evidence of increased involvement from the federal government regarding the public school system with an effort to provide equal education opportunities for all (Young et al., 2018). The addition of national standards and assessments is a driving force for school accountability and was an initiative to create educational equity, but many believe that the national push for standards-based education has slowed educational progress (Young et al., 2018). With the focus on standardized testing, Education Digest (2017) reports that many teachers in struggling public schools focus on test prep, which takes away from actual teaching and narrows the curriculum.

Educational equity is the current focus of political figures; Cervantes (2022) defines disparities in resources, systems, conditions, and structures that students in high-poverty areas experience throughout their academic careers. Current research shows that the current focus in public education attempts to use a vague definition of equity to address various social issues (Cochran-Smith et al., 2022). Cochran-Smith et al. (2022) argue that this vague definition of equity needs to address the structural inequalities in teaching, learning, and the school environment. Covid-19 exposed these disparities with research that shows that 40% of Black and 30% of Hispanic students in the United States did not receive online instruction (Cervantes, 2022). In comparison, only 10% of White students did not receive online instruction during the Covid-19 pandemic (Cervantes, 2022). Intense educational equity challenges theories, ideas, and assumptions about minority or marginalized groups, but the implementation of strong equity in education does not come from just one school or leader (Cochran-Smith et al., 2022). Still, educational equity involves policymakers, educators, community members, and activists (Cochran-Smith et al., 2022).

Even though the United States has made gains in providing educational opportunities, there is still a need for change from past educational issues to societal problems (Teasley, 2019). There is a movement to defund, privatize, and deregulate the public school system by pushing school-choice and voucher programs (Education Digest, 2017). Public schools are experiencing substantial financial cuts (Young, 2018), and developmental programs such as Head Start are usually the first cuts made in districts (Teasley, 2019). Superfine & Paige (2022) share that after examining current reform efforts, there are some successes and many problems. Datnow (2020) and Superfine & Paige (2022) agree that more research is needed to reform public education on a larger scale with input from social justice and educational stakeholders.

Socioeconomic Status Influence on Achievement

Research shows that students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds usually exhibit lower academic achievement when compared to their more affluent peers (Zhang et al., 2020). There are more challenges and barriers for families with a lower socioeconomic status; these challenges prevent families from striving to enhance the academic success of the next generation (Zhang et al.,2020). Shala et al. (2021) shared that parents with a higher socioeconomic status can provide more academic resources and promote a home environment conducive to learning and cognitive development. Some researchers argue that the proposed correlation between socioeconomic status and academic achievement is more complicated; low socioeconomic background does not necessarily equal poor academic achievement (Zhang et al., 2020; Shala et al., 2021).

Barriers in low socioeconomic areas extend into schools, preventing students' academic success (Oakes et al., 2021). Barriers such as food insecurity, poor housing, homelessness, crime, traumatic experiences, and lack of social health impact students of color and underrepresented students (Oakes et al., 2021). Public school systems in high-poverty areas also face barriers such as the state finance system, charter schools, voucher programs, access to quality teachers, lack of support for children and families, and school accountability (Oakes et al., 2021). Research shows that students with lower socioeconomic status are more likely to experience reading delays in each developmental area when compared to peers with a higher socioeconomic status (Kieffer, 2010).

Financial Spending in Public Education

Knight (2017) reveals that high-poverty districts are not protected when state cuts happen, which offers an inequitable funding system detrimental to students in high-poverty areas. State cuts affect staffing and inequitable income-based funding in the public education system; this inequitable funding has led to further gaps and caused high-poverty districts to increase taxes (Knight, 2017). Knight (2017) shares an example of a Texas district that could not maintain financial adequacy after state cuts, even after raising taxes. Public education systems receive federal, state, and local funding, with mostly from state and local governments (Kitchens, 2021). The funding system causes equity concerns because local communities cannot provide the same funding as more affluent communities due to lower revenues from a lower tax base (Robert, 2022).

Although, according to Robert (2022), no data shows a correlation between median household income and per-pupil spending. Some states have attempted to regulate the financial systems in education, but the tax system still allows high-income districts to receive more resources than low-income districts (Kitchens, 2021). In Connecticut, the educational funding system is under scrutiny because of equity concerns (Zhao, 2020). Data analysis shows that spending is inadequate for the predicted achievement cost; this means that the inefficient spending of funds can lead to students underperforming relative to the expected target (Zhao, 2020).

Zhao (2020) argues that there is a need for additional state assistance to subside the lack of local revenue in some districts. Robert (2022) believes that money is not the answer to the equity problem in the public education funding system. Still, some research shows a clear correlation between academic success and accessible financial resources (Zhao, 2020). Aina & Bipath (2020) believe that the problem is that some districts need help managing the funds received. “Absence of financial support prevents the achievement of good quality

education, but the situation worsens when available funds are misused" (Aina & Bipath, 2020). Often districts need clarification about how to spend federal funds because of the rules and policies; this leads districts to use the funds the same way without assessing the effectiveness of using funds (Junge et al., 2019).

Teachers and Administrators in High-Poverty Schools

Studies show preparation is essential to teacher success post-graduation (Kuriloff et al., 2019). Still, there needs to be more consensus on best practices for classroom management and multicultural education (Kuriloff et al., 2019). Teachers work in challenging conditions with the impact of poverty, students with disabilities, and immigration; however, many teacher preparation programs fail to prepare teachers for these challenges (Kuriloff et al., 2019). The lack of preparation for teachers in supporting educational equity leaves teachers feeling unprepared when faced with various challenges (Kuriloff et al., 2019).

There needs to be more research on how to successfully prepare teachers to teach in schools with students who live in high poverty (Bazemore-Bertrand&Handsfield, 2019). The key areas teachers feel will help them succeed in high-poverty schools are building relationships with students, connecting curriculum to students' backgrounds, and having more clinical experience (Bazemore-Bertrand & Handsfield, 2019). Reddy et al. (2021) acknowledge that teachers in high-poverty schools have unique challenges; large class sizes, stressful accountability policies, and disruptive behaviors.

Murakami & Kearney (2020) note that some high-poverty schools are successful on state assessments with firm administrators and instructional support. Reddy et al. (2021) suggest that implementing coaching models like the Classroom Strategies Coaching Model (CSC) helps prepare teachers in high-poverty schools. Assistance from coaches provides emotional support as well as job-embedded professional development, which leads to a reduction of unpleasant emotional experiences for teachers in high-poverty areas (Reddy et al., 2021) Administrators who build capacity with their staff set the tone for high expectations and create a culture for learning are essential for success (Murakami & Kearney, 2020). Engaging the community through building relationships with teachers, students, leaders, and parents creates a team that has a collective focus on school improvement (Murakami & Kearney, 2020).

Theoretical Framework: Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory (CRT) is the idea that race manifests itself to create oppressive educational experiences for students of color in seemingly race-neutral contexts relative to pedagogy, policy, and curriculum (Lynn & Dixson, 2013). The CRT is a movement of activists and scholars researching and transforming the relationship between race, racism, and power (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). CRT questions the foundations of the liberal order, the equality theory, legal reasoning, Enlightenment rationalism, and neutral principles of constitutional law (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). The basic idea of CRT is that racism is challenging to address or cure because it is not acknowledged, large populations of society have little interest or incentive to end racism, and races are categories society creates to manipulate or retire when convenient (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

Origins of Critical Race Theory

After the court case Brown v. Board of Education (1954), there was a push to dismantle the structures of racism and oppression created by segregation throughout the United States

(Lynn & Dixson, 2013). Legislation like the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act, and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act were remedies to discrimination in America (Lynn & Dixson, 2013). The court case Green v. New Kent County (1968) addressed the lack of progress in the desegregation of public schools, which caused school districts to eliminate segregation in public schools (Lynn & Dixson, 2013). In the late 1960s, the affirmative action admission policy pushed for African Americans and minorities to attend higher education campuses (Lynn et al., 2013). Due to stalled advances in the civil rights movements and the rollback of legislation, many activists, lawyers, and legal scholars reframed theories and strategies to combat subtle racism in America (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Due to the lack of positive programs addressing the concerns of people of color, theorists need to address racism and oppression in America (Lynn & Dixson, 2013).

The Critical Race Theory movement has three major themes or views: idealism, realism, and materialism (Delgado & Stefancic., 2017). Idealists believe that racism and discrimination are forms of thinking and mental categorization by an individual toward a different race, whereas realists believe society allocates privilege and status (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Race is a visible stain of the unseen caste system in the United States (Wexler, 2020). Racial realism is the understanding that African Americans will never gain full equality in America (Lynn & Dixson, 2013). Materialists believe conquering nations, demonizing subjects, and exploiting creates circumstances where one race cannot get an advantage (Lynn & Dixson, 2013). There are criticisms within the critical race theory movement and outside the action (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). The external complaints argue that narrative storytelling paints the picture of victims from a biased point of view (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). The purpose of storytelling in the Critical Race Theory movement shows that racism is present in the everyday life of people of color (Lynn & Dixson, 2013). Critical Race theorists have also experienced internal criticism dealing with the movement's worth and the movement's focus (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

The Cultural Deficit Theory is another theory that explains the underperformance and low educational outcome of students of color (Solorzano & Huber, 2020). The Cultural Deficit Theory centers the problem on students of color, stating that African Americans struggle with performing like their White counterparts because African American parents do not value education (Solorzano & Huber, 2020). Literature paints the picture of how expectations for black students regarding academic success are much less than their peers (Lynn & Dixson, 2013). Many black schools have closed in post-Brown v. Board of Education, black teachers and administrators have lost their jobs, and there is a disproportionate burden on the desegregation of black students (Lynn & Dixson, 2013). The closing of community schools dismantles minority communities (Lynn & Dixson, 2013). Researchers highlighted how black students feel regarding black underachievement, and most students shared a perception that white is good and black is wrong (Lynn & Dixson, 2013). There is a need to rebrand black educational achievement in the United States, representing excellence and not failure (Lynn & Dixson, 2013).

Assault on Critical Race Theory

Recently, the ideas of Critical Race Theory have been under attack, and anyone who speaks of the views of Critical Race has received backlash (Conway, 2022). Discussions of Critical Race Theory are banned in many states, citing Whiteness's emotionality, which stems from guilt, anger, deflection, denials, and anxiety (Liou & Alvara, 2021). The attempt to erase the violent history in America of institutional and individual racism against immigrants and minorities is a fight by those in power to maintain the mythic identity of America as "the home

of the free" (Conway, 2022). Banning the discussion of Critical Race Theory is an undemocratic approach to silence the debate on past national events (Conway, 2022). This ban prevents oppositional or minority views and contrasts with the principles of free speech (Conway, 2022). Many politicians believe that pulling Critical Race Theory from the education curriculum is to unify the country (Liou & Alvara, 2021). Still, it hinders the movement past systematic racism that has fueled the continuation of racial inequality in our country (Conway, 2022).

Fictionalizing Critical Race Theory removes history to fit the status quo of right-wing ideologies (Conway, 2022). Higher education is where critical thinking about social issues is supposed to occur. Still, due to conflicting beliefs in a curriculum centered around race, many professors have experienced backlash (Liou & Alvara., 2021). Professors have experienced complaints and refusal to complete assignments due to instances where White students were uncomfortable with the topic, the reading did not align with their core beliefs, or anger prevented them from completing the assignment (Liou & Alvara, 2021). Critical Race Theory has become a political push that has caused fear among White individuals and coined beliefs such as "anti-racist is a code word for anti-White" or "diversity is a code word for white genocide" (Kendi, 2021). Recent events have led policymakers to require school districts to review the curriculum's content through a racial disparity lens (Pondiscio, 2021).

Critical Race Theory in Higher Education

Conversations centered around racial history, diversity, and culture is imperative in teacher preparation programs because a lack of understanding or avoidance of these topics can hinder the success of future teachers (Smith, 2020). Discussions around racial justice equip individuals to increase empathy, challenge misconceptions, promote analytical skills, develop tools to engage in productive dialogue, and expand their theoretical perspectives (Harbin et al., 2019). Avoiding multicultural education or the diluted presentation of the topic is a failure of the public education system. Avoiding discussions around multicultural education in higher education limits a marginalized and oppressed group from organizing against oppression and moving toward liberation (Dixson, 2018). Research shows that White students are less than half of the K-12 population. Still, universities continue to push out 80% of unequipped White cohorts to teach racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse students (Sleeter, 2017). Through conversations about racial injustice, White educators can confront race conversations and work with the community as a representation for all (Sleeter, 2017). Working alongside the movement for equitable opportunities for all will build positive teacher-student relationships and foster positive school climates in high-poverty schools, increasing student engagement (Greer et al., 2022).

Methodology

The purpose of this causal-comparative quantitative study was to explore reading data from students in grades third to fifth grade using statewide assessments to discover if there is a correlation between socioeconomic status, demographics, and the school’s access to financial resources. The goal of causal-comparative research studies is to explore the differences between pre-existing groups related to an outcome or dependent variable (Schenker & Rumrill, 2004). Causal comparative (ex post facto) research does not include manipulation or interference by the researcher but includes observation and examination of facts in their natural state (Salkind, 2010).

A quantitative method is appropriate for this research because, according to Johnson & Christensen (2014), qualitative research renders results that help investigate a problem in response to a process. A causal-comparative method is appropriate because the researcher will not manipulate any variables. According to Johnson & Christensen (2014), an experimental research method allows the researcher to manipulate the variables becoming embedded in the actual conditions of the study. The causal-comparative method is appropriate for this research because the researcher examines ex post facto data. The basis of the causal-comparative research design involves the idea that the observed differences equate to differences in experiences between two groups (Allen, 2017), which was the driving force in this research.

Participants

This study focused on a population of students in Missouri in grades third through fifth who completed the English Language Arts portion of the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) in the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 school years.

Table 1:The population of Students (Grades 3-5) Assessed in English Language Arts

Testing Year	Grade	Population Assessed in ELA
2016-2017	3	69,473
	4	69,624
	5	68,082
2017-2018	3	68,094
	4	69,734
	5	69,953

Recruitment

This study randomly sampled 100 elementary schools in Missouri with students in third through fifth grade who attended schools with a student population that ranges from 250 to 350. The study established the sample size through secondary data from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education website.

Data Collection

Data was collected using archival documents on the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education website. The study examined the Missouri Assessment Program data, the demographic percentages in the school, the yearly expenditure per pupil, and the participation in the Community Eligibility Program (free and reduced lunch program for schools in high-poverty areas).

Table 2: Alignment of Instrumentation to Research Questions

Research Question	Variable Measured	Instrumentation Used to Measure
Is there a correlation between socioeconomic status of students and reading proficiency?	Socioeconomic Status; reading proficiency	Socioeconomic status is determined by the school participation in the Community Eligibility Provision Program: this program services schools in high-poverty areas and gives an idea of the average socioeconomic status of the surrounding area Reading proficiency is measured by the number of students who scored proficient or advanced on the statewide assessment.
Is there a correlation between the demographics of schools and students' reading proficiency?	Demographics. reading proficiency	Demographics focus on the race/ethnicity of students serviced at each school. Reading proficiency is measured by the number of students who scored proficient or advanced on the statewide assessment.
Is there a correlation between the schools' accessible financial resources and students' reading proficiency?	Schools' accessible financial resources; reading proficiency	The schools' accessible financial resources were determined by the current expenditures per student given to each school. Reading proficiency is measured by the number of students who scored proficient or advanced on the statewide assessment.

Data Analysis

SPSS is a software that collects and analyzes data; this software can calculate correlations and produce graphs. The correlate bivariate with confidence intervals option allows for the calculation of the correlation between variables. By entering the variables in different columns, variables can be measured against each to find the correlation. Bivariate correlation was used to analyze the correlation between the studied variables. When using the bivariate correlation option, the bootstrap technique and confidence interval was used to ensure that there was no present bias. A 95% confidence interval was also used, giving a lower and upper boundary to correct bias. Using Pearson's Correlation Coefficient, the correlation coefficients show if there is a positive or negative correlation between the two variables. If there is a positive one, there is a perfect positive correlation between the two variables. If there is a correlation coefficient of 0.8, there is a fairly strong positive relationship. A correlation coefficient of 0.6 shows a moderate positive relationship, and a correlation coefficient of 0 means there is no relationship between the variables. Correlation coefficients in the negative show that there is a negative correlation between the two variables.

Findings

- Research Question 1: Is there a correlation between the socioeconomic status of students and reading proficiency for third through fifth graders?

Research has shown that socioeconomic statuses are a crucial indicator of academic achievement (Reardon et al., 2019). Data from the current study shows a moderate correlation between socioeconomic status and reading proficiency. The schools in high-poverty areas were less likely to have high proficiency rates in reading. When looking at the data, schools that participated in the Community Eligibility Program were less likely to have a high percentage of proficient readers. Schools deemed eligible for the CEP program consistently had a higher percentage of Black and Hispanic students. This segregation of Black and Hispanic students due to socioeconomic factors supports the theoretical framework of Critical Race Theory, which explores systematic oppression that prevents a particular ethnic group from progressing.

Some research suggests that socioeconomic status is an indicator for students who struggle with reading proficiency (Zhang et al., 2020). Some data show that students with lower socioeconomic statuses are at a higher risk of experiencing reading difficulties during the developmental reading stage (Kieffer, 2010). This statistic means that students from lower socioeconomic areas are at a higher risk of struggling with reading before grade 3; this risk is present at all levels but was extreme with students in primary elementary (Kieffer, 2010). The relationship between socioeconomic status and reading proficiency points to factors such as low parental interest in books and education, poor nutrition, genetics, or poor neural and cognitive development (Dolean et al., 2019). Research shows that state-level achievement correlates with state racial and socioeconomic disparities. The most significant distinctions are in states with a larger gap in racial differences in family income, poverty, unemployment rates, and educational attainment (Reardon et al., 2015).

Family income dictates the socioeconomic status of families and the areas in which they live. However, this research shows a moderate correlation between the amount of money families make and reading proficiency. This research suggests that students attending high-poverty areas schools are less likely to be proficient in reading. The study states that

socioeconomic disparities and achievement affect not only Black and Hispanic students but also students in rural areas (May et al., 2021). This study did not explore students' reading proficiency in rural areas, but research shows that rural areas are also high-poverty areas (May et al., 2021). Heavily segregated areas of Black and Hispanic students in high-poverty areas paints a picture of systematic oppression based on a socioeconomic factor, confirming the argument presented by Critical Race theorist.

- Research Question 2: Is there a correlation between the demographics of schools and students' reading proficiency for third through fifth graders?

Data show a discrepancy between academic success across demographics (Crane et al., 2011 & Reardon et al., 2015). The demographics collected for this research focus on the race and ethnicity of students evaluated. The demographics report from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education shows the percentage of students by ethnicity for the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 school years. This data show how a higher percentage of one race affects the percentage of students who are proficient in reading. Correlating the racial demographics of students with reading proficiency shows the correlation between demographics and reading proficiency.

Poverty fuels the achievement gap, not a race according to research (Samuels, 2019). The segregation of African Americans and Hispanics in high-poverty communities makes the data appear to be a racial gap. Still, poverty is the culprit that prevents equitable opportunities for all learners (Samuels, 2019). Current research shows racial and socioeconomic disparities, and segregation patterns were the strongest predictors of racial achievement gaps (Reardon et al., 2019). Research shows that factors other than racial and ethnic socioeconomic disparities determine academic achievement (Reardon et al., 2019). When comparing students in high-poverty areas and students in more affluent areas with similar socioeconomic backgrounds, academic success varies (Reardon et al., 2017; Reardon et al., 2019). Past research suggests that the higher exposure to school poverty for Black and Hispanic students in relation to their white counterparts creates education inequality (Reardon et al., 2019).

Data from the current study shows that there is a correlation between White students and reading proficiency. However, there is a negative correlation between reading proficiency among Hispanic and Black students. The heavy concentration of Hispanic and Black students in high-poverty areas confirms research that academic achievement is not a race issue but a poverty issue. When analyzing the data, some schools with a higher demographic of white students and a high percentage of proficient readers also had a percentage of Black students in their demographics. This data suggests that Black and Hispanic students can thrive in reading outside of the poverty lines. In schools with a higher percentage of White students, there are more qualified teachers, quality instructional materials, quality equipment, adequate support staff, quality facilities, and fewer behavior issues to distract from learning (Reardon, 2017). The differences in school climate create an inequitable experience for students in high-poverty areas reducing the educational attainment of the students. These inequitable experiences hinder underrepresented students from reaching their full potential toward proficiency in reading. The lack of equitable opportunities for schools in high-poverty areas systematically oppresses the growth of students in this area. This idea confirms the idea of the Critical Race movement in the United States.

Research shows a discrepancy among racial demographic areas related to reading proficiency (Crane et al., 2011). The following study looks at various subgroups, including race

and situational factors; the study reported that on the Arizona State Assessment, the subgroups: Asian, White, and students not receiving free and reduced lunch have the highest proficiency rates (Crane et al., 2011). This research concludes that Asian, White, and students not receiving free and reduced lunch correlate with reading proficiency, meaning that a higher percentage of Asian and White students equals a higher percentage of proficient readers (Crane et al., 2011). Native American, Hispanic, and Black students had the lowest proficiency rates (Crane et al., 2011).

Data show that in most neighborhoods in the United States, there are racial boundaries for various reasons, including income and political boundaries designed to exclude certain races or economic classes (Kitchens, 2021). The concentration of Black and Hispanic students in high-poverty neighborhoods confirms research that shows that students in high-poverty areas are not receiving equitable opportunities to ensure proficiency in reading. Reducing economic segregation could provide opportunities to mitigate educational attainment between high- and low-income students (Mayer, 2002). The data in this study confirms that Black and Hispanic students are consistently struggling with reaching proficiency in reading.

Research shows that White students are less than half of the K-12 population. Still, universities continue to graduate 80% of unequipped White cohorts to teach racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse students (Sleeter, 2017). The negative correlations between reading proficiency of Black and Hispanic students can be due to traumatic events associated with poverty, such as concerns for food, shelter, and other basic needs. The negative correlations between the reading proficiency of Black and Hispanic students can also result from a lack of quality teachers in schools heavily populated with Hispanic and Black students. Teachers who teach in schools with a high percentage of Black and Hispanic students struggle with relating to the students and providing instructional strategies that engage the population. This further causes a gap for students who are in high-poverty areas and hinders these students from reaching proficiency in reading. This discrepancy is a systematic error that affects underrepresented students and supports the Critical Race theoretical framework of systematic oppression.

- Research Question 3: Is there a correlation between the schools' accessible financial resources and students' reading proficiency for third through fifth graders?

Funding differs in each district for various reasons, with most funding coming from local personal property and commercial taxes. The expenditure by pupil report from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education represents the schools' accessible finances. This report shows how much money districts received per pupil based on student attendance. This information is one source of income for school districts but gives an idea of how funding varies between districts. The current operating expenditures decide expenditure by pupil for the district divided by the attendance for the district. These data show the correlation between accessible school finances and reading proficiency.

Some research states there is no correlation between accessibility to financial resources and student reading proficiency. Schools are receiving equitable funding but have struggled with mismanagement of funds causing students to not benefit from the resources provided (Ray & Lao, 2019). When allocating funds, district leaders should be cognizant of decisions, ensuring that purchases are data-driven and in the best interests of scholars (Ray & Lao, 2019). School districts lose funding due to students opting to use vouchers to attend other schools (Carvlin, 2002). Implementing reforms such as the school voucher systems allows for more student choices and created competition for public school dollars between various educational sectors

(Carvlin, 2002), which has already caused struggling districts to lose funding. The voucher system attacks struggling schools in high-poverty areas and strips schools of high-performing students and funding.

These data show that expenditures per pupil are similar for some schools in high-poverty and more affluent areas. Still, the information does not reveal how many students in high-poverty areas opted to attend a charter or private school. When students opt to participate in another school, the funds allotted for that pupil go with them to that school. Expenditures per pupil are distributed based on the consistent attendance of those students in the school. Absenteeism is higher among impoverished students (Rafa & Education Commission of the States, 2017), which means funding is jeopardized for high-poverty areas when students do not attend school. Racial segregation and the accessibility to equal financial resources correlate with student academic success (Kitchens, 2021). Public education receives federal, state, and local governments, with most funds coming from the state and local governments (Kitchens, 2021). Property taxes make up the revenue for local governments, so districts in areas with a lack of business or lower property values receive less funding per pupil (Kitchens, 2021). Even though residents in black communities pay more in property taxes, there is a discrepancy in the number of money districts receive per child in local revenue (Kitchens, 2021). Research shows a correlation between the sales prices of homes and student success on a standardized test (Ray & Lao, 2019). Schools with lower-priced homes are likelier to have a less proficient percentage of students on a standardized test (Ray & Lao, 2019).

District boundaries have concentrated populations and resources into one area and have created segregation controlled by household income, political boundaries, and limited financial opportunities such as private schools (Kitchens, 2021). The current study did not find a correlation between the schools' accessible financial resources and reading proficiency because there was no clear correlation between the funds received and the percentage of proficient students. In some cases, districts received similar funding, but there was a drastic difference in the percentage of proficient students. Factors such as demographics, location, and participation in the CEP program were the factors that separated the districts. There is an association between the percentage of Black students and low-test scores, which confirms various research (Kitchens, 2021). This data show glaring racial gaps, oppression, and inequalities in all aspects of life and demonstrates the idea of Critical Race Theory and how it hinders growth in our education system in the United States (Camera, 2021).

Recommendations for Future Research

There is a need for a more detailed analysis of how reading proficiency differs across socioeconomic statuses. Future research should explore schools in various socioeconomic areas, socioeconomic status, demographics, accessible financial resources, and reading proficiency among the chosen schools using case studies. A case study will allow the researcher to focus on a smaller sample size from various socioeconomic backgrounds and gather more direct data related to the participants. Research should try to understand how students and teachers feel in areas of high poverty and more affluent areas. Research can explore how students feel about the school environment, teachers, and how they think they learn best. Teachers can give insight into how they feel about their work environments, student learning, and capabilities to reach the learners.

Research shows a decrease in effective teachers who can instruct students in high-poverty areas upon graduation from four-year universities. Researchers can conduct a qualitative study on how prepared teachers feel after exiting college to tutor students in high-poverty areas. After

one year in public education the same teachers can share what teaching courses were beneficial and which courses were not applicable to the current teaching field. This study can explore challenges teachers often face in these areas and what they think would have better prepared them for the difficulties identified. Further research in this area will ensure that teachers are ready and qualified upon entering a four-year university to instruct all students from various backgrounds. Comparing the data from measurements of high-poverty and more affluent areas will give researchers further insight into how different socioeconomic areas differ in educational attainment and how students and teachers feel about the quality of education in those areas.

There is a need to explore what instructional strategies for reading are beneficial for students. This research could highlight what instructional strategies work for reading and what instructional strategies do not in high poverty areas. Researchers can conduct mixed methods studies to determine the use of instructional strategies in high-poverty areas versus more affluent areas and how the instructional strategies affect reading data. The researcher could survey teachers in high-poverty areas and more affluent areas and ask what instructional strategies are being used in the classroom. The researcher can then collect data using the pretest posttest research design to see which instructional strategies yielded the most academic growth. Researchers can also explore what types of supplemental reading programs are successful in high-poverty areas. This research could give insight into how schools have used literacy programs to close the gaps in reading proficiency and how the implementation of these programs affected reading scores.

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COUNSELORS AND TEACHERS' KNOWLEDGE, PERCEPTIONS, AND AWARENESS OF SUICIDE AMONG YOUTH: AN EXPLORATORY CASE STUDY

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Abstract

The problem is because teachers and counselors often do not have adequate youth suicide prevention training, this lack of training often results in the high numbers of needless youth suicides each year. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to understand how counselors and teachers perceive the adequacy of their training to prevent youth suicide. The population consisted of 32 high school teachers and 5 counselors, with at least one year experience. Data were collected from two sources, questionnaires with open ended questions and one-on-one interviews that included open-ended and short answer questions. Data for this study was analyzed with the help of a Computer Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software, or (CAQDAS), NVivo. Using a software to help aid in the analysis of collected data can support qualitative researchers in their efforts to present their analysis and findings in a transparent way, thus enhancing trustworthiness. Four major themes surrounding counselors and teachers' knowledge, perception, and awareness of suicide among youth, emerged from the data collection: 1. Inadequate suicide prevention training: Limited to online modules, 2. Mixed perceptions and beliefs regarding suicide, 3.Comfort level of approaching students regarding suicide, and 4. Recommendations for future leaders and practitioners may include researching more literature regarding online suicide prevention training programs in school, that demonstrate an increase in knowledge and awareness of suicide among youth.

Counselor's and Teacher's Knowledge, Perception, and Awareness of Suicide Among Youth: An Exploratory Study

Suicide is one of the leading causes of death in the United States. Many reports of suicide deaths take place each day. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2021) reported that more than 12 million Americans considered suicide in 2019. According to Curtin (2020), 45,855 suicide deaths were reported from the national vital statistics, in the year 2020. Suicide in ages 10-24 is the second leading cause of death in the United States, with 47,500 deaths, one every 11 minutes, being reported in 2019 (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2021). Such reports demonstrate the important role of schools and school officials to the prevention of suicide. Although establishing effective suicide prevention programs in schools is a great start to suicide prevention and spreading awareness, it is important to ensure that educational staff such as teachers and counselors are properly trained on the subject. Holden et al. (2018) asserted that many teachers and students have yet to receive the appropriate mental health training, demonstrating a need to incorporate suicide prevention programs into schools to help spread awareness.

Educational institutes play a significant role in the prevention of suicide. Schools have a duty and obligation in making sure students can perform in a safe environment. School administrators, including counselors and teachers, are in an idea position to help with the prevention of suicide. This chapter discusses the problem of suicide among adolescents, the challenges and known factors that lead to suicide, or thoughts of suicide, and how incorporating suicide prevention programs and proper training, can assist school counselors and teachers in the prevention of suicide.

Problem Statement

The problem is because teachers and counselors often do not have adequate youth suicide prevention training, this lack of training often results in the high numbers of needless youth suicides each year, (Becnel et al., 2021). Holden et al. (2018) asserted that there is a need to incorporate mental health activities that focus on suicide prevention and removes the stigma of suicide, as many teachers and students do not receive adequate health training. In a qualitative study regarding youth suicide prevention in schools, Ross et al. (2017) noted that exploring the impact that youth suicide has on teachers, their perspectives of youth suicide prevention, and including the views of other school staff, such as guidance officers, would be an added benefit of future research. Despite suicide prevention training in schools, suicide in youth and adolescents ages 10-24, remains the second leading cause of death in the United States (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2018). In an article written on the concerns of suicide being the second leading cause of death in Canada, Merali (2017) emphasized the important role counselors play in the prevention of suicide, by pointing out that counselors are professional educators with extensive mental health background experience, which can benefit other teachers in identifying students at risk of suicide behavior. Youth spend a large amount of their time in school settings surrounded with peers and educational staff, thus, stressors related to peers and academic achievement can become stressful for some youth. Poland and Ferguson (2021) reported that suicide trends in school aged youth were on an all-time high, with many students reporting having considered attempting suicide and having a plan. Suicide is increasingly high and prevalent among youth, across all demographics, where schools can be an effective setting for the identification and prevention of suicide among youth, (Brann et al., 2021). Whitney et al. (2011) explained that due to the large amount of youth who attend public and private schools, it

seems logical that schools would be the domain where preventive methods to suicide prevention could be implemented.

This qualitative exploratory case study based on an exploratory research design seeks to answer the following research questions:

- RQ1: How do teachers and counselors perceive the adequacy of their suicide prevention training?
- RQ2: How do teachers and counselors perceive the role of school personnel in preventing youth suicide?

Significance of the Study

Case study research constitutes an all-encompassing method that covers the logic of design, data collection techniques, and specific approaches to data analysis, (Yin, 2018). As stated by Streb (2010), Yin defined exploratory case study as a method to explicate the required questions and hypotheses for developing consecutive studies. This exploratory case study sought to gain insight on the beliefs of both counselors and teachers, working in the field of education, as it related to suicide prevention in high school youth. The research questions worked as a guide to understanding the phenomena surrounding youth suicide. To undertake qualitative research usually involves exploring ways of gaining insights into beliefs, attitudes, opinions, and practices drawing on data collection tools such as interviews, observations, reflective diaries and so on within such research genres as case study (Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2013). Campbell (2015) addressed five different applications of choosing a case study for research: to explain the assumed causal links in real-life interventions; to describe an involvement and the real-life context; to explain certain topics using a descriptive approach; to explore situations in which intervention has no clear set of outcomes; and to conduct a meta-evaluation. In a case study exploring the attitudes and perceptions of Cambodian students, Tost et al. (2019) noted that the use of a case study was more effective for addressing research questions as well its benefits of allowing further in-depth expansion, for future research

Literature Review

Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the United States. As noted by Walrath et al. (2015), it is the 3rd leading cause of death in ages 10-14, and the 2nd leading cause of death in ages 15-24. Suicide is a widespread issue and concern, as reported throughout history. Stockburger and Omar (2017) identified suicide as a major public health problem, affecting individuals of all ages, with youth showing the most alarming of high rates. Nearly 30,000 suicides take place annually in the United States according to Greydanus (2017), and approximately 90,000 suicides around the world, take place in youth up to age 19, with one every five minutes occurring. Such high numbers demonstrate a high priority of attention needed to understanding suicide and suicide ideation. There are many theories that seek to explain suicide ideation and suicide attempts.

Joiner's interpersonal theory states suicide is caused by two interpersonal constructs, thwarted belongingness, and perceived burdensomeness (Van Orden et al., 2010). The theory, as described by Hames et al. (2015), asserted that when loneliness, disconnection from others, and the perceived or actual absence of social relationships coincide with the misperception that one is

a burden on others, involving feelings of self-hatred and the belief that one's death would be worth more than one's life to others or society, the desire for death develops. The theory also asserts that to die by suicide, one must have developed the capability to die by suicide (Hames et al., 2015).

A more recent theory than Joiner's interpersonal theory, is Klonsky and May (2015), Three Step Theory (3ST), which states that suicide derives from pain and hopelessness. There are three central claims of the three-step-theory, as defined by Dhingra et al (2019): First, the amalgamation of pain and hopelessness forms thoughts of suicide. Secondly, cohesion prevents suicide ideation from reaching levels of intensity in those at risk, and finally, suicide ideation only leads to a suicide attempt if the person has the means and capacity to do so. Such theories leave others searching for explanations for high suicide rates among school age youth. Many educational institutions offer suicide training and suicide prevention programs in their schools, however, despite many efforts, suicide among youth ages 15-24 continue to pose a concern.

The Role of the School in Suicide Prevention

Schools are presented as idea for promoting school safety, yet it is here that many school-age youth experience suicide. Schools and school officials have an obligation to provide a safe healthy environment for their students. Granello and Zyromski (2018) viewed schools as the appropriate environment to provide suicide prevention programs. Students can spend eight hours a day five days a week in a school setting, and for some who attend year-round education, even more hours are spend inside of a school. Many of the factors associated to suicide are displayed in a school setting and can often go unnoticed. With many certified trained staff, schools have the necessary resources to ensure the proper programs and training are put in place to assess suicide behavior. Because the school is the community institution that has the primary responsibility for the education and socialization of youth, the school context has the potential to moderate the occurrence of risk behaviors and to identify and secure help for at-risk individuals, (Kalafat, 2003). Schiro (2017), a former teacher and secondary principal, encouraged schools to not ignore warning signs of students who may be exemplifying signs of suicide, and to take action immediately with the following key steps to prevention: provide mental health first aid training to at least 2 staff members at each campus, set up a Safe-talk training that teaches individuals how to recognize and encourage communication in those experiencing suicidal thoughts, plan training for both students and staff, increase awareness by encouraging participation in the National Suicide Prevention week at school, and use evidence based tools for suicide prevention and awareness. Schools play a vital role in the safety of students at all ages and levels. By educating students and staff on the prevention of suicide, and taking the necessary steps to incorporate effective training, can help reduce the number of deaths in suicide.

Role of Counselors and Teachers in Suicide Prevention

The increased rise in suicide among youth is demonstrating a greater need to properly prepare and train counselors and teachers in the prevention of suicide. McConnellogue and Storey (2017) voiced a concern and need for teachers to be trained on how to respond appropriately to suicide. In their study, experiences and perceptions of teachers were explored as it related to their role in suicide prevention. To respond to the need of more educational staff receiving suicide prevention training, Gallo (2017) also agreed that not only should school counselors and educational staff play a role in reducing the rates of suicides, but it is their ethical duty to protect their students. Noted in a recent study, Shannonhouse et al. (2017) contributed to

McConnellogue and Storey (2017) and Gallo (2017), belief that school personnel, such as school counselors and teacher's role in the awareness of suicide prevention, can increase knowledge and understanding of suicide risk factors, and aid in the reduction of suicide deaths. In an experimental group consisting of counselors, teachers, and administrators, from elementary, middle, and high school, participants took part in a pre-test and post-test ASIST training. The results indicated that teachers were not as skilled as school counselors, and thus lacked confidence in playing a role in suicide prevention. However, their confidence and skill level increased after having completed the training. confident prior to taking the training, however, after completion of the training, demonstrated the opposite, feeling more confident to assist students in the prevention of suicide. As reported throughout much of the literature, school counselors are more skilled in suicide prevention programs. However, as stated in the experiment conducted by Shannonhouse et al. (2017), it is in the best interest of the counselors to utilize their skills and knowledge in providing training to their educational colleagues.

As the literature continues to display relevant information and proven data on the important role of counselors and teachers in participating in school programs geared at increasing suicide awareness, involving teacher role in suicide prevention, can help decrease more rates, by increasing awareness.

Theoretical Framework

The basis of this study derived from David Klonsky and Alexis May, Ideation-to-Action Framework. According to Klonsky and May (2015), the framework offers separate explanations for (a) the development of suicidal ideation and (b) the progression from suicidal ideation to attempts. This theory holds that suicide ideation and attempts are explained in terms of just four factors: pain, hopelessness, connectedness, and suicide capacity. This applied framework lend itself to the study as it aided in the understanding of suicide ideation, by arguing that the "ideation-to-action" framework should guide suicide theory, research, and prevention because the development of suicide ideation and the progression from ideation to suicide attempts are distinct processes with distinct explanations. The Three-Step-Theory (3ST), from which the Ideation-to-Action framework extends, would be acceptable when assessed using large populations associated with such factors as "thwarted belongingness, perceived burdensomeness, connectedness, and feelings of entrapment and defeat" (Tondo, 2018, p. 564), with suicidal ideation and behavior, with and without current clinical depression. Such examination aligns with Thomas Joiner's Interpersonal-Psychological Theory, or (IPT).

Interpersonal-Psychological Theory

The Interpersonal theory has informed the study of suicide attempts to explain why individuals engage in suicidal behaviors and to identify those individuals who are at risk. According to Van Orden, et.al. (2010), the most dangerous form of suicidal desire is caused by the simultaneous presence of two interpersonal constructs—thwarted belongingness and perceived burdensomeness—and further that the capability to engage in suicidal behavior is separate from the desire to engage in suicidal behavior. In a close examination of the theory, Joiner et al. (2012) further analyzed the two components by defining thwarted belongingness as one who experiences loneliness and a lack of reciprocally positive relationships. Perceived burdensome was defined as misconceptions of being a burden to others, or self-hatred, as well feeling responsible for others. Applying this theory to the present study, assisted in understanding the related causes of suicide by providing unexplained facts because of the low

number of advances in understanding the causes and correlates of suicide, as well as methods for suicide prevention. An important strength of the theory is that it explains the lower frequency of more severe levels of suicidality (such as suicide attempt) compared to less severe levels (such as passive suicidal ideation), (Horton et al., 2016).

Integrated Motivational-Volitional Theory

Consistent with the Ideation-to-Action framework, the Integrated Motivational-Volitional theory identifies key factors to bring meaning and understanding to the emergence of suicide ideation; its purpose or existence, and what leads to the transition between thoughts of suicide to conducting the act of suicide. Rory O'Connor's and Olivia Kirtley (2018), IMV model proposed that defeat and entrapment drive the emergence of suicidal ideation and that a group of factors, entitled volitional moderators, govern the transition from suicidal ideation to suicidal behavior. The IMV model operates from three phases: The Pre-Motivational Phase, the Motivational Phase, and the Volitional Phase. Wetherall et al. (2019) briefly explained the three phases as such: The pre-motivational phase of the IMV model describes the background context (e.g., deprivation, genetics, vulnerabilities, negative life events) in which suicide ideation may develop. Factors related to the development of suicide ideation, including moderators that facilitate the transition from defeat to entrapment and from entrapment to suicide ideation. The final volitional phase of the model outlines the factors that increase or decrease the likelihood that someone acts on their thoughts of suicide; these volitional phase factors include impulsivity, exposure to suicide, and acquired capability for suicide.

Methodology

The purpose of qualitative research, as explained by Bhatta (2018), is to study complex social phenomenon which is not appropriate to do with the quantitative approach of research. In contrast to quantitative research, generalizability is not a guiding principle (Korstjens & Moser, 2017). Whereas quantitative research deals with restrictions, where the researcher already has an expected outcome of a certain amount or quantity from the start of research, qualitative research has room for more flexibility, as new information is discovered throughout the process. As explained by Korstjens and Moser (2017), qualitative research works with emerging design; thus, details of the research cannot be planned at the start of the study as the researcher has to be responsive to new information discovered throughout the process, which can pose additional questions to be answered.

Participants

Participants included teachers and counselors working for a high school located in Texas, who had engaged with students in a capacity that included a classroom or school setting, for at least one year. Purposeful sampling was used, and participation was voluntary, for this study. Recruitment. An email was sent out to the superintendent of the school district, with an attachment of a consent form, outlining the research, purpose of the study, and permission to contact the principal of the high school for participation. Once granted permission, another form of consent, along with the superintendent's approval document, was emailed to the principal of the high school as an attachment, requesting the teachers and counselors to participate in the research study. Once permission was granted by both the superintendent and principal of the district, to gain access to email lists, recruitment letters were sent out to a database of high school teachers and counselors asking for their participation in the study. Once agreed to participate in

the study, a consent form, which outlined the details and purpose of the study, was emailed to those who wished to participate. The participation forms included an optional choice to participate in the questionnaire, semi-structured interview, and focus group discussion. Consent forms included the attached questionnaire in a word document, with questions for both teachers and counselors to answer, upon agreement and acceptance; for those who met the criteria. Although the goal of the researcher was to include focus groups to collect data, due to the rising numbers -of COVID-19, many teachers were out at various times, and thus it was difficult to gather groups for the study in one setting.

Data Collection

Two instruments were used to collect data, a questionnaire, and semi-structured interviews. Although there were volunteers and signed consent forms for the focus group, teachers' schedules were limited, with setbacks from COVID, and many teachers being pulled to cover classrooms for other teachers who were out. The questionnaire contained approximately 12 questions. The first set of questions will pertain to participants demographics; gender, ethnicity, education level, years of experience, etc. The second set of questions were centered around teachers' and counselors' knowledge, perception, and awareness of suicide among youth in the form of open-ended questions. The questionnaire took approximately 30-60 minutes to complete. Semi-structured interviews consisted of a series of open-ended questions, which were designed based on the research questions. Seven open-ended questions served as a foundational platform, to gain a deeper understanding of participants knowledge, perception, and awareness, of suicide among youth. The interview process took approximately 30-60 minutes, based on participants response, and took place using the video platform, zoom. Due to Covid restrictions and guidelines for the educational systems, an in person, face-to-face was not available. Once the recordings were transcribed, participants were given the opportunity to verify that the information contained in the transcript of the interview was accurate. Participants were also given the option to include additional information that they might not have shared during the interview.

Data Analysis

To ensure the collected data was thoroughly analyzed to its maximum capacity, data for this study was analyzed with the help of a Computer Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software, or (CAQDAS). For this study, the data from questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were collected, organized, and analyzed using NVivo 7. Questionnaire responses were coded for themes using NVivo 7. Data was placed in categories, based on themes. The thematic categories were further analyzed, or broken down, to identify sub-categories such as male and female, nationality, educational experience, and other demographics, to gain a deeper insight into the study. With the sub-categories, information was grouped based on repeated words and sentences, which helped to formulate a theme. The one-on-one semi-structured interview notes were analyzed using the same NVivo software. The concept of pattern-matching and thematic coding was applied to the analysis process. The researcher reviewed all collected data from both the questionnaires and interviews, placing them in the corresponding list based on the repeated words and phrases, and creating new categories as needed, paying close attention to any overlapping themes that may occur, until saturation was reached. Once saturation was reached, triangulation was achieved by viewing both data sources, together, to reveal themes. Based on the repeated words and phrases from both the questionnaires and interviews, four major themes

emerged: Inadequate suicide prevention training: limited to online modules, mixed perceptions and beliefs regarding suicide, comfort level of approaching students regarding suicide, and the role of the school in the prevention of suicide.

Findings

In this qualitative exploratory case study, we explored both counselors and teachers, knowledge, perceptions, and awareness of youth suicide. A total of 14 participants, 10 teachers and 4 counselors were aware that suicide is high among youth, and more than 80% were aware of the increased statistic rates surrounding suicide. At least four of the fourteen participants had personal experiences with youth suicide. Two of the fourteen reported having encountered at least one student who was identified as being suicidal, with at least one attempt to end their life. More than 80% of the teachers and counselors felt comfortable approaching and/or talking to students about suicide prevention. Overall, 100% of volunteers reported that the role of the schools should involve more effective training that went beyond the online modules. The problem is because teachers and counselors often do not have adequate youth suicide prevention training, this lack of training often results in the high numbers of needless youth suicides each year. RQ.1 How do teachers and counselors perceive the adequacy of their suicide prevention training? RQ. 2 How do teachers and counselors perceive the role of school personnel in preventing youth suicide?

Questionnaire and Semi Structured Interviews

A total of nine people volunteered to answer the questionnaire, and a total of seven were submitted and used for data analysis. Two teachers were reported as having had personal experience with the subject matter, and thus was not comfortable with participating, and another teacher was unable to participate due to a family emergency. Semi-structured, one-on-one, interviews were conducted via zoom, based on the agreed date and time of participants. Due to the high demands of teachers during the COVID-19 Pandemic, as well as the sensitivity of the subject matter, the researcher was limited on volunteer availability. A total of seven, to include three with counseling background, and four teachers, all agreed to take part in an interview. Four themes emerged from both data sources (questionnaires and interviews). The four themes included: Inadequate suicide prevention training: limited to online modules, mixed perceptions and beliefs regarding suicide, comfort level of approaching students regarding suicide, and the role of the school in the prevention of suicide.

Questionnaires

Inadequate Suicide Prevention: Limited to online modules

Six reported having taken part in the school required online training modules, Eduhero. This training takes part at the beginning of the school year. In addition to this six, one of six reported taken additional training to become more aware of the signs and ways to help students. One identified as being new to the district, and therefore wasn't aware of any training as of yet. Four reported additional information by adding that the school takes part in suicide prevention week at the school by hanging up posters, making announcements regarding self-harm, and allowing the kids to make personalized bookmarks. When asked how the training equipped them for dealing with students who may be suicidal, Six of the seven, (85.7%) stated the training they received from completing online modules, did not prepare them.

- One teacher, identified as T4, stated:
  "It really didn't. When the student I mentioned above attempted suicide, I was not prepared, and I barely saw the warning signs. I learned more from the experiences I had with the above student than I ever got from the training module."

All seven, (100%) stated that teachers needed to be trained effectively on the topic of suicide. Two of the seven added that students could benefit from campus training as well. All, 100% reported not having taken part in any district suicide prevention training, but that a new emotional and wellness counselor was hired for the district, to be a support for both students and staff, regarding mental health.

Mixed Perceptions and Beliefs Regarding Suicide

All seven of the participants stated that suicide from youth affects them personally and professionally, and that it is very hard on the family of those who have lost loved ones to suicide. Two of the seven reported having personal experience with someone who had thoughts of suicide and attempted suicide. Two of the seven reported having personal experience with students who took their life by suicide.

- T-3, stated:

  "Suicide needs to be taken seriously."

The participant, T3, went on to add that a former student took their life by suicide on a school campus, by gunfire to the head, within another district, where the teacher worked years prior to becoming employed by the Texas school.

> "I have found a healthy balance in my life since this happened, but it has taken almost 16 years before I could compartmentalize this situation."

All seven (100%) believed that suicide should not be viewed as a personal choice, but rather something that youth may not can mentally comprehend, and thus make the choice based on feelings of loneliness, personal issues at home, and at school such as bullying.

- One participant, a counselor, C-1 stated:

  "I feel that most people who get to this point don't want to actually end their life; they just don't know what to do about their problem or are feeling alone/unloved by their most important people. There are problem solving skills that can be implemented or "I feel," statements that could be told to loved ones."

Comfort Level of Approaching Students Regarding Suicide

Each participant explained how they would approach a student who may be dealing with suicidal thoughts. Six of the seven (85.7%) was comfortable approaching a student and talking to

them. The most common phrases stated was building a relationship with the student, talking to the student gently and calmly, and showing the student that they care.

- T-6 stated:

  "I would try to get them to talk about why they are feeling like suicide is their only option. I would hope to be able to show them how their life is more important and how they make a difference even if they don't realize it."

In addition, all reported that they would also report the communication to a school counselor. One of the seven stated they were not comfortable engaging in a conversation with a student, due to personal experience with a student, but would refer the student to a counselor right away if anything unusual was noticed.

Role of the School in the Prevention of Suicide

The role of the school was discussed quite a bit in the responses, even in questions that didn't directly ask about the role of schools. The most common words and phrases repeated were, "Schools don't talk about it enough," and "More training is needed to prepare teachers."

- One of the counselors responded on the questionnaire, "It seems there's a lot of misunderstanding that if talked about it would give the idea. So, more awareness and training for both parents and students would be nice."

Six of the seven participants made statements regarding the stigma of suicide being changed in schools, where it is talked about more. One of the seven didn't feel competent enough to respond stating, "I haven't been here long enough to know what schools are lacking or not." Six of the seven stated schools needed to provide other training beyond the online modules, to better prepare teachers and counselors. All seven stated their roles in school as a counselor or teacher should be to help any student in need, pay attention to changes in students' behavior, and report those changes immediately.

One-on-One Interviews

Inadequate Suicide Prevention: Limited to online modules

When asked about the suicide training received, one reported not having participated in any training, but was aware that the rates of suicide among youth was very high.

- T-6, stated:

  "Providing first year teachers with suicide prevention training within the first few weeks of teaching, would be very beneficial to new teachers."

Of the six remaining, two reported taking a suicide prevention training off campus during the summer. With backgrounds in counseling and psychology, the two stated that attending suicide training off campus, of their own choice of just wanting to gain more insight, helped prepare them as parents and educators.

The remaining four reported having only taken the online module training Eduhero, as well participated in Red Ribbon week at school where posters were hung around the campus, and the topic of self-harm was discussed with students. One participant stated that the word "suicide," was replaced with self-harm, when discussing with students during that week. Further, the participant stated that they couldn't remember having any discussion on the topic since the training, which only happens once a year, had taken place. All participants reported that they had not taken part in any district training on suicide prevention, but that a new emotional and wellness counselor was hired for the district, to be a support for both students and staff, regarding mental health.

Regarding the question about the effectiveness of suicide prevention training in schools, 6 (85.7%) reported that training in schools is not yet effective, because there isn't enough sufficient training offered by schools for teachers, and most training involves online modules, versus an individual providing the training to schools. One reported not knowing having participated in any training, and thus could not respond appropriately to the question.

- C-2 stated that if training was implemented with fidelity, and the stigma around suicide was removed, then training could be more effective.

Mixed Perception and Beliefs Regarding Suicide

There are different beliefs surrounding suicide, and one having the right, or personal choice to their life. When asked about this, all, (100%) believed that the during the stage of suicide ideation, the young mind isn't mentally strong or stable enough to make a sound decision about ending their life. Of the seven, five (71%) believed that most students who think about taking their life do so because of lack of knowledge and training, as well as because of feelings of being alone, bullying, and not having anyone to talk to.

- C-3 stated:

  "One's life should be left in the hands of God; however, this is my personal belief. I don't believe these students are mentally strong enough to make a decision to end their life."

The overall belief was that students should not be left in a position to make such a decision, and that more support from school and staff could be beneficial.

Comfort Level of Approaching Students Regarding Suicide

Although more than half reported that training was limited to an online module course, when asked about the comfort level of approaching students who may be suicidal, six (85.7%) reported they were comfortable with talking to students. Of the six, three identified as counselors.

- C-2 reported having had personal experience with a student, in which a no-harm contract would be presented after having gone through the proper process and channels of communication.

- T-7 reported having witnessed at least three youth suicides, unrelated to the school campus, in which the parents and family had to be notified. During the interview, T-7 stated:

  "I have seen the impact. I have witnessed three suicides, and I have seen the effect on the family in trying to pick up the pieces afterwards. This experience made me want to talk to students even more."

The participant explained that the experience not only made them comfortable in talking to students on campus about suicide prevention but motivated them to talk to their family as well.

Role of the School in the Prevention of Suicide

All seven, (100%) stated that there is simply not enough on the topic of suicide offered to teachers and counselors. Two of the seven volunteers believed schools should get rid of the stigma surrounding suicide, and that it should be talked about more, as rates in youth suicide are steadily increasing, especially with students feeling alone and closed in during the pandemic.

- C-3 explained :

  "Schools need to get rid of the stigma surrounding suicide. If a training was implemented with fidelity, it may make speaking about it more comfortable in schools."

Limitations

Prior to conducting the study, the researcher originally sought to include a larger district, consisting of at least four high schools, to gain a larger variety of data. However, in the year 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic hit worldwide, causing many cities and states to order a mandatory shut down. As a result, students and teachers were confined to virtual learning. This delayed the process of me being able to locate schools in the larger cities of Texas which to consider in my study. The researcher was limited to finding a high school in the outer parts of Texas, where approval from the superintendent and principal was granted, but the researcher's study resulted in a much smaller sample size. Another limitation involved not being able to collect data from a focus group, which was the study's third data collection instrument. Teachers were limited, as many had transferred from other districts, and thus were new to the school, others were out tending to family members who were hospitalized, and some were home with their kids, due to COVID-19.

Recommendations for Future Research

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to understand how counselors and teachers perceive the adequacy of their training to prevent youth suicide. In addition to bringing in more counselors, teachers can benefit from bringing in trained professionals from other outside organizations, which includes in-person screening and/or training on how to identify signs of suicide in students. Leaders and practitioners of the school can also implement other creative safe ways to talk about suicide, throughout the year, versus the once-a-year discussion during Red-ribbon suicide week. Other recommendations for future leaders and practitioners may include researching more literature regarding online suicide prevention training programs in

schools that demonstrate an increase in knowledge and awareness of suicide among youth. A mixed-method study on a comparison of secondary teachers' knowledge and awareness of suicide prevention, through online training versus in person, could help leaders assess their current programs or need for such. There is a stigma surrounding suicide, and many schools may fear that talking about it openly with students will cause an increase in suicide. However, as participants of the study stated, the stigma needs to be removed, as not talking about it more has not decreased suicide rates among high school students. A correlational study can be conducted to identify the relationship between the stigma of talking about suicide openly in schools and an increase in suicide deaths or suicide ideation among youths.

Conclusion

A total of seven participated in the completion of a questionnaire. All seven participants stated and agreed that the topic of suicide, the word itself, needed to be talked about more in schools, to help both teachers and students. Of the seven participants, all (100%) expressed having limited knowledge of suicide among youth. All lived within the area or community. Three teachers and four counselors participated in semi-structured interviews. Teaching experience ranged from one to 38 years. Of the seven participants, only one viewed themselves as knowledgeable about suicide, based on a combination of training from within and outside of the school, as well as reported statistics involving youth suicide. The remaining six did not view themselves as knowledgeable regarding the topic of suicide.

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ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND PERFORMANCE: THE PRACTICE OF SUSTAINING HIGHER PERFORMANCE IN BUSINESS MERGER & ACQUISITION BY HENRIETTA M. OKORO – A REVIEW

KATINA WHORTON, MSW, DILLARD UNIVERSITY

Book Review

Henrietta Okoro provides an in-depth look at the ongoing failures of business mergers and acquisitions in the scope of competitiveness and employee growth and retention in this textbook. This textbook is written with diversity in mind and is well executed, utilizing research that combines business as well as social cultural traits to foster factors that could facilitate lasting creativity and performance. It presents policies from a neutral point of view as well as the topics that support the author's pedagogy. The textbook is written in a clear and concise manner and is an easy read as well as engaging for students. The text has a strong introduction and lays a great foundation for starting off the textbook. The chapter lengths are manageable and have appropriate content for students. The order of the textbook is written in proper sequence, and it would be recommended for instructors to use all chapters in the order they are presented.

It is appreciated that the chapters have chapter exercises and chapter quizzes with the solutions. However, the chapter quizzes could be more extensive. It is recommended that the chapters utilize more real-life scenarios and case studies would be a great edition. It is also recommended that the glossary be expanded. Finally, it is recommended that key terms be highlighted in the chapter or at the end of the chapter. Overall, the textbook is highly recommended for use.


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DEAR Black Girl
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Always BELIEVE In Myself
GIRL POWER
Here's how to make your dreams a reality!
KNOW THE REAL DEAL ABOUT YOUR MEAL!
'I'M SPECIAL BECAUSE...'
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" I AM MY SISTER'S KEEPER'
CUltivating healthy friendships founded on girlhood!
V.RHODES x C.EVANS
'Dear Black Girl,
What's happening to me?!'
PUBERTY
FOR BLACK GIRLS BY BLACK GIRLS

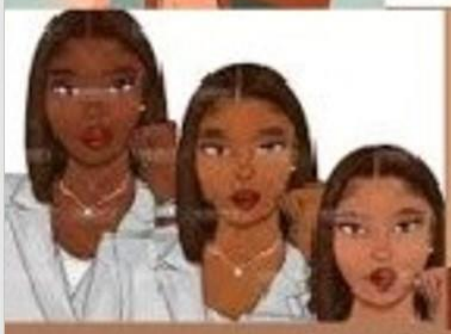


TABLE OF CONTENTS

V.RHODES x C.EVANS

March 17, 2023
Contributor: *Valesha Rhodes*

TEENAGE DREAM

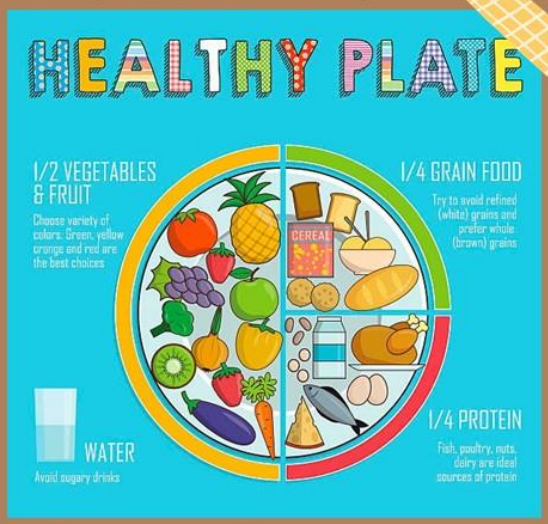
Periods: What You Need To Know!

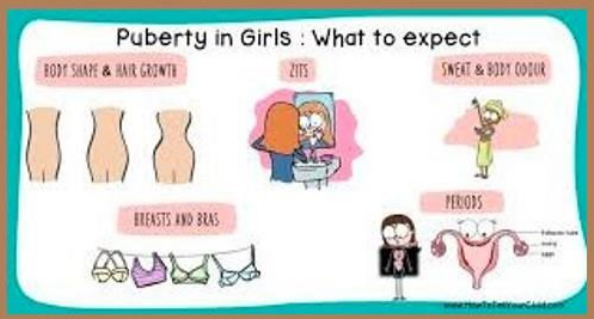
The body's hormones shift before a period arrives. The body receives messages from hormones. The uterine (or womb) lining thickens as a result of these hormones. This prepares the uterus for the attachment of the mother's egg and the father's sperm, which will result in the development of a baby. The lining disintegrates and bleeds if the lady is not successful in getting pregnant. Every month, this same procedure takes place. Because of this, the majority of girls and women have menstruation once every month (Cleveland Clinic, 2023)

THE "P" Word

Although while it can be challenging to separate cause from effect, early puberty might have negative effects, especially for females. Girls who experience puberty earlier than their classmates are more likely to have sadness, anxiety, substance addiction, and other psychological issues (Stickle, 2013). Girls who receive their periods early may also be at a higher risk of developing breast or uterine cancer in adulthood.

Nobody is aware of the risk factor, or more likely, the mix of risk factors, that is causing the age drop or the obvious racial and gender disparities. Although it appears to be a factor, obesity cannot fully account for the shift. Researchers are also looking into additional possible factors, such as stress and compounds present in some plastics(Stickle, 2013). What can you do? Love your body and eat well.





Fun facts

Healthy eating can help!

Ance is normal!

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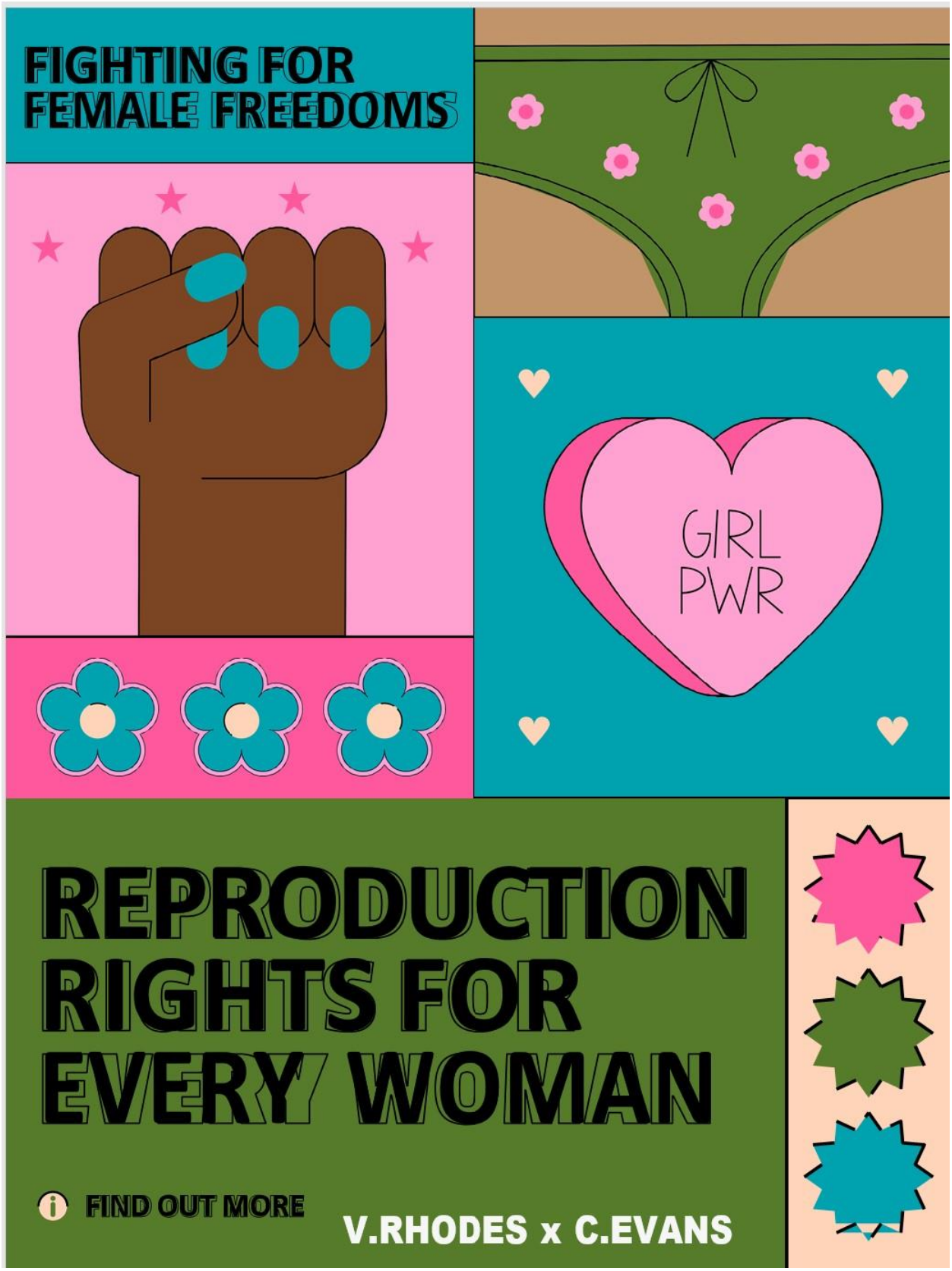
FIGHTING FOR
FEMALE FREEDOMS
GIRL
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RIGHTS FOR
EVERY WOMAN
FIND OUT MORE
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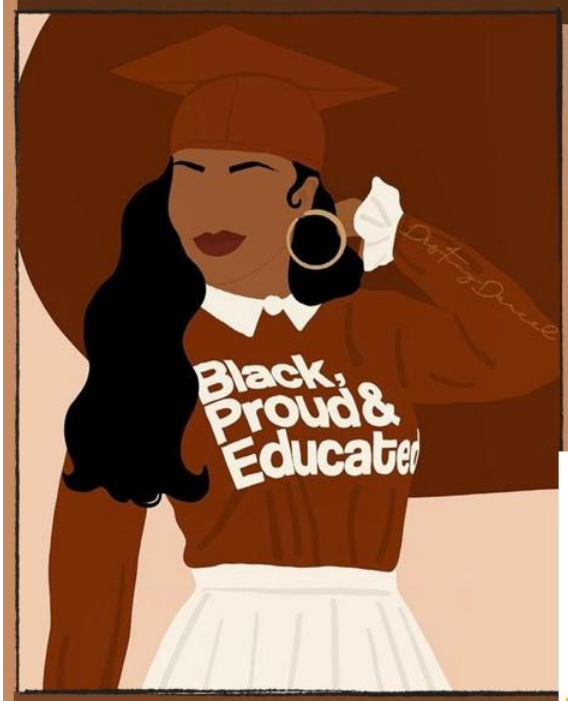
March 19, 2023
Contributor: Valesha Rhodes



Work Hard, Play Hard

Achievement, Work, & Careers

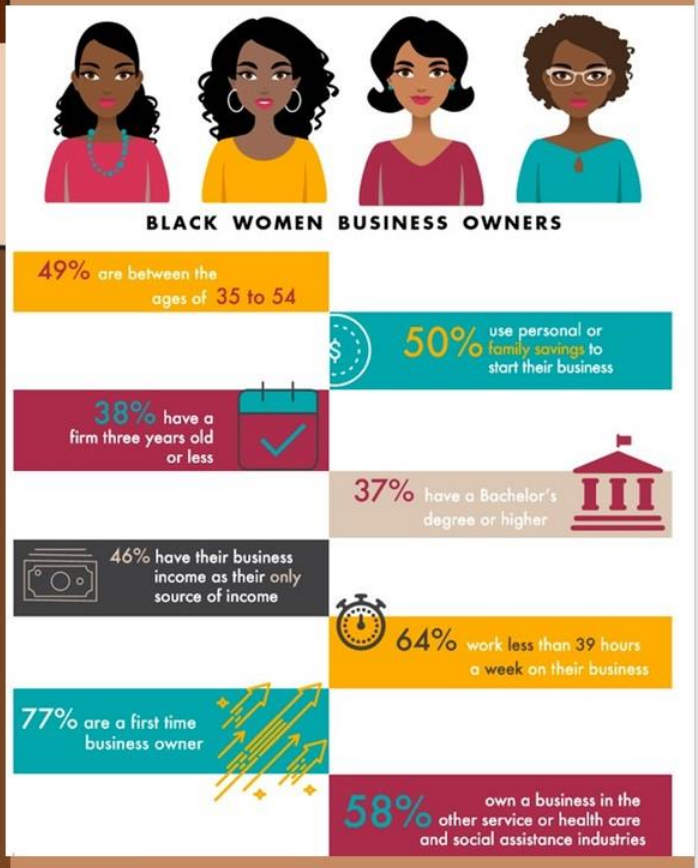
Dear Black Girl may your dreams reflect all the beauty that you are and not what the world tells you to be! We've all heard the phrase 'Girls go to college to get more knowledge.' But do you know how important your goals and achievements are to your development and future? With the pressures of school and social life, here are some tips to help you set and succeed in goals that are true to YOU!

Believe. Achieve.

According to McGraw Hill, the expectations of parents and other figures can make us question who we are and what we desire to achieve (Stickle, 2013). However, the opportunities are endless! The real question is not what can, or should you do, but what motivates you intrinsically?

Who will you be?

Once you separate other people's expectations from the desires that you wish to achieve, you will be one step closer to whom you dreamed of becoming (JSTOR, 2023). However, hard work is necessary. Psychologists at the American Psychological found that adolescent girls develop faster and can dedicate themselves to meaningful work that can enhance their lives as emerging adults and beyond (PsychNet, 2023). Though your environment has a major impact on your story, it does not determine your success- you do!



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Dear Black Girl,
Anything worth having takes time.
Never Give Up!
V.RHODES x C.EVANS

Note to

Self

I AM...

The Creator of My Reality

Dear Black Girl, Be Yourself!

V.RHODES x C.EVANS

March 17, 2023

Contributor: ***Valesha Rhodes***

Note to self

Identification is our perception of who we are as people and as members of particular social groups (Buckley & Carter, 2005). Our identities are not just something we make up for ourselves; they also develop in reaction to internal and external events. Every one of us selects an identity to some extent, but identities are also shaped by contextual factors outside of our control (Promoting Self-Esteem Org, 2023)
With time, identity evolves and becomes more complex.

Self-identity is how we describe who we are. Our sense of self-worth is based on our sense of self. In adolescence, among other social situations, the way we view ourselves varies in reaction to peers, families, and schools (Buckley & Carter, 2005). Our sense of belonging is shaped by our self-identities.

Dear Black Girl, though there are scientifically many factors that may influence who you are, you define who you are! As your personality and emotions will expand as you grow, embrace who you are in every season.
When you embrace yourself, you can show up as the best version of yourself!

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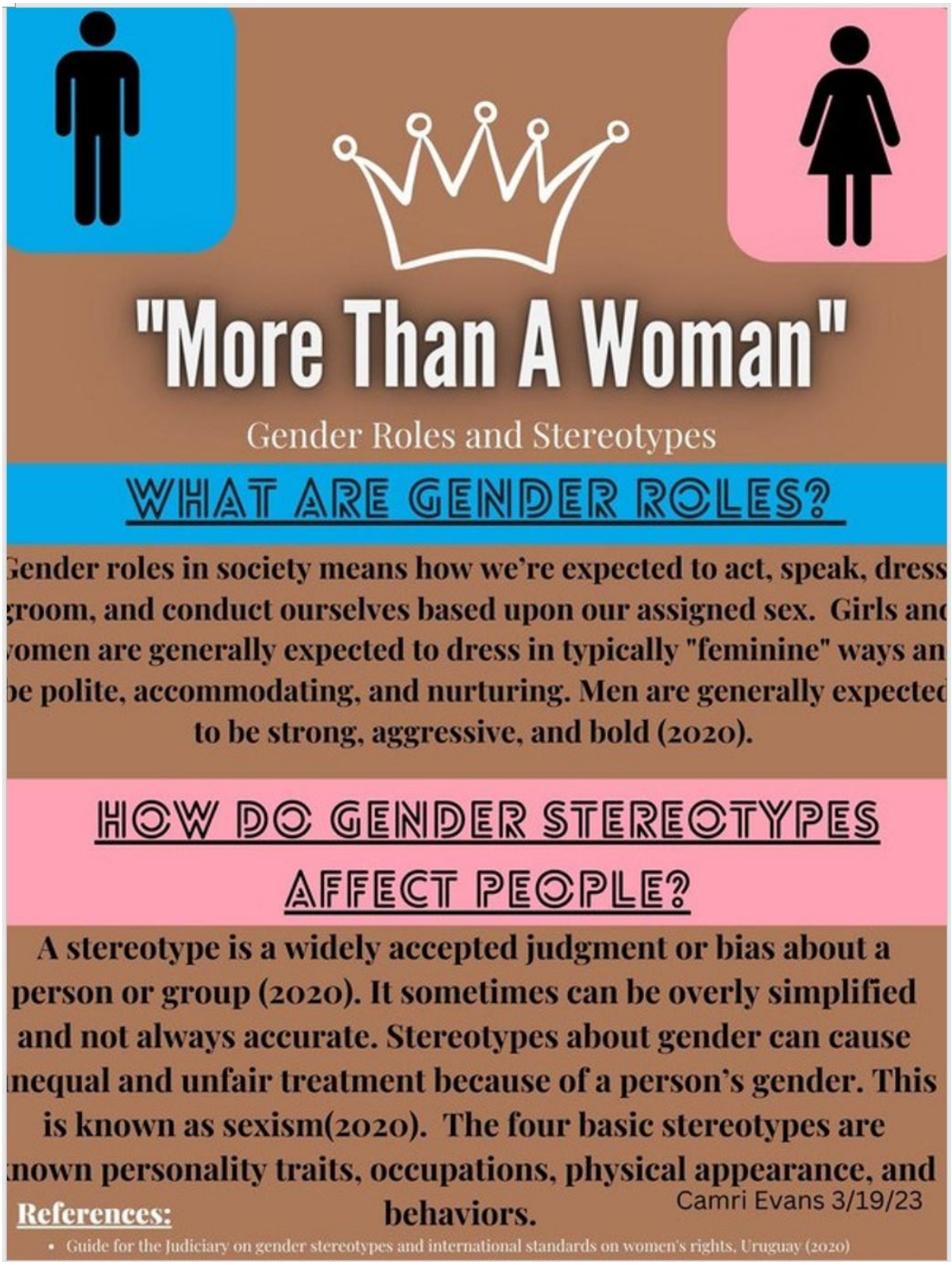
"More Than A Woman"
Gender Roles and Stereotypes
WHAT ARE GENDER ROLES?
Gender roles in society means how we're expected to act, speak, dress
groom, and conduct ourselves based upon our assigned sex. Girls and
women are generally expected to dress in typically "feminine" ways an
be polite, accommodating, and nurturing. Men are generally expected
to be strong, aggressive, and bold (2020).
HOW DO GENDER STEREOTYPES
AFFECT PEOPLE?
A stereotype is a widely accepted judgment or bias about a
person or group (2020). It sometimes can be overly simplified
and not always accurate. Stereotypes about gender can cause
unequal and unfair treatment because of a person's gender. This
is known as sexism(2020). The four basic stereotypes are
known personality traits, occupations, physical appearance, and
behaviors.
Camri Evans 3/19/23
References:
Guide for the Judiciary on gender stereotypes and international standards on women's rights. Uruguay (2020)


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THE IS YOURS
Checklist to a life you desire:
01
Lifestyle:
Prioritize self care and one on one time with yourself. The main key to self love is learning who you are and loving her. Make that time for yourself, you deserve it sis! (Killoren, 2020)
02
Peers:
Surround yourself with those who are supportive and bring positive energy. It is always great to enjoy good company. However, remember to create safe boundaries for yourself within these relationships.
03
Romantic Relationships:
As you allow yourself to form a meaningful bond with someone, make space for self love within your relationships as well. Doing so will help you maintain boundaries and protect yourself (Killoren, 2020). Never put your worth in someone else's hands. You are the prize, don't settle for anything less than that!
References:
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Discover Your Own Ways to
"FIND YOUR LOVE"
one's level of awareness and enjoyment of one's body.
Sensuality
skin hunger
stimiuli
sexual responses
body image
fantasy
Sexualization
flirting
messages/images
seduction
sexual harassment
incest
Intimacy
caring /sharing
vulnerability
self disclosure
trust
reciprocity
Values
the use of sexuality to control and/or manipulate others
the experience of closeness with anothe
Sexual Health and Reproduction
intercourse
anatomy and physiology
STI's
contraceptions
abortion
Sexual Identity
biological sex
gender identity
gender expression
gender role
sexual orientation
ocuses on the attitudes and behaviors related to the exual and reproductive systems as well as the sexual consequences
how we perceive ourselves as sexual beings

Dear Black Girl

Connect

Is it really cool to love school? I have all As and I even get to keep the class turtle for a week. my dream is to become a food education professor in Africa! However, my classmates called me. a 'nerd' or 'geek'.
How do I stop getting teased for loving school?
Signed 'Brainy Black Girl'

Dear Black Girl,
Our friendship is falling apart! My bestie and I had an argument about what 'sisterhood' is. She says that sisterhood means love but I believe it is loyalty. Was I wrong?
With Sisterly Love,
'My Sister's Keeper'

Hi Black Girl!
Green Girl here and I have the ICK! I love ice cream and candy, but my mom is making me eat more vegetables. I do not like them! This feels like a violation of my rights, doesn't it? Do I really have to eat my veggies?
With Sweet Dreams, Green Girl

Dear Black Girl,
I think I am in love. The guy from my tennis team is the most beautiful being I have ever seen. I think about him all the time and I cannot seem to get him out of my head. Am I in love? What if he doesn't like me back? Should I just ask him to marry me? Dear Black Girl, I have NEVER felt this way before- HELP!
In Love, Lover Girl

Dear Brainy Black Girl,

Embrace your genius! School is cool but bullying is not. Do not be afraid to express your love for knowledge. Tune out the background noise and focus on your dreams. The only opinion that matters is yours. Keep learning Professor Brainy!

Dear Sister's Keeper

You are both right! Sisterhood is what you make it. Try approaching your sisterhood from both love and loyalty- it will only grow. Friendships with other young ladies can empower us all. Love on your sister and continue to be her keeper!

Dear Green Girl

We all love sweets here and there, but vegetables are what will keep you healthy and strong. All things are good in moderation so try to find a healthy balance. It is not illegal for your mother to encourage a healthy lifestyle, try it out! You will thank her for it when you are healthy in the future. Veggies also taste YUMMY! Try a smoothie Green Girl!

Dear Lover Girl,

AWW sounds like you have a crush! Feelings are normal so no need to fear. You may be a bit too young for marriage, but this black girl sees nothing wrong with you crushing. Try having a conversation to see what you all have in common then let it flow from there. whether he likes you back or not, you are still BEAUTIFUL! Try a friendly tennis match to serve up some love!

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Body & Mind Self-care Exercise

Start Small

You can start from small goals to big ones, from just a simple walk day to a full spa-day. Your choice!

Reminder

It can be a long journey, but in the end it will always be worth it and will train you to get used to a new routine

Go Meditate

Tidy up your space

Keep & write a gratitude jar

Start to set boundaries

Make a daily routine steps

www.reallygreatsite.com

V.RHODES x C.EVANS

BIOGRAPHIES

Kerry Alexander is a doctoral candidate in Language and Literacy Studies at the University of Texas at Austin. She is an artist, writer, university instructor, and literacy researcher dedicated to community-centered inquiry and responsive pedagogical design in elementary literacy classrooms. Through critical, inquiry-based pedagogies, she embodies what she calls an act of *language artistry*: the relational and multimodal meaning-making involved in designing for a more inclusive world.

Dr. George L. Amedee is Professor of Political Science at Southern University at New Orleans (SUNO). He formerly held the Emmett W. Bashful Endowed Chair in Public Policy and Leadership. On March 24, 2023, he was sworn in as the 2023-2024 President of the Conference of Minority Public Administrators (COMPA). Previously, he served as a member and Chairman of the New Orleans City Planning Commission (CPC). He earned a bachelor's degree in Political Science from the University of New Orleans and a Master's degree in Urban and Regional Planning from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. His Ph.D. is in Political Science with concentrations in Public Policy, Public Administration, and Urban Management from Northern Illinois University. He has published articles in *Politics and Policy, the Entrepreneurial Policy Journal, Journal of Urban Education, Journal of Race, Gender, and Class, Africana Studies Journal, Transportation Research Forum, Transportation Research Board, Annual Conference Proceedings of the American Institute of Planners , International Journal of Leadership, Business, and Education, and the Journal of Education and Social Justice*

Diane Archer-Banks, Ph. D is a Doctoral Instructor with the University of Phoenix.

Emily Smith Brandes is a white, queer woman living in Austin, TX with a background in Restorative Justice Practices, leading social justice teams, facilitating professional learning, affinity groups, and coaching. Previously a Restorative Practices Associate with Austin Independent School District, Emily now serves the UT Austin Community as a Restorative Justice Program Administrator with The Office for Inclusion and Equity on campus. Emily's main passions are treating ALL people with dignity, embodying Restorative Justice in all aspects of her life, striving towards inclusiveness, anti-racism, and equity. Emily is a mother of two AISD students, a partner, a sister, a daughter, a friend, and a dedicated member of her loving community.

Dr. Jessica L. Burke is an Associate Professor of Sociology at Francis Marion University. Her research interests focus on domestic violence and abuse, particularly issues pertaining to social learning, education, and intervention; race and police interactions, including the willingness to call the police for assistance, and family relationships, such as interracial relationships, identity, and mental well-being. Dr. Burke has publications in *Social Sciences*, *Race, Class, Gender*, and *Deviant Behavior*. Dr. Burke has also presented her research at various conferences, including Mid-South Sociological Association, Southern Criminal Justice Association, and the South Carolina Sociological Association.

Dr. Lisa A. Eargle is a Board of Trustees Research Scholar and Professor of Sociology at Francis Marion University in Florence, SC. Her primary research areas are violence and disasters. Her publications have focused on human trafficking, gun violence, domestic violence, terrorism, and anti-violence strategies, as well as the impacts of disasters on different types of social institutions and populations.

Todd English, M.S.C.J., is a twenty-three-year veteran with the Lake County Sheriff's Office, currently a Division Major directing investigations and professional standards. In this command staff function, English operationalizes an essential element in support of the Sheriff's mission of protecting citizens and guests in Lake County, Florida. Major English holds a M.S. degree in Criminal Justice Administration from Columbia College of Missouri and a B. S. degree in Criminology from the University of Florida. As a recent graduate of the FBI's National Academy and is a strong advocate of law enforcement professionalism and social justice. In addition, Todd is an avid outdoors hiker, and he and his family reside in Central Florida.

Ashraf Esmail, Ph.D. is an Associate Professor and Program Coordinator of Criminal Justice at Dillard University. He is also the Director for the Center for Racial Justice. He serves on the Boards for the National Association for Multicultural Education, National Association for Peace Education, World Association for Academic Doctors, Midsouth Sociological Association, and Court Watch Nola.

Camri Evans is a full-time college student at Dillard University in New Orleans, La. She always had big dreams of becoming a marriage counselor, but her plans altered once entering college. She found an interest in psychology and studying how society and environmental factors can affect the mind. It made her pay closer attention to her own personal triggers and things that she needed to heal from. Growing up as the oldest of two girls, she always felt a sense of responsibility for taking care of other people. She knew whatever she wanted to do in her career, it had to involve helping and motivating others. Camri hopes to become a boss, working for herself and no one else. Camri is a hardworking and resilient black woman who will accomplish big things one day. With her creative talents and determination, she has the power to change lives.

Dr. Stephanie Ferguson has served as Dean of Applied Sciences and Learning Technology at New Mexico Junior College in southeastern New Mexico since 2016. She has also held a variety of faculty and administrative positions at the University of Phoenix, the University of the Southwest, Mary Baldwin College, the University of Virginia, the University of Arizona South, and Southeastern Louisiana University. She is also a Professional Clinical Mental Health Counselor (LPCC) in New Mexico and has been recognized as a National Certified Counselor. Her degrees include a bachelor of science in secondary English education from Millersville University of Pennsylvania, a master of education in curriculum and instruction from Southeastern Louisiana University, a master of science in clinical mental health counseling from the University of the Southwest, and a Ph.D. in Special Education with an emphasis in Gifted Studies from The University of Southern Mississippi.

Lorna Hermosura is Assistant Professor of Instruction in the College of Education at The University of Texas at Austin. She teaches and researches Restorative Practices, Trauma-Informed Practices, Implementation, and the School-to-Prison Pipeline. Dr. Hermosura is the Principal Investigator and Project Director of STEP-UP Texas: Improving Juvenile Justice Outcomes through Trauma-Informed and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Training, a project funded by a U.S. Department of Justice grant.

Skye Howell, M.Ed. (she/her) is Potawatomi and Ottawa, a proud mother, partner at Full Humanity and is honored to serve her community as a board member for Great Promise for American Indians. She received her graduate degree in Educational Equity and Cultural Diversity from the University of Colorado - Boulder as a first-generation college student. Skye

supports organizations across the social impact sector to align vision, mission, and daily practices through an anti-racist approach that centers Indigenous practices.

Dr. Tiffany Hunter is an eager educator, currently serving as the K-12 Science Curriculum Coordinator in Riverview Gardens School District. Tiffany received her Bachelor of Science from the University of Central Missouri in Elementary Education. She obtained her master's in educational technology from Webster University and her Educational Doctorate from the University of Phoenix in Educational Leadership. Tiffany is an active practitioner in her field, always looking for innovative ways to improve vocation for all scholars.

Clarence "Teddy" Jones has over 20 years of service in public education, serving in both Minneapolis and Austin. He previously served as a Restorative Practices Facilitator and more recently, the Coordinator of Student Agency and Engagement with Austin Independent School District.

June Jones, Ed.D is a Family Engagement Specialist with a public school district in southeastern Virginia. Jones has conducted workshops for grand families (grandparents and guardians) raising children in grades K -12. Her research interests include improving policies to accurately explain appropriate contact with students and providing educators with effective training to reduce the chances of litigation from false accusations levied by students or parents.

Kimberly Kimbrough-Edwards, Ed.D, Mental Health Advocate, is an educational advocate, with a strong focus on incorporating more mental health programs in schools. Kimbrough-Edwards is CEO and founder of the Non-profit (There is Life After Life) where she provides workshops, training, and counseling for those who have experienced suicide ideation, or who have lost a loved one to suicide. Kimbrough-Edwards is also currently seeking her LPC and LMFT to further her knowledge of the subject matter.

Perry Lyle, Ph.D. has a combined 40 years' experience in the Public Safety Leadership and Private Security having held responsible positions of leadership in law enforcement, intelligence, and private security. He is an adjunct professor of Criminal Justice at Columbia College of Missouri teaching in both the Undergraduate and Graduate programs. Dr. Lyle earned his doctorate from Capella University in Public Service Leadership with honors, and his undergraduate and graduate degrees in Criminal Justice from Rollins College, Winter Park, Florida, and a graduate certificate in Counterterrorism from Reichman University in Israel. He is a member in the FBI's InfraGard Program and actively participates in the World Association of Academic Doctors, and the Association for Former Intelligence Officers. As an author of several books and journal articles, he has a passion for social equality in criminal justice and education. Dr. Lyle serves on the Editorial Board for the Journal of Education & Social Justice, Virginia University of Lynchburg.

Alvin Mitchell is an Associate Professor in the College of Arts & Sciences at the University of the Virgin Islands, Albert Sheen Campus. His interests of study include drugs and crime, capital punishment, and voting behavior.

Dr. Evelyn Ogden received her doctoral degree from Rutgers in Education Evaluation, Psychological Measurement and Statistics. She is the author of six books, Programs that Work, reports on effective schools, and programs for at-risk students. She is a professor for Walden University.

Valesha Rhodes, often referred to as 'The Daring Dreamer', believes that there are no limits to her success. As a Senior Psychology and Pre-Law Honors Student at Dillard University, Valesha is dedicated to one day bridging the gap between Law and Psychology via advocacy and policy change. After graduating from Dillard as a first-generation college student, she plans to further her education by obtaining a JD and PhD in Psychology. She has served in roles for organizations such as The Louisiana Supreme Court, Shelby County Juvenile Court, The Memphis Bar Association, The Civil Rights and Restorative Justice Project, Northeastern School of Law, and New Orleans City Hall. Awarded the highest academic scholarship from her university, Valesha prides herself on academic success and has maintained a 4.0 GPA while serving in multiple leadership roles on and off campus. She is president of the Omicron Chapter of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority Inc., Vice President of the Psi Chi International Honor Society of Psychology, and a member of The National Pan-Hellenic Council, The Student Government Association, Thompson-Cook Honors College, the Mock Trial Team, Collegiate NAACP, Leading Ladies International, and a plethora of others. Valesha has also completed several research studies and presentations including The Louisiana Governor's 42nd Annual Juvenile Justice Conference where she presented mindfulness-based programming for juveniles. Recently, Valesha was awarded the Justice Revius Ortique Scholarship from the Greater New Orleans Martinet Society as well as the Class Act Award from The Crescent City Chapter of Links Incorporated. Her passion for helping others has led her to faithfully volunteer for The Net Gentilly, The Taffi T. Crawford Domestic Violence Foundation, the National Lawyers Guild, and child literacy campaigns across the city of New Orleans. She even empowers other women to live out their dreams via her podcast and blog 'The Venusian Vault'. Valesha lives by the phrase '*I Did Not Come This Far, Just to Come This Far*'. She knows that even the sky is not her limit.

Dr. Franklyn J. Scott is an Associate Professor of Criminal Justice at Southern University at New Orleans (SUNO). She is the Criminal Justice Undergraduate Program Coordinator as well as the Interim Chair of the Student Grievance Committee. Dr. Scott is currently serving as the Criminal Justice Undergraduate Program Self-Study Portfolio Coordinator and formerly served as the Criminal Justice Graduate Program Portfolio Coordinator. She is the Interim Director of the Criminal Justice Academy at Martin Luther King High School. She earned a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education and a Master's degree in Criminal Justice from Southern University at New Orleans (SUNO). Her PhD is in Health Psychology from Walden University. She is an expert on the topics related to Driving While Intoxicated (DWI) and Driving Under the Influence (DUI). She worked as a DWI/DUI probation officer for over fifteen years and conducted extensive research on DWI/DUI offenders.

Veronica L. Silva is a Xicana born and raised in occupied Jumanos, Coahuiltecan, Lipan Apache, and Tonkawa land, also known as San Antonio, TX by her mother and grandparents. Veronica co-parents her two beautiful children, Esperanza Xinachtli and Serenidad Xochitl with her partner Jesse. She is committed to continuing the work of restorative practices that seeks to disrupt colonization and systemic oppression.

Dr. Erin Sultana has a Doctoral Degree in Curriculum, Instructions, Assessment, and Evaluation from Walden University. She has Master of Arts degree in teaching with a specialization in Best Practices from National University in San Diego, California, which focuses on implementing appropriate teaching strategies that accelerate student accomplishment through

an interdisciplinary process permitting her to develop a systematic approach for training across the curriculum. She has a MBA from the National University of Bangladesh.

Marni Ann Whitehead, a recent graduate of Walden University, enjoys teaching middle school mathematics, helping with STEM ROV club, and participating in drama productions.

Molly Trinh Wiebe is passionate about Critical Pedagogy, Critical Literacy, Restorative Practices, and Social Entrepreneurship. Dr. Trinh Wiebe served as the Assistant Professor of Practice and Program Coordinator for Youth and Community Studies in the College of Education at The University of Texas at Austin. She also served as the Co-principal Investigator of The Education Innovation and Research Early-Phase Grant, a project funded by the U.S. Department of Education.

Amber Watts is a Black queer woman with a background in restorative practices, education justice, youth leadership development, and yoga. Her passion for education justice derives from her own experiences with racism, sexism, and homophobia growing up. She loves crafting, yoga, and roller skating. Amber is a proud partner, bonus parent, daughter, sister, aunt, and a dedicated member of her loving community.

Marni Ann Whitehead, Ed.D. enjoys teaching middle school mathematics, helping with STEM ROV club, and participating in drama productions. She obtained her Master of Science and Doctor of Education in Curriculum and Instruction from Walden University. She currently teaches in the Quillayute Valley School District.