

# Aspen Journal of Scholarly Works

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The AJSW is a peer-reviewed journal that recognizes the academic scholarship of the faculty and students at Aspen University, United States University, and the external community of researchers



## Acknowledgements & Dedication

The *Aspen Journal of Scholarly Works* (AJSW) is a publication resource for academic scholars across a range of fields. It serves as a medium for faculty and students to present their research findings or discuss theoretical interests.

This journal is made possible by the hard work and efforts of faculty members who serve on the Aspen Journal Committee. The journal is a product of a collaboration between Aspen University and United States University. The peer-reviewers for this volume of the AJSW are listed below (alphabetically by last name). Both AU and USU want to thank the committee members specifically for their professional contributions.

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## Field of Nursing and Health Sciences



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## **Implementation of an In-Patient Audio-Visual (Video) Education Method for the Stroke/TIA Patient Based on one's Personal Learning Preference for Improved Learning**

Dr. Wendy Foss

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### **Abstract**

After an individual experiences a stroke (ischemic or hemorrhagic), they and their caregivers require effective education in medication and lifestyle management. If this education could be presented before a stroke occurs, reaching those with the highest risk factors, a stroke could be avoided. Education delivery systems are increasingly being offered in different formats. Considering how a person learns best could improve their processing and retention of the information. For example, when acquiring new information, one may prefer visual, aural, read/write, kinesthetic (VARK) or a combination in learning options. In addition, a stroke patient may experience new deficits that decrease their understanding of information and require alternative learning methods. Using the VARK learning preference tool provides an opportunity to capture those determined to be a visual and/or audio learner. Once discovered, a video education format can be offered. Offering an additional format to receive and process stroke education fills an education gap with a vulnerable population, increases an opportunity to modify lifestyle decisions for better outcomes, and increases prevention of not only secondary episodes but initial ones as well.



*Keywords:* stroke, hypertension, diabetes, atrial fibrillation, hospital, patient education, video, hyperlipidemia, smoking, TIA.

## **Introduction**

Experiencing a Cerebrovascular Accident (CVA), an interruption in blood flow to the brain often referred to as a stroke is noted by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC, 2021) to be the leading cause of long-term disabilities in the United States (U.S.). In addition, after experiencing a transient ischemic accident (TIA), or mini stroke where stroke symptoms resolve over minutes to hours, there is an elevated risk for a true stroke within a year (CDC, 2021). Education delivery systems are increasingly being offered in different formats. Considering how a person learns best could improve their processing and retention of the information. For example, when acquiring added information, one may prefer visual, aural, read/write, kinesthetic (VARK) or a combination in learning options often referred to as multimodal. In addition, a stroke patient may experience new deficits that decrease their understanding of written information and require alternative learning methods. The purpose of this project was to present an additional format of stroke education to better capture visual or auditory learners, ensuring they have the best opportunity to understand their new health situation.

Currently, Salem Medical Center, New Jersey (N.J.) offers only a paper stroke education handout before discharge. Education then is presented the same regardless of their learning preference or deficits. As a Primary Stroke Center (PSC) one responsibility is educating the public in stroke prevention. By focusing on educating patients and their caregivers, based on learning preferences, it was anticipated that they would have a better understanding of their health situation and increase their ability to prevent first or secondary stroke events. Each year, of the 795,000 strokes that occur in the United States (U.S.), 23.27 % have recurrent episodes

(CDC, 2021; Denny et al., 2017). The American Heart Association (AHA) following the global trajectory of strokes further predicts that by 2030, 4% of all U.S. adults will suffer a stroke increasing the financial burden of this disease upward of \$183 billion dollars a year (Gorelick, 2019). The Global Burden Of Disease (GBD, 2021) 2019 Stroke Collaborator group notes the top five leading risk factors for a stroke being high blood pressure, high body-mass index, elevated fasting plasma glucose, pollution, and smoking. This correlates with the strategies discovered in successful stroke rehabilitation programs focused on education in cardiac rehabilitation principles, blood pressure control, active lifestyle, follow-up appointment adherence, medication adherence, and caregiver inclusion (Lambert et al., 2021). After a first stroke incidence only one in five live longer than fifteen years and many suffer cognitive and physical disabilities that span their lifetime (Crichton et al., 2016). For these reasons, those with high risk factors were also added into the research inclusion criteria.

### **Research Question**

The research query guiding this quality improvement project was: In in-patient high-risk stroke/TIA patients and their caregivers, what is the effect of audio-visual (video) education compared to providing a standard handout have on learning and satisfaction within a six-week period?

### **Literature Review**

#### **Risk Factors**

As a pathway to prevention, it was essential to determine the high-risk factors for a stroke. The American Stroke Association (2022) and the National Institute of Health (2020) lists the top risk factors, under one's control to prevent a stroke is managing one's blood pressure, smoking cessation, diabetes control, and diets low in fats and salt. In addition to these, a

diagnosis of a previous stroke or TIA defined the inclusion criteria. In a study by Bailey (2018), tracking the outcomes of those that modified these risk factors, mortality was reduced by 85-92% over ten years.

### **Learner Preference**

Learning typically comes in the form of visual, aural, read/write, kinesthetic (VARK) or a combination of approaches. The VARK learning preference tool, used with copyright permission, is a sixteen-question survey helping people understand their best learning method. The VARK tool has a good reliability score determined to be 0.85 visual, 0.82 auditory, 0.84 reading/write, and acceptable at 0.77 kinesthetic (VARK, 2022). In a study of 40,000 individuals separated into two groups of teachers and students, 21% of teachers preferred the read/write format, while 15% of students did (Levin & Fulginiti, 2017). The other 79% and 85% learn through kinesthetic or visual/aural.

### **Video Education**

In accordance, Denny et al. (2017) found a high satisfaction rate in the post video stroke education format (74.2%,  $p < 0.01$ ) over pre-video education (49.5%,  $p < 0.01$ ). Not only was there a reduction of preventable risk factors but using a video format increased knowledge and satisfaction in how they received it. Kamal et al. (2020) sought the impact of 5-minute stroke education movies on the well-being of stroke patients. These were shown on admission to the intervention group, at discharge, one month, and three months post discharge. The intervention group, those that had the video education, had lower systolic blood pressures ( $< 125\text{mmHg}$ ) 62%, lower diastolic ( $< 85\text{mmHg}$ ) 55%, lower HA1C ( $< 7\%$ ) 55%, and lower low-density lipoprotein (LDL $< 100$ ) 55%, over those in the control group at systolic 38%, diastolic 45%, HA1C 45%, and LDL 45% (Kamal, et al., 2020).

## **Caregiver Burden**

Another theme emerged in stroke readmission rates in connection to education, the caregiver anxiety in response to unknowns. To begin, Hur and Kang (2021) conducted nurse interviews and viewed videos of nurses interacting with aphasic patients, a disorder often experienced after a stroke where there is a level of difficulty communicating and processing written or spoken language. Nurses revealed they were frustrated and felt guilty they did not know how to communicate well with aphasia patients. This is a relevant concept to reflect on and became an applicable inclusion criteria. If healthcare professionals reveal they are struggling to care for the needs of a stroke patient, how will a lay person cope with the demands of these new healthcare challenges? Kjork et al. (2019) and Yigital et al. (2017) both revealed that caregivers wanted more education and training. Those caring for patients with chronic diseases predisposes them to depression, anxiety, stress, and burnout. Across research, this has led to the patient having unmet needs and increased readmissions. Additionally, there is a correlation between a high caregiver burden (strain) index and a perceived lack of information or education (Yigital et al., 2017).

## **Methodology**

### **Sample Studied**

The project site is a 126-bed primary medical center in a rural east coast setting. A convenience sampling was used to counter the small participation number anticipated in this setting. A total of thirty-two participants were selected for inclusion having the determined risk factors or diagnosis of a stroke/TIA. Of the thirty-two, two refused to participate and three were excluded due to advanced dementia with no caregiver in attendance. Twenty-seven participants

completed the pre survey, the education format, and the post survey, for a total of ten males and seventeen females.

### **Design Study**

This was a quasi-experimental quality improvement project. The pre-survey yielded four qualitative results allowing for a descriptive analysis for the themes that emerged. Each question captures data that aligns with the American Stroke Associations (ASA), Get With the Guideline-Stroke education and reporting being used here. The post-survey had the same four questions with the addition of two quantitative Likert type questions and an additional qualitative question. A descriptive analysis was used to describe the results.

### **Dependent /Independent Variable**

The Independent variable was the separation of participants into either the video or handout education format. The dependent variable compared not only the pre- to post-survey answers within in each format but the perceived Likert score satisfaction rate of each format.

### **Instruments Used**

The VARK tool separated the participants into either a handout or a video education format group. In summation, 92.59% (n=25) of the participants either stated a preference for a video education format or were determined to be video/aural learner by the evidenced based VARK learning preference tool over the read/write format 7.4% (n=2).

Utilizing the basic information deemed to be the most important by stroke experts for the public to know, an open-ended pre-survey was created. The post-survey included the same four pre-survey questions with the addition of two Likert type questions using the scale 1-strongly disagree to 5-strongly agree. This sought to discover if there was engagement and satisfaction to

the education. The final open-ended post-survey question was requested by the stroke coordinator to identify any other patient or caregiver feedback.

### **Data Sets Collected**

Data was collected on patients age, gender, diagnosis, VARK results, education format given, pre-survey four questions results, and post-survey seven questions results.

## **Results**

### **Caregiver**

During the six weeks on-site, the average in-patient census ranged from twelve to twenty-seven patients with a median age of 68 years. Inclusion of the caregiver was an important part of the research as lack of caregiver education led to higher readmission rates and caregiver burnout (Kovoor et al., 2021 & Yigital et al., 2017). It was more difficult than anticipated to capture a caregiver due to their lack of visitation. Of the two that completed the entire process, both preferred the video, answered questions accurately, except one did not know that aspirin and hypertension medication could also decrease stroke risks.

### **VARK**

Forty-four percent ( $n=12$ ) of the participants completed the VARK learning preference tool. Overwhelmingly the participants responded as kinesthetic learners at 91.6% ( $n=11$ ), which is an area for future discussion. The categories reveal the strength within each area, not just one format strength, which account for more than one preference for a participant. The next predominant learner is the visual at 50% ( $n=6$ ), aural at 41.6% ( $n=5$ ), and then the read/write at 16.6% ( $n=2$ ). Of those that declined the VARK survey, they were asked if they were to learn a new skill would they prefer to watch a video on how to do it or have a printed list of steps. From this, fifteen stated a video preference.



### Survey Response One: Name A Warning Sign Or Symptom Of A Stroke

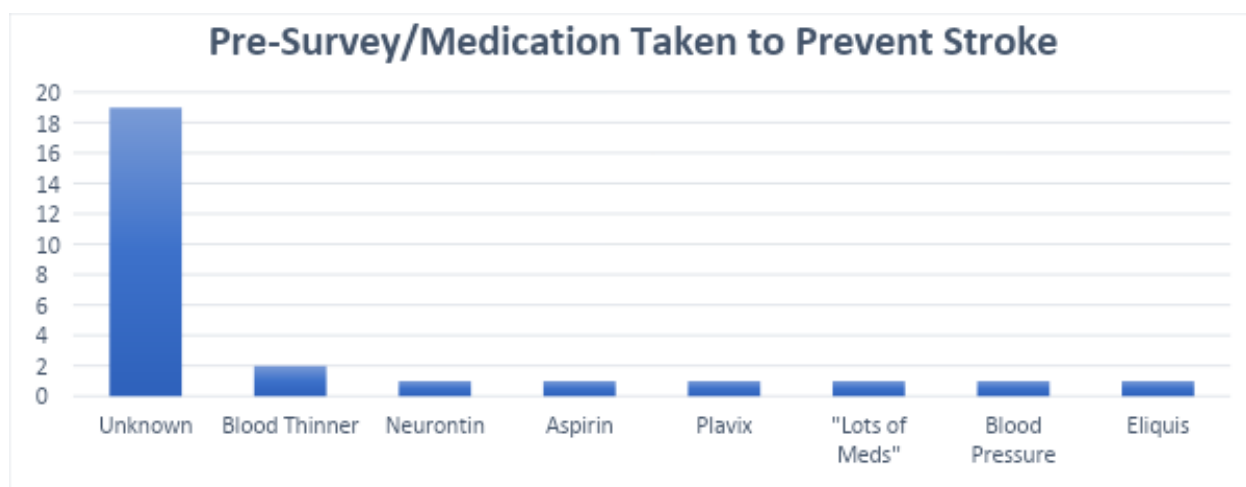
The American Stroke Association (2022) notes the signs of a stroke with the acronym FAST: Face drooping, Arm weakness, Speech difficulty, and Time to call 911. All four having no answer in the presurvey answered signs from FAST, revealing a 100% postsurvey outcome in stating accurate signs of a stroke.

### Survey Response Two: Name A Medication You Are On To Help Prevent A Stroke

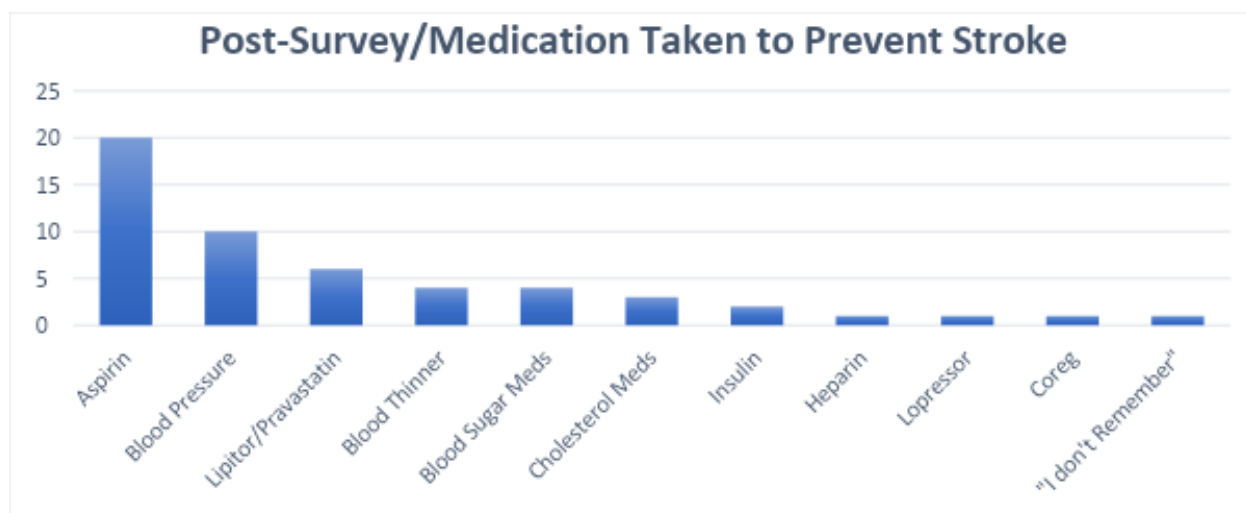
In the presurvey, nineteen participants could not name a medication they are on to prevent a stroke. In the video and the handout, medication education discuss blood pressure medications, cholesterol medication, blood thinners such as aspirin, and blood sugar medications. In comparison, within the post survey response, eighteen participants were able to name two correct medications (Table 1).

**Table 1**

*Pre/Post Video Survey Question 2. Medication Response Comparison*



*Note.* (n=19) Did not know a correct medication to prevent a stroke.



*Note.* (n=26) Knew a correct medication to prevent a stroke.

### **Survey Question Three & Four: What is Something I Can Do To Decrease A Risk For A Stroke & What Should You Do If You Or Your Loved One Thinks You Are Having A Stroke?**

Both answers revealed high accuracy in the pre-survey. Most noted exercise in the presurvey and 100% provided accurate responses in the post survey. Eighteen stated they would call 911 if they had stroke signs and 100% recognized the need to get to the hospital quickly in the post-survey.

### **Survey Question Five: Is The Stroke Education Easy To Understand**

Following the video education, twenty-four participants 5-strongly agreed that the video education was easy to understand. One participant responded with a 4-agree. In comparison, the handout responses had one-3-fair and one-5-strongly agree.

### **Survey Question Six: Do You Find The Stroke Education Beneficial To Your Understanding of Strokes**

Following the video education, twenty-four participants strongly agreed that the video education was satisfying and benefitted their knowledge. One participant responded with a 4-

agree. In comparison, the handout responses had one-3-fair and one-4-agree. It is difficult to compare the handout education with the video method when there are only two responses (the handout) against twenty-five (the video). In summation, there were many more opportunities for the video education to receive a 3 or below and it did not. Therefore, the data supports that video education engages the patient more than the handout.

### **Survey Question Seven: Is There Something I Can Better Explain?**

There were only five responses to this and four were easily discussed at the time with the participant. One held the most potential for further discussion. The query if there is any natural preventative options to prevent a stroke? This is within the field of naturopathic medicine and not a specialty of this site but lends an area for further discussion.

### **Conclusion**

The leading cause of long-term disability in the United States are deficits experienced following a stroke. Furthermore, the CDC discovered that only 38% of stroke victims recognized the major signs of a stroke. The aim of this research was to fill an education gap in reaching alternative learners in recognition of signs and in lifestyle modification for a stroke. The most significant outcome was in the lack of medication knowledge. Prior to this project, about seventy-five percent could not name a medication they were on to prevent a stroke, whereas a hundred percent could name at least one afterward. Nurse leaders need to continue to advance multiple methods to reach patients and their caregivers. Creating a medication reconciliation council could also be utilized to ensure the most updated evidenced based practices are being utilized.

Next, while not previously noted, there is a large Spanish speaking immigration population here, but none were in-patient during this timeline. It could bear further research into

population health as to where they are receiving their primary care and if this format meets their needs. In addition, there was only one high-functioning aphasic patient captured in this research. The National Aphasic Association notes this population processes video education over written word better and bears further research.

Both in research and this project, kinesthetic learning was overwhelmingly a predominant learning type while read was the least preferred. The kinesthetic learner is referring to the tactile learner or learning in motion. While video education is noted to be a piece of this type of learning, watching real-life survivors presenting the concepts may create a stronger patient engagement in self efficacy. Moreover, this could include areas of homeopathic medicine, which is not only a cultural standard healthcare pathway of the Spanish population but was also a request in the post-survey.

Finally, data reflects that there is substantial improvements in knowledge of symptoms of a stroke, medication to prevent it, lifestyle changes to decrease a risk, and what to do if you think you are having a stroke with the video method. Additionally, the participants overwhelmingly, felt more engaged in their health and more satisfied with the video over the handout. This research has set the groundwork for additional discussion in how it can advance other nursing practices, inspire research, and ultimately, improve patient outcomes.

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## Care Management in the Correctional Setting

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The National Commission on Correctional Health Care (NCCHC), 2014 sets the standards of care for the incarcerated; however, treating, and managing the health of the inmate patient is as costly as it is tedious to manage. The marketing of correctional health care has become necessary in order to secure the rights of inmate patients to receive medical care. The complexities in managing care behind bars require well-thought out-processes to ensure each inmate patient's medical care is timely to ensure the health of the individual needing services, and to protect the individual rights of each inmate. This article will attempt to illustrate the necessity to provide quality, case management services to detainees in need of health care services in order to secure an internally healthy environment.

Interestingly, did you know that there were 1-110 adults incarcerated in 2013 in either prisons or local jails (Glaze & Kaeble, 2014)? This number may not appear detrimental or look like it is in need for further analysis until we take a closer look at the types of medical conditions that require immediate and sustainable interventions for inmates housed in correctional facilities. Care for inmate patients requires more than individualized care management. Caring for the detained inmate requires meticulous surveillance for the safety of all imprisoned or who work within the facility. As you can imagine or have seen in other care settings, the population of the facility must be a precursor to care in order to manage care and maintain the safety for all

patients confined behind bars. Think of it this way, each jail, prison, or penitentiary can become a public health nightmare if those in charge do not take surveillance seriously. For example, a missed diagnosis of tuberculosis could result in an outbreak of tuberculosis within the correctional facility. Not only is the population of the correctional facility at risk, but there could be a potential for an inmate with tuberculosis to be released from the correctional facility into the general population.

Why is case management important? How can health care workers ensure all patients' rights to receive health care, especially chronic diseases, get treatment behind bars? First, we will address the first question: Why case management is important behind bars. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the following facts beg us to take a closer look on how to manage inmate patient health (Maruschak & Berzofsky, 2015):

1. In 2011-2012, approximately 40% of state and federal prisoners and jail inmates reported having a current chronic medical condition. This number does not reflect the fact that over half of those incarcerated did report having a chronic medical condition in the past.
2. Reports on tuberculosis, hepatitis B or C, and STDs (excluding HIV/AIDS), twenty-one percent of prisoners reported having tuberculosis, hepatitis, and or other STD's. Fourteen % of jailed inmates reported the same.
3. Prisoner and jail inmates were more likely to report ever having a chronic condition or infectious disease.
4. Female inmates were more likely to report ever having a chronic condition.
5. The most common chronic condition reported by prisoners (30%) and jail inmates (26%) was high blood pressure.
6. Prescription medications for chronic illnesses taken estimations include: 66% of prisoners and 40% of jail inmates
7. More than half of prisoners and jail inmates said that they were satisfied with the health care they received while incarcerated.

Table 1 illustrates the disparities between the incarcerated and the general population.

**TABLE 1**

**Prevalence of ever having a chronic condition or infectious disease among state and federal prisoners and the general population (standardized), 2011–12**

Chronic condition/infectious disease	State and federal prisoners		General population**	
	Percent	Standard error	Percent	Standard error
Ever had a chronic condition <sup>b</sup>	43.9%**	1.5%	31.0%	0.3%
Cancer	3.5	0.4	/	:
High blood pressure/hypertension	30.2**	1.2	18.1	0.3
Stroke-related problems	1.8**	0.3	0.7	0.1
Diabetes/high blood sugar	9.0**	0.8	6.5	0.2
Heart-related problems <sup>c</sup>	9.8**	1.0	2.9	0.1
Kidney-related problems	6.1	0.7	/	:
Arthritis/rheumatism	15.0	0.9	/	:
Asthma	14.9**	0.9	10.2	0.2
Cirrhosis of the liver	1.8**	0.3	0.2	--
Ever had an infectious disease <sup>d</sup>	21.0%**	1.3%	4.8%	0.2%
Tuberculosis	6.0**	0.6	0.5	0.1
Hepatitis <sup>e</sup>	10.9**	1.0	1.1	0.1
Hepatitis B	2.7	0.4	/	:
Hepatitis C	9.8	1.0	/	:
STDs <sup>f</sup>	6.0**	0.5	3.4	0.1
HIV/AIDS	1.3%**	0.3%	0.4%	0.1%

\*Comparison group.

\*\*Difference with comparison group is significant at the 95% confidence level.

--Less than 0.05%.

:

/Not collected in the NSDUH.

<sup>a</sup>General population estimates were standardized to match the prison population by sex, age, race, and Hispanic origin.

<sup>b</sup>Includes only conditions measured by both the NIS and NSDUH. In the NSDUH, persons were asked if a doctor or other medical professional had ever told them that they had high blood pressure, a stroke, diabetes, heart disease, asthma, or cirrhosis of the liver.

<sup>c</sup>For state and federal prisoners, heart-related problems could include angina; arrhythmia; arteriosclerosis; heart attack; coronary, congenital, or rheumatic heart disease; heart valve damage; tachycardia; or other type of heart problem.

<sup>d</sup>Excludes HIV or AIDS due to unknown or missing data. Only those tested reported results.

<sup>e</sup>Includes hepatitis B and C for the prison population and all types of hepatitis for the general population.

<sup>f</sup>Excludes HIV or AIDS.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Inmate Survey (NIS), 2011–12; and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), 2009–2012.

To illustrate the enormity for a potential health care crisis of those detained, Rabuy and Oberholtzer (2017) report: “The American criminal justice system holds more than 2.3 million people in 1,719 state prisons, 102 federal prisons, 901 juvenile correctional facilities, 3,163 local jails ....” Next, imagine a room 6 x 8 feet. An inmate housed in a cell with this approximate dimension is common. In many instances, cells have more than one inmate. Overcrowded conditions in correctional facilities are a natural concern for all officials and health care workers. The correctional population’s security management is not limited to the physical confines of the facility. Tight quarters can be troublesome for health care professionals. Imagine facilities that can hold 1000-2000 inmates. As we noted earlier, approximately 40% have a chronic medical condition. In fact, the admissions screening that

takes place initially in a correctional setting is critical to both the individual inmate as well as the entire population. Proper and accurate screening identifies the appropriate housing needs for the inmate patient as well as allocates the initial provider-screening track for all inmates incarcerated. In order to accomplish this tall order, facilities will need a robust informatics program designed to assign the newly admitted inmate to the correct medical-services line(s) to receive prompt medical care. The intake process ensures that inmate patients will see a medical provider for assessments and follow up care. The process also ensures sick inmate patients receive treatment immediately upon entering the facility. Two clear-cut examples are the admission of a diabetic with high blood sugar, or the detainee with untreated hypertension. A common occurrence seen is the admission of an inmate who is detoxing. This inmate patient requires immediate intervention. Determination of the substance abused is the first step. The intake specialist does just that.

How are the health care needs of inmates met behind bars? Manageable care requires the identification of needs along with preventative measures. The NCCHC provides the standards to provide health care for incarcerated individuals; however, ensuring that the necessary care occurs is in the delivery of an electronic health care record system designed for correctional health care and the specific needs of the facility. Ensuring compliance is an integral part of any correctional health care delivery system. The correctional medical health care provider collaborates with an electronic medical record system in order to manage inmate care, and analyze the specific health care needs of detainees within the correctional facility. The EMR system replaces paper charting and processes often described as cumbersome and inefficient. Health care provider roles identified through the correctional health care programs help to ensure correctional standards can be met as well as scheduling inmates according to specific health care needs. A critical example

of meeting NCCHC jail standards for inmates behind bars would feature a designated list of patients who are on suicide precautions or detoxification protocols. In addition, some lists generated (or lines) may be called “sick call” or “med pass” (CorEMR, 2017). Other lines can be generated according to the needs of the medical correctional facility and type of institution serviced. For case managers and correctional health care leaders, the specific correctional EMR systems do generate reports for various services and types of care delivered within the institution. Once in receipt of these reports, facilities can make modifications to the delivery of care.

One very specific case management feature identified within a correctional medical provider’s EMR program is the identification of chronic illnesses or diseases that require specific management in order to meet current national medical standards. Chronic care clinics managed by the medical providers follow the Federal Bureau of Prisons (FBOP), Clinical Practice Guidelines (2013) as well as the NCCHC Guidelines for Disease Management (2014). Nursing is not exempt from chronic care management. Nursing plays a significant role in the management of chronic care conditions through patient teaching, medication administration, surveillance, symptom management, and lifestyle adjustment to include mealtime and recreation (Schoenly, 2017). Nurses identify chronic care patients and the need for increased surveillance of symptoms through sick call lines, RN physicals, detoxification protocols, vital signs, initial assessments, as well as referrals from reporting security personnel concerned with an inmate’s presentation while being housed in general population. Interestingly, nursing personnel are often recipients’ of reports of inmates being transferred or released from acute care settings and other correctional facilities. Nurses are an integral part in the identification of an inmate’s specific case management needs.



Identification of specific case management needs involves many aspects. Case management within the correctional setting involves managing contagious diseases (Schoenly & Knox, 2013, p. 184). It is common within correctional facilities to have outbreaks of head lice and scabies as two examples of the importance for early identification and treatment of these cases in order to gain control of an outbreak. Other outbreaks that require immediate management are flu, Norovirus, tuberculosis and the most recent novel virus Covid-19. Identification of MRSA wounds requires specific vigilance of the incarcerated population. Often, MRSA is undetected and only suspected when the wound is visible to the naked eye. In this setting, the treatment of MRSA must be prompt and swift in order to prohibit an outbreak among the population. Inmates often hide what they suspect is MRSA because the inmate patient does not want to be placed on isolation precautions. Proper surveillance of these issues and other potential outbreaks within the incarcerated population necessitates dedicated nursing case management.

Jails and prisons often receive transfers from other settings. One specific need is to prepare the facility and staff to meet the often-complicated needs of someone released from an acute care setting into a medical housing unit within a jail. Discharge planning must occur before inmate admission to ensure that there is the proper equipment and personnel available to care for the inmate patient prior to release from the hospital. One unique scenario was the admission into a county jail of a patient released from the ICU requiring a bi-pap machine. Clearly, this is not what your typical inmate looks like who is being admitted to a correctional facility; however, this scenario is becoming more prevalent in today's complicated health care world.

Another facet of nursing care in corrections is the intentional consideration of an inmate patient's needs prior to discharge whether the discharge is to another facility or into the

community. This specific case management aspect requires deliberate planning. Applying sound case management skills will assist inmates upon discharge by providing the necessary resources for the patient to meet his/her individual health care needs. In the correctional setting, the application of sound, guiding case management principles provides safe discharge planning for both the patient and the population where the inmate patient will next reside. You can see the similarities in the need to manage the population health setting behind correctional walls and the need to protect the general population's health care needs as well. Therefore, qualified case managers must attend to the discharge planning needs of the incarcerated. In addition, any transport from one facility to another or from the correctional facility to a courtroom, must protect the population of anyone exposed to the inmate.

Case managing pregnancy of incarcerated women brings a unique set of challenges in correctional nursing care. In addition to nutritional counselling, prenatal care, and patient teaching, addiction counselling and/or treatment may be an issue for the medical staff. The American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) 2017 did recognize the increasing problems in women who were addicted to illegal drugs. In a statement regarding opioid addiction and pregnancy, "Screening for substance use should be a part of comprehensive obstetric care and should be done at the first prenatal visit in partnership with the pregnant woman" (ACOG, 2017). For the incarcerated, the opportunity to first identify opioid use and pregnancy is at intake. A urine drug screen and pregnancy screen at the intake screening process along with an intake history will provide the opportunity to intervene and care for the opioid addicted pregnant inmate. Meticulous case management of the pregnant inmate patient may require methadone treatment if there is a history of opioid use. Modifying prenatal care to include additional sexually transmitted disease testing, ultrasounds to determine fetal growth,

and additional medical service providers may be necessary in order to deliver the safest care to both the pregnant inmate and the unborn child (ACOG, 2017). Here again, you can see the need for deliberate admission and discharge planning services.

Care management of patients in the correctional setting has become a priority in order to provide safe medical care as well as preventative care to both the individual incarcerated and the population that surrounds the detained individual. The case management needs within this specialty has exploded in recent years.

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## **Effect of a Congestive Heart Failure Navigator on Acute Care Readmissions**

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### **Abstract**

Chronic diseases such as congestive heart failure have caused a strain on the healthcare system. In the United States, frequent hospitalizations and rehospitalizations have cost millions of dollars each year. Health care reform has forced hospitals and providers to address readmissions by instituting penalties and making hospitals proactive in avoiding readmissions by transforming health care. Addressing chronic conditions on the initial admission and educating patients on avoidance of exacerbations can increase the quantity and quality of their lives. Hospitals operating on thin margins can avoid penalties and the loss of reimbursement incentives by focusing on value-based care. This project focused on decreasing congestive heart failure readmissions in a rural hospital by instituting a navigator. In comparison, there has been ample research in larger facilities with increased staff assigned to population health initiatives. A retrospective chart review was completed and analyzed congestive heart failure patients admitted to the hospital without a navigator against heart failure patients with a navigator. The evidence in this project confirms the hypothesis that instituting a navigator does decrease congestive heart failure readmissions.

*Keywords:* Congestive heart failure, readmissions, health care reform, navigator, rural hospital

## Introduction

Chronic medical conditions are the leading cause of disability and death in the United States, affecting six out of ten Americans (Nair et al., 2020). Chronic conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, and chronic pulmonary disease affect individuals' quality and quantity of life, including work, family dynamics, and, most importantly, finances. Healthcare costs and days missed of work for individuals and their family members can cause undue emotional and financial stress. Identifying chronic conditions early by promoting wellness and prevention is a proactive approach to decreasing the burden on individuals and their families, lessening the strain on healthcare resources, and driving healthcare costs. The fiscal impact on providers and health care organizations by way of penalties and decreased incentive payments also harms these organizations. While organizations are now driven to move from volume to value, their earnings are heavily derived from volume and are easier to capture by accounting and finance. Nonprofit hospitals already operating on razor-thin margins have difficulty sustaining operations when met with avoidable admissions and readmissions (Senot et al., 2016).

Congestive Heart Failure (CHF) is a complex chronic condition, often identified after a precipitating chronic condition such as coronary artery disease. Because of the usually later diagnosis and presentation of symptoms, permanent damage is often discovered, leading to an unpredictable decline in functional health (Toukhsati et al., 2019). According to Toukhsati et al. (2019), one million heart failure admissions cost institutions more than \$30 billion in the United States a year, with one-quarter of heart failure patients readmitted within 30 days of a discharge from an acute-care hospital. Social determinants of health, health literacy, medication adherence, and the lack of collaboration of health care providers and patients contribute to the struggle against this advancing chronic condition. This research project evaluated a standardized process



to address CHF to reduce CHF readmissions, improve hospital reimbursements, and improve patient outcomes and quality of life.

Indiana Regional Medical Center (IRMC) is an independent community hospital in Southwestern Pennsylvania. The hospital is the sole community provider and does not meet critical access designation because of a bed count of 166, but it is considered a rural hospital (Community Health Needs Assessment 2018, 2018). Indiana Regional Medical Center has been penalized for avoidable readmissions, with CHF being the top penalized condition. Congestive heart failure has been identified as a leading disease in the IRMC's coverage area and zip codes and a leading admission and readmission reason (Community Health Needs Assessment 2018, 2018). The hospital cannot sustain the CMS penalty and not achieve quality bundle incentives from their leading primary payers, University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) and Highmark.

The project aimed to examine and decrease CHF readmission rates at IRMC by utilizing a patient navigator. The targeted population was patients admitted to the medical center with a diagnosis of heart failure. The project included a retrospective chart review of CHF patients before implementing a CHF navigator and after comparing 30-day readmission rates. This quantitative quasi-experimental quality improvement project aimed to determine if or to what degree the translation of evidence-based research using a patient navigator would impact 30-day readmissions in adult CHF patients in an acute care facility in rural Pennsylvania over 12 weeks.

Clinical questions are developed and thoroughly worked through evidence-based research. To formulate a clinical question, the clinician must first consider their approach to critically apply a searchable question that meets the intended research (Anderson et al., 2014). The PICO is the standard layout for a clinical question to a problem.

- (P) Population=patients with an acute care admission to IRMC and a diagnosis of CHF
- (I) Intervention=implement a chronic condition navigator
- (C) Comparison intervention=retrospective chart review of patients without the navigator and with the navigator
- (O) Outcome=decreased readmission rates

Ultimately, this research seeks to examine whether 30-day readmission rates demonstrate a decrease in CHF patients who experience a navigator's intervention.

## **Literature Review**

### **Heart Failure Incidence**

Of all significant chronic conditions such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and diabetes mellitus, heart failure leads to these conditions in incidence and financial costs to patients and organizations. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2020), 6.2 million adults in the United States have been diagnosed with heart failure contributing to over 370,000 deaths in 2018 and costing the nation \$30.7 billion in missed work, healthcare services, medications, and hospitalizations. The increased incidence and cost have led the federal government, private payers, and quality regulators to charge healthcare providers to address heart failure through population health and pay for performance metrics and federal legislation under the Affordable Care Act (Nair et al., 2020).

### **Hospital Readmissions Reduction Program (HRRP) and Finance**

The Affordable Care Act was enacted on March 23, 2010, aiming to increase health insurance coverage and make healthcare coverage affordable. Many other parts of this enormous piece of legislation assist in paying for these benefits. Pay-for-performance was introduced for the 2010 reporting period, with the penalty phase beginning in 2012. HRRP was intended to

penalize for avoidable readmissions of chronic conditions, including acute myocardial infarctions, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, pneumonia, elective total hip or knee replacements, coronary artery bypass graft surgery, and heart failure, with a maximum penalty rising to 3% once fully implemented (Psotka et al., 2020).

Hospitals need to understand HRRP and the importance of why it was introduced and not how to navigate around it. Regardless of the potential financial penalties by Medicare or loss of quality payments by private payers, it is in the best interest of organizations to keep their communities healthy. Organizations must be mindful of the length of stay related to their payments from providers.

### **Prediction of Heart Failure**

With every intervention in place, readmissions will still occur. Evidence-based interventions will prevent readmissions, but some interventions may succeed more than others. The same intervention that works for one individual may not help other individuals. Risk scores, or predictive analysis, determine the likelihood of being readmitted for CHF. The Readmission After Heart Failure (RAHF) scale is one tool to predict readmission for CHF patients. This scale or other predictor tools use demographics, past medical history, comorbidities, and polypharmacy to predict readmissions. Clinicians have added this to their arsenal when evaluating heart failure patients upon initial admission—these tools grade patients at low to high risk for readmissions. Clinicians can tailor interventions to patients based on their scores (Chamberlain et al., 2018).

### **Data Sources and Searches**

Searches in PubMed and CINAHL were searched between January 2016 and December 2021. The search strategy included heart failure, hospitalization, readmission, and navigator. This process yielded over 680 potentially relevant articles.

## Interventions

The importance of CHF and readmission rates after HRRP was introduced has grown immensely; hence a large amount of research and many interventions have been studied. In the articles searched, evidence-based interventions have proven successful, but CHF continues plaguing United States healthcare. Interventions without hardwired processes become a short-term exercise and can lose their value and sustainability.

With various interventions to measure, track, and implement, it is essential to have continuity of care. It is not uncommon for patients with CHF to receive care delivered by multiple providers in outpatient and inpatient settings. Cardiologists, pulmonologists, home health agencies, and therapies for modality lead to complexity of care. Integrating care and coordinating care will reduce repetitive touchpoints and tailor patient communication needs. Assigning a navigator to the patients as their source for education, appointment needs, and follow-up post-discharge. Senot (2019) states that continuity is fundamental to treating chronic conditions.

Recognizing CHF patients on admission is paramount for decreasing readmission rates. The length of hospital stays is often only a few days and identifying patients on admission gives the navigator the best opportunity to start working with the patients early. Wyer et al. (2015) discussed this concept and developed a pathway beginning with the patient presenting to the emergency department. Each day includes interventions, including diet, providing a scale on day one, and an educational video. Day two reviews health literacy around medications; day three is a review and, if discharged, a thorough review of instructions. Discharge phone calls follow for the next thirty days, including medication reconciliation reinforcement, teaching back congestive heart failure medication, and follow-up physician appointments (Wyer et al., 2015).

Inadequate medication adherence leads to an increased risk for hospitalizations related to heart failure exacerbations. Patients, unfortunately, can fall into a cycle of acutely ill, stabilized, discharged, and back again acutely sick. Medication adherence interventions can break this cycle. The two most extensive descriptions utilize medication education and disease education as the basis of adherence, with nearly all interventions having a verbal interaction. This dialogue should be continued and addressed while hospitalized and at each provider visit (Ruppar et al., 2016).

Strategies for discharge planning need to be identified and have processes specially built around them. Before discharge, it is imperative to ensure the patient is clinically stable without evidence of acute illness or fluid volume excess. Assessing the patients' previous living arrangements for safety or advanced therapies may limit a discharge to home. The navigator should follow up 24-48 hours after discharge, review medications, discuss follow-up appointments, and reinforce dietary education. Ongoing engagement with the patient for the next thirty days hardwiring healthy eating, monitoring weight, and confirming attendance at physician visits is paramount.

Motivational interviewing has been used in chronic disease management. The principles and techniques used are designed to elicit motivational change in the patient. Open-ended questions, affirmations, and reflective listening encourage more discussion and draw motivations for change (Martino, 2011). Once a rapport has been established, and the patient senses a need, they can control their disease and introduce self-care interventions. Patients then understand how and why interventions assist their health (Toukhsati et al., 2019).

Given the burden of heart failure on the health care system coupled with decreased length of stay and the current strain on hospitals, remote monitoring, and digital health are beneficial

options in the post-acute phase. Real-time data reported daily may reduce readmission costs and improve quality outcomes (Park et al., 2019). Remote monitoring has challenges, and all interventions may not be suitable for all patients.

Following patients, post-discharge can be more difficult. The patients are in their homes and back to daily routines and may not prioritize following up. Heart failure multidisciplinary clinics, home health, and cardiac rehabilitation are impactful interventions. Patients enrolled in a heart failure clinic with specific visits for weight monitoring and continued education on medication adherence significantly reduced 90-day readmission rates (Jackevicius et al., 2015). Home health care is a common intervention for discharged patients from the acute care setting. (Pesko et al., 2017)

Cardiac Rehabilitation programs have shown to be safe and effective in reducing mortality and increasing functional independence. These programs have shown increased functional capacity and reduced heart failure readmissions and are an effective alternative to traditional brick-and-mortar programs (Chen et al., 2018).

### **Process Improvement and Conceptual Framework**

Even though evidence-based practice has proven improved patient outcomes, quality care, and lower costs, studies have shown it remains low as an organizational priority for nurse executives (Ost et al., 2020). Organizations need to address barriers and develop leaders in the importance of evidence-based practice. Larger organizations often have process improvement departments or subject-matter experts. This project focused on John Kotter's eight-step change theory. John Kotter's eight-step change theory discusses how to lead change in such an environment. The organization needs to set the stage and create a sense of urgency to decrease the CHF readmission rate by using the steps as follows; creating a sense of urgency, building a

guiding coalition, enlisting a volunteer army, removing barriers, forming a strategic vision as a team, celebrating early wins, sustaining the momentum, and instituting change (*Eight Steps to Accelerate Change in Your Organization*, 2020).

## **Methodology**

### **Setting**

This project took place at Indiana Regional Medical Center. IRMC is a 166-licensed-bed acute care facility located in Southwestern Pennsylvania. The average daily census ranges between 80 to 100 patients. This organization is the sole community hospital for Indiana County and is competitive in several other counties, including Cambria, Westmoreland, Armstrong, and Jefferson counties.

### **Population/Sample**

Patients included in this project received healthcare at IRMC and were diagnosed with CHF on admission to the facility. A retrospective chart review compared the patients before and after the navigator intervention. This six-month study's sample size was less than 120 patients each month.

### **Instrumentation**

A checklist was developed for the navigator to complete during the intended interaction of hospitalization and 30 days after the post-discharge of CHF patients. The project investigator designed the checklist, which the Quality Director approved at IRMC. The checklist consisted of interventions during the hospital stay, including a cardiology consult, patient education, evaluating patients' heart failure in red, yellow, and green zones, and a heart failure log for patients to monitor after discharge. This checklist was based on an evidence-based toolkit from the American Heart Association (AHA, 2020). The self-management assessing zone's pamphlet

was also from the American Heart Association's self-check plan for heart failure management (AHA, 2020). The project investigator designed the log and included daily weights and cues for self-care interventions addressing shortness of breath, medication compliance, increased edema, and what to report if any changes are noted. The survey extended the motivational interview techniques started during hospitalization. Patients were offered telemonitoring services. Due to the hospital covering a large area with many areas being extremely rural and patients' unwillingness and hesitancy, telemonitoring did not apply to all participants.

### **Data Collection**

The navigator utilized an Excel spreadsheet to collect patient data, including the general demographics of both patients identified before and after the implementation of the navigator. Patient identifiers were removed and de-identified for this study. The specific interventions agreed upon by the project investigator and the quality director at the organization were placed on the sheet. These included the navigator meeting with the CHF patient daily, education materials reviewed, and a follow-up appointment in seven days while hospitalized. Post-discharge interventions include follow-up phone calls weekly x 4 weeks, the American Heart Association alert level paper reviewed, daily weights, and medication compliance. Any readmissions were documented.

### **Data Analysis and Management Methods**

The data were collected and entered into the Excel spreadsheet for the project. The navigator documented demographics, admission date, length of stay, education documentation, seven-day office follow-up appointment, weekly check-ins with the patient, gathering weights, medication adherence, and the symptom check document review. The spreadsheet included demographics, heart failure admission, and readmission rate up to thirty days after discharge for



the retrospective chart review.. Weekly touchpoints occurred with the DNP student and the navigator. Charts were reviewed for readmissions, including 24 weeks, twelve weeks before the navigator, and twelve weeks after the navigator, comparing the number of 30-day readmissions for each group.

The principal research question of decreasing readmissions was identified by comparing the patients before and after the navigator. For this project, the interventions were collected in quantitative format for future studies on the success of interventions. All data will be destroyed, and information systems will deactivate the drive once the allotted time has expired for data requirements has expired.

### **Results**

For this project, the data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics are ideal for projects comparing data when implementing a process improvement project or trialing a new intervention for comparison. Descriptive statistics are commonly used in smaller research projects completed over shorter periods (Kim, 2016). Using this data analysis is beneficial for providing a foundation for future research or more complex investigations (Conner & Johnson, 2017).

All patients 18 and older were eligible for this study and included. Patients were excluded if they expired during the hospital stay. The ages of patients ranged from 32-93 years of age. Without the navigator interventions, the patient samples from October through December 2021 included 243 admissions and 29 readmissions. Of those 29 readmissions, 17 were male, and 12 were female. The data from January through March 2022, with the navigator interventions, included 314 patients and 31 readmissions. Of those 31 readmissions, 18 were males, and 13 were females.

The first three months of the study without the navigator saw 243 total CHF admissions compared to the next three months of the study with the navigator, which saw a higher volume of 314 total CHF admissions. Even with the higher admission volume during the second three months of the study with the navigator, the readmission rate was less. Without the navigator, there were 29 readmitted CHF patients, equating to an 11.93% readmit rate; with the navigator, there were 31 readmitted CHF patients, equating to a 9.87% readmit rate, for a decrease of 2.06%. Having the navigator interventions in this project appeared to be crucial to succeeding in decreasing the readmission of heart failure patients (Nair et al., 2020).

### **Conclusion**

Value-based healthcare has continued to develop since introduced under the Affordable Care Act. However, small rural hospitals are at a disadvantage as they do not have added layers of support that larger organizations have. Rural hospitals must recognize and establish standardized processes to address rehospitalizations. While it is challenging to tie "hard dollars" to readmissions, the financial impact will be significant over time. Sole community providers like IRMC also have a responsibility to their community to assess health literacy, educate patients on chronic conditions, and encourage wellness and prevention, making patients aware of how to increase their quality of life.

Analyzing the data and results strengthens the hypothesis that assigning a navigator to patients on admission for CHF will decrease avoidable 30-day readmissions. The interdisciplinary team led by the navigator will succeed with a program built on a solid theoretical framework coupled with a standardized conceptual process improvement model such as the PDCA model. Building excitement for patient-centered care, celebrating early wins, and adapting interventions as needed will standardize a process that can be replicated for other

chronic diseases. Reinforcing education and assessing health literacy by motivational interview techniques will build collaboration between patients and the team leading to success in the initiatives implemented.

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## **The Educational Intervention of Educating on Chlorhexidine Gluconate Bathing in Critically Ill Patients: Reducing Barriers and Increasing Compliance**

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### **Abstract**

Critically ill patients at an academic medical center in New York required usage of central venous catheters (CVCs) in order to provide lifesaving healthcare medications and management. Unfortunately, CVCs placed patients at higher risk for central line associated blood infections (CLABSI) that result in patient harm and even death. Central line care has been studied for over a decade and it has been proven in numerous research studies that chlorhexidine gluconate (CHG) bathing wipes result in decreased CLABSI and improved patient care. This best practice was in the policy for daily use of CHG wipes on all adult inpatients with CVCs. However, lapses in care and decreased nursing education interventions had occurred, resulting in decreased usage and documentation compliance for CHG use on required adult patients. Research had shown that best practice, including the usage of CHG bathing, requiring ongoing surveillance and education. The electronic health record (EHR) tracked CHG bathing compliance and it had decreased over the last several months resulting in increased central line infections. This study examined if increased education over a four-week education and in-service timeline on CHG bathing did result in increased CHG documentation compliance with the hopes of improved patient care. The education took place during a four interval in Spring of 2022 and 180 registered nurses (RNs)



and 85 nursing assistive staff (NAS) participated in this quality improvement initiative. After the four-week intervention period, the compliance rates went from 71.6% to 82.8%. The number of central line infections lapsed and remained at zero.

*Keywords:* chlorhexidine gluconate (CHG), bathing wipes, CLABSI

### **Introduction**

During the past several years healthcare had shown an enormous shift to value-based and quality-based care. Hospitals shifted focus from fee-for-service (FFS) to quality-based care. The process for hospital reimbursement had evolved from outcome-based reimbursement to quality-based reimbursement. There was a shift in focus to nursing patient-sensitive indicators and hospital-acquired infections (HAIs). These complications are linked to increased risk of morbidity, mortality, and length of stay. Some of the HAIs monitored closely in the inpatient setting were venous catheter infections and urinary catheter infections. For the purpose of this paper, the HAI focused on is catheter associated bloodstream infections (CLABSI). The use of Central Venous Catheters (CVCs) or central lines were a means to provide emergent or lifesaving medications to patients. Even though these lines have saved many lives, they have also contributed to patient harm through the complication of infection which resulted in a decreased patient safety, higher costs attributed to infections, as well as increased length of stay (LOS). CLABSI are an undesirable outcome from the placement of CVCs. CVCs are a mechanism for lifesaving patients' needs which included access to emergent medications; however, the insertion and maintenance of CVCs posed patients at heightened risk for infection.

Hospital reimbursements impacted the way healthcare was measured. Evidence-based practice (EBP) is necessary to continuously improve patient care quality to reduce costs. The increasing healthcare costs are a national concern and have driven many hospitals to closure

(Reynolds et al., 2021). Central line infections are a costly and common HAI across the nation. A multitude of recent studies had proven that daily CHG bathing on critically ill patients with central lines was directly linked to infection reduction and improve quality for central venous catheter (CVC) care (Musuuza et al., 2017). In the past, the patient was washed with regular soap and water which reduces infections and germs but the introduction of CHG bathing has shown improvements as great as 79% in CLABSI incidence rates (Feriani et al., 2020). This was directly associated with a reduction estimated to range from 46,000 to 75,000 dollars on average per infection (Reynolds et al., 2021). Many studies have repeatedly shown the effectiveness of CHG bathing with the reduction of CLABSIs. Research and EBP nationally and globally have resulted in the reduction of CLABSI and decreased costs for organizations and hospital systems after implementation of the CHG bathing daily for patients with central lines. In the pre-QI time period CHG wipes were available at the urban hospital in New York, where the quality improvement initiative had taken place, but data revealed that CHG bathing at this facility were lower than usual compliance rates at 71.6% which compounded with high rates of organizational CLABSI and resulted in increased costs associated. There was noted opportunity for improved patient care processes around CHG bathing as well as cost savings through cost analysis from increased awareness, education, and availability of CHG bathing in this acute care setting. CHG bathing wipes had been around for several years and many organizations saw improved care and a reduction of CLABSIs based on the EBP surrounding daily use directly related to decreased central line infections. CLABSIs were associated with approximately 28,000 deaths and 2.3 billion dollars annually in the United States (Reynolds et al., 2021). It was imperative and important to educate, reinforce, and redefine the best care for CVCs to prevent harm to patients and unexpected costs.

### **Literature Review**

In 2020, the Centers for Disease and Control and Prevention (CDC) reported increased negative impacts on hospital acquired infections (HAIs) related to the COVID-19 pandemic. More specifically it was reported that the national central line-associated bloodstream infection (CLABSI) rates increased 47% in quarter four across all locations and specifically 65% in intensive care units (CDC, 2021). In the United States alone, there are an estimated 80,000 infections per year with at least 28,000 deaths annually related to CLABSIs of patients in the hospital (Reynolds et al., 2018). Not only is this a detriment to society but it is also a detriment to US healthcare spending. Reynolds et al. attributed around 15,000,000 central lines in the United States per day. Research had shown a significant reduction in central line infections since the introduction of chlorhexidine gluconate (CHG) bathing cloths into the hospital setting. The daily bathing of central lines with this technique has prevented unnecessary infections, decreased increased length of stay, and decreased unnecessary spending.

A study by Reagan et al. (2019) investigated cost savings associated with the implementation of CHG bathing through cost analysis of patient outcomes. Reagan et al. estimated an average cost of 45,000 for each hospital-acquired infection which resulted in an \$815,301.75 cost reduction after increased CHG compliance rates from 60% to 90% as well as estimated five lives were saved during this time. Another study by Frost et al. (2016) completed a systemic literature search to assess the effectiveness of CHG bathing to reduce infection among adult critically ill patients which included bloodstream infections such as CLABSIs. Frost et al. concluded through meta-analysis that CHG bathing had positive clinical benefits for critically ill patients. This study saw a 56% reduction of CLABSIs in patients with central lines. Research by

Huang (2019) discussed the importance of CHG bathing to “treat, cure, and prevent suffering” in patients with central lines (p. 1160).

There was a growing amount of energy being invested into studying the causation and prevention of hospital-associated infections (HAIs). Pallotto et al. (2019) investigated CHG bathing and the reduction of HAIs in the hospital setting. This randomized, controlled study used infection specialists blinded to the randomized intervention. The study concluded that daily bathing of patients with central lines significantly reduced CLABSI in the ICU settings on patients that were given the CHG bath. Huang et al. (2016) reviewed fifteen studies including three randomized control trials as well as twelve quasi-experimental studies that concluded that daily CHG bathing resulted in a significant reduction of CLABSI. The study, like many others, concluded that daily bathing decreases several HAIs but for this project, the focus remained CLABSI reduction.

Frost et al. (2018) concluded that CHG bathing when not completed regularly in the critical care setting resulted in increased infections and CLABSI. Tien et al. (2020) reviewed CHG bathing in regards to critically ill patients with a 60% reduction rate after initiation. There was consistent data seen in Tien et al. (2020) reported that CHG bathing has shown to be a “highly effective approach for preventing gram-positive cocci-related, skin-flora related, or central line-associated bacteremia” in critically ill patients (p. 556). Afonso et al. (2016) performed a meta-analysis of four trials and concluded that while daily CHG bathing does reduce several HAIs, it has the most severe impact on the reduction of CLABSI. The main purpose of this patient safety analysis was to improve quality care through the reduction of monetary and clinical burdens of CLABSI in hospitals. This meta-analysis had significant evidence that CLABSI rates were reduced in all four trials with proper usage of CHG.

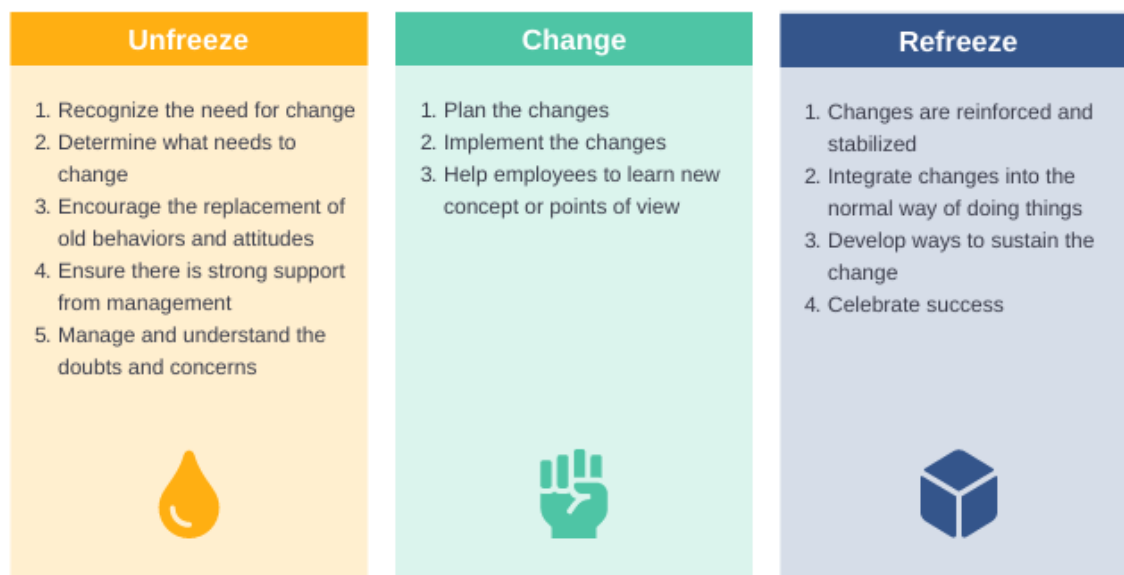
Key factors to successful implementation were staff education and measurement of compliance which is ultimately the responsibility of adherence to the policy. Reynolds et al. (2018) concluded that a multifaceted strategy to promote implementation and support of CHG bathing resulted in decreased infection rates as well as increased nursing compliance. Reynolds et al. (2018) discussed a pre and post-test that examined the knowledge and perceptions of compliance for CHG bathing by nurses as well as the nursing education factor as a multifaceted approach. Post COVID-19 pandemic, it is critical to understand how the management of central lines resurfaced as one of the most critical pieces of HAI reduction.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework underpinned in this clinical practice of implementation of CHG bathing compliance is from Lewin's change theory, pictured below, supported this system change and more specifically the three stages of change throughout Lewin's change theory (Lewin, 1947). Change management required understanding the current state and the ability to make change through having clear objectives and transformational leadership. Lewin's change theory demonstrated the unfreezing, change, and refreezing stages of the theory. The image below from Lewin's change theory (Lewin, 1947) displayed the image of Lewin's change model and explained the stages of unfreeze, change, and refreeze. The change in practice for central line care through the hospital began during the unfreezing or first phase of the theory as nurses prepared for a new practice change, as well as an increase in accountability, here at this urban medical center in Brooklyn. The other two stages, change and refreeze, were demonstrated in the project as it transitioned into practice and then became stabilized in the refreezing stage (Lewin, 1947). Before the practice change occurred, the intervention re-educated and in-serviced nursing staff on the usage and the benefits of CHG bathing as well as re-educated daily documentation

procedures on CHG. The objective evaluated the impact of the re-introduction to CHG bathing in the prevention of central-line associated bloodstream infections (CLABSI) through monitored compliance in the electronic health record (EHR). The secondary objective examined if CLABSI rates decreased with increased compliance. This project was a part of a system quality improvement initiative that incorporated, educated, and re-introduced CHG bathing and documentation processes to nursing staff in the inpatient setting on adult patients with central lines. The United States was in a healthcare reform era in which there was high stakes on reimbursement for providing high-quality care. Empirical evidence and theoretical underpinnings support the use of CHG daily wipes or baths to prevent CLABSIs. This DNP quality improvement initiative emulated best care and best practice by following the evidence-based practice (EBP) and guidance of other high-reliability organizations providing safer care for patients with central lines by increasing the knowledge and use of CHG bathing. The institution where this project was conducted had the potential to sustain care through the advancement of the nursing practice. The increased awareness and reliability of CHG bathing compliance intended to further the EBP that CHG bathing resulted in fewer CLABSIs. The contribution is attributed to improved safety scores and decreased costs associated with a lapse in CLABSIs at this institution. There were significance and justification for the hospital to continue to invest in this worthwhile patient care strategy for improved central line care.

# Lewin's Change Model



## Conclusion

The evidence-based practice (EBP) in the literature review suggested that there is a multitude of evidence supporting CHG bathing in the reduction of CLABSIs (Reagan et al., 2020). It was predicted by the principal investigator that the decrease in CHG compliance resulted in an increase in central line infections at the DNP location site. After the intervention period, the interpretation of data and analysis supported this notion. In the pre-QI period, there were 169 total events with 121 being compliant for a compliance rate of 71.6%. In the post- QI period, there were 174 events with 144 being compliant for a compliance rate of 82.8%. The result indicated that there was a significant difference in compliance rate between the pre-QI period and the post QI period ( $\chi^2 = 6.08$ ,  $Df = 1$ ,  $p = 0.014$ , exact  $p = 0.0147$ ). During the four-week intervention period, there were 265 RNs and NAS re-trained on how to complete a CHG bath, the protocol and process, and how to document daily. The principal investigator met with a statistician to analyze the data and displayed the results through a Chi-square analysis and a one-

sided hypothesis, the compliance rate in the post-QI period was significantly higher than the compliance rate in the pre-QI period ( $Z = 2.47$ ,  $p = 0.007$ ). The overarching theme displayed increased compliance after the intervention. The theoretical or conceptual framework, Lewin's change model, was displayed in the unfreeze, change, and refreeze phases of the change management (Curley & Vitale, 2012).

After the results of this Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) quality improvement initiative, the findings supported the need and the application in the real world to re-educate and reinforce education for chlorhexidine gluconate (CHG) bathing as well as other quality improvement protocols post pandemic. There were multiple factors that contributed to outbreaks of central line associated blood infections (CLABSIs) amid the corona virus pandemic nationwide (Patel et al., 2022). The hospital in which this DNP quality improvement project was performed had an increase in CLABSIs that aligned with the decrease in nursing compliance for daily CHG baths on adult patients with central lines. A study by Patel et al. (2022) examined the same issues and results had revealed that there were "deviations in nursing training, documentation, and standard practices in central-line dressing care" as well as paused period of semiannual training for nursing nationwide (p. 2). This ENP aligned with the predictions discussed by this principal investigator. This study by Patel et al. (2022) resulted in a decrease in CLABSIs after the reintroduction and education of CHG at that facility. It is important for hospital and healthcare leaders to acknowledge the effects that the pandemic had on nursing care and increase of hospital acquired conditions (HACs). Another study by Patel et al. (2021) resulted in consistent concern for the high acuity of patients with COVID-19 and how this presented in heightened challenges for preventing CLABSIs in the nursing community. This DNP quality improvement initiative contributed to the notion that various challenges negatively impacted the way nurses have been



able to care for patients and provide care. As healthcare leaders, it was critical to understand the dynamics of increased patient acuity and decreased staffing levels in order to understand lapses in quality of patient care. This project supported the notion that lapses in education and decreased quality of patient care had resulted in increased CLASBSIs and other hospital acquired conditions resulting from lapses in acceptable compliance with existing quality protocols. The implication for increased CHG usage and compliance was to reduce CLABSI by providing best care for patients with central lines. Many hospitals faced extreme challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic which resulted in increased infections and academic delays in education and process improvement training for nursing (Cao et al., 2019). There will most likely be further implications in nursing and healthcare related to the stress and anxiety of the pandemic still persisting. Cao et al. (2019) discussed that “academic delays were positivity associated with the level of anxiety symptoms” from the pandemic (p. 4).

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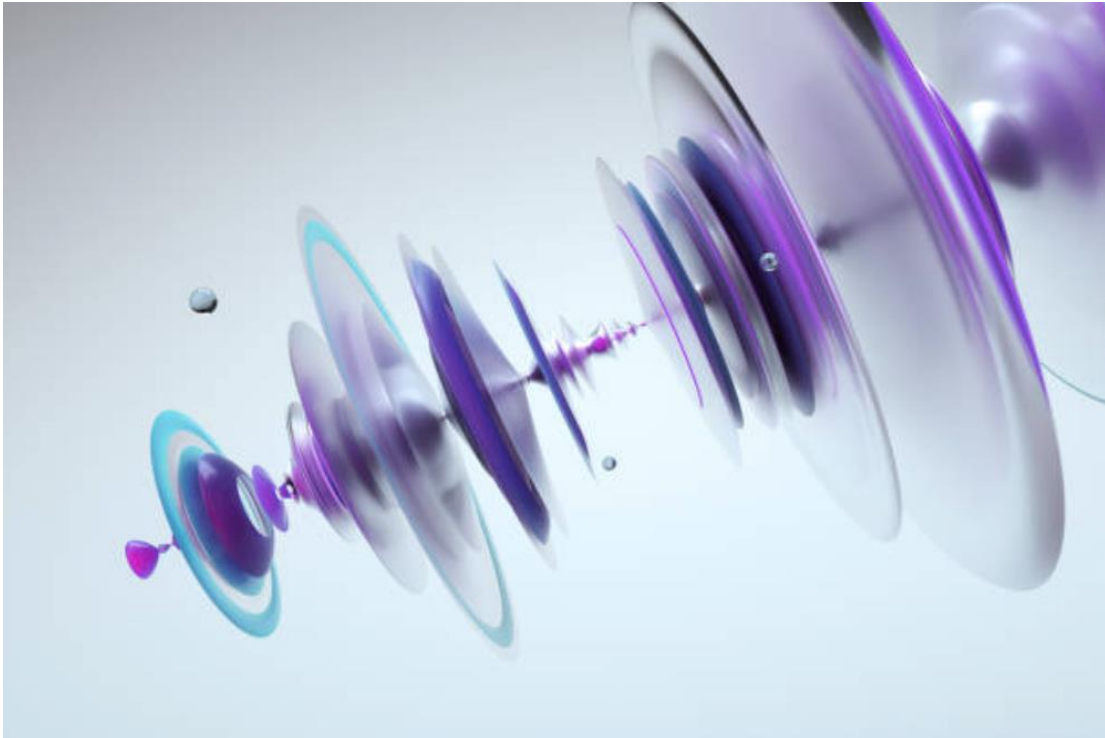
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## **A New Hope or New Burden?**

### **Community College Students and Online Learning during COVID-19**

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*Aspen University, School of Education*

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#### **Abstract**

This study explores the experiences of community college students with the rapid shift from traditional to online learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The study was motivated by the overarching question of how students in a community college perceive the transition from conventional to online learning. Previous studies have focused on the challenges and benefits of online learning in higher education. Still, little attention has been given to what community college students portrayed as the struggle or opportunity provided by the rapid transition. This study expanded the understanding of what students described as the challenges or benefits of online learning. After interviewing eight community college students, this phenomenological study found that online learning was associated with ease of access, lower attendance costs, and the opportunity to utilize technology to improve learning. However, a successful transition to online learning relied on the connection to college services and the availability of instructors and staff. Technological challenges, lowered motivation, and uncertainty were among the chief obstacles during the transition. The findings call for equipping the institutions with more technical resources to meet students' needs. Appropriate training for instructors and staff is essential to assist community college students in succeeding in online learning.



*Keywords:* online learning, community college, COVID-19, phenomenology

## **Introduction**

In the middle of the spring semester of 2020, most colleges and universities decided to transition students from a face-to-face learning environment to online learning. This decision was rapid, unplanned, and surprising to students and educators. Although involuntary, the decision to move to online learning was necessary due to the deteriorating situation of COVID-19, especially after the number of cases increased in most states. The U.S. government declared COVID-19 a national emergency, and many lives were affected directly or indirectly by the pandemic, including the lives of college students.

Most educators in higher education are familiar with traditional face-to-face and online learning. Nevertheless, many needed more experience and training using a technology-based hybrid learning modality to be ready to engage students in online learning settings. The rapid transition from traditional to online learning brought numerous academic and personal challenges.

The school closures and rapid shift from face-to-face to online learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic took place without prior planning and training (Almutairi et al., 2021; Iglesias-Pradas et al., 2021). The rapid shift to different learning modalities and the sudden closure of schools made students and educators uncertain and vulnerable to psychological, social, and economic pressures (Fruehwirth et al., 2021). Researchers have examined the impact of COVID-19 on student learning and satisfaction (Bhowmik & Bhattacharya, 2021; Ho et al., 2021; Weidlich & Kalz, 2021) to understand the impact of the pandemic on different aspects of education. However, it is still ambivalent how community college students perceived their experiences or what types of challenges they experienced.

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to unveil community college students' experiences with the rapid shift from face-to-face to online learning.

Two theories guided the theoretical framework of this study. The first theory was Lewin's force field analysis (Killam & Heerschap, 2013). The second theory is the ecological model of Bronfenbrenner (1979). This study subscribed to a grand tour question (Werner et al., 1987) to address the central phenomenon, i.e., students' perceptions of online learning. Further, several sub-questions were added to contribute to the maximum variation of students' perceptions regarding online learning (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

### **Research Questions**

The overarching question that guided the study was: How did students in a community college perceive the transition from traditional to online learning because of the COVID-19 pandemic?

The following sub-questions contributed to answering the overarching question:

RQ1a: How were students' perceptions of college enrollment, engagement, and completion affected by the rapid transition to online learning?

RQ1b: What challenges did the students describe because of the transition to online learning and the consequences of COVID-19?

RQ1c: How did students in community colleges describe the best practices of faculty and student services that helped them overcome the challenges of online learning?

RQ1d: Did community college students perceive any benefits from online learning after the rapid transition?

### **Literature Review**

Educators use different forms and modalities of learning to achieve their learning outcomes. The best form of learning relies on the available tools, spaces, and students' learning styles. One of the primary learning modalities is face-to-face learning (also known as traditional learning), where participants are gathered in a defined space to interact synchronously (Nortvig et al., 2018). Using technology or web-based content does not necessarily change the main approach to traditional learning.

Online learning is another form of learning influenced by the emergence of different learning styles of students and the increased presence and usage of technology. Online learning does not need a physical classroom learning structure. Instead, it is a web-based environment that offers learning opportunities and is more independent regarding timing and pace (Bernard et al., 2014; Chigeza & Halbert, 2014; Potter, 2015). The delivery and design of online learning are facilitated through Learning Management Systems LMS or Virtual Learning Environments VLEs (Pellas & Kazanidis, 2015).

Online learning provides the flexibility of time and place for students and institutions to deliver the materials and engage students (Smedley, 2010), ease of access to different and extensive content that is otherwise limited in traditional learning (Arkorful & Abaidoo, 2015), encourages students to interact with each other, with instructors, and with the materials because it reduces the fear of socializing that might take place during traditional learning (Wagner et al., 2008), and reduces the cost and energy for students and staff that is associated with traditional learning by focusing on their learning preferences and style (Arkorful & Abaidoo, 2015).

Online learning comes with some disadvantages, such as students' lack of motivation and inability to regulate time and energy (Wan Hassan et al., 2020) because online learning is more independent than traditional learning, relinquishing students' social skills and isolating them

from their learning environment (Gillett-Swan, 2017). Online learning is not "one-size-fits-all." Some disciplines, e.g., science courses with labs, require hands-on experiential learning that is difficult to manage or achieve electronically (Arkorful & Abaidoo, 2015).

Online learning occurs in a virtual environment where students and instructors use several technological tools and web-based content to produce knowledge and achieve learning outcomes (Shahabadi & Uplane, 2015). However, online learning has two primary forms: synchronous and asynchronous. Synchronous learning is a learning process where students and instructors meet online at a specific time to interact with each other and the materials (Amiti, 2020). Synchronous online learning allows students to attend lectures without worrying about distance or the social anxiety created by face-to-face interaction (Skylar, 2009).

Even when students cannot make it to the online class, instructors can respond to students' needs by recording lectures for those who cannot attend synchronous meetings (Perveen, 2016). Also, synchronous learning allows students to engage based on their preferred learning style and technology, e.g., speaking, typing, or using chat rooms to discuss with other students (Tabatabaei & Sharifi, 2011). However, synchronous learning poses a scheduling challenge (Amiti, 2020) and requires high institutional adaptability to carry out the best practices of synchronous learning (Graf, 2007).

An asynchronous learning virtual environment gives students more flexibility because it is a more independent form of learning (Hrastinski, 2008). Students can navigate ready-to-use learning materials and recorded lectures to facilitate their learning (Perveen, 2016).

Asynchronous learning is self-paced, and student-centered learning promotes higher-level thinking practice because it does not rely on memory and immediate reaction (Murphy et al., 2011). Additionally, students can still interact with each other, with instructors, and with the

materials through emails, discussion forums, and submission of assignments (Perveen, 2016).

However, some challenges are associated with asynchronous learning, including delayed feedback, going off-topic, and reduced social interaction that impacts engagement (Hsiao, 2012).

### **Methodology**

The current study used a qualitative phenomenological approach with a purposeful sampling strategy and in-depth interview data collection tool to explore students' online learning experiences during the pandemic of COVID-19.

#### **Sample Studied**

The sampling strategy used for this study was purposeful sampling. According to Shaheen and Pradhan (2019), purposeful sampling is selecting participants with rich experience with the phenomenon. Purposeful sampling assisted in collecting manageable data valid for the intended analysis for qualitative research (Ames et al., 2019). The participants of this study were community college students enrolled in at least one semester of online learning courses using Zoom, e.g., synchronous online learning during or right after the COVID-19 pandemic that resulted in college closures.

The age of the eight participants ranged from 21 to 36 years old. Five of the participants were females, while three were males. Four participants reported their ethnic background as Hispanic, two stated they were White, and two identified as mixed-race. Seven participants described their level of educational classification as sophomores, while one student was a freshman. The participants were enrolled in various Biology, Communication, Computer Information, Kinesiology, Mexican American Studies, and Pre-Nursing majors. Seven participants said they were single, and one was married. Similarly, seven participants were

planning or had already transferred to a 4-year university, and one was still debating whether to transfer to a university. Table 1 shows the key demographics of the participants.

**Table 1**

*Participant Demographics*

Name	Age	Gender	Race	Major	Education Classification	Marital Status	Transfer to 4-year College
Carol	26	Female	Hispanic	Biology	Sophomore	Single	Yes
Paul	33	Male	White	Pre-nursing	Sophomore	Married	Yes
Clarissa	36	Female	Hispanic	Pre-nursing	Fresh student	Married	No
Sofia	21	Female	Hispanic	Mexican American Studies	Sophomore	Single	Yes
Mia	21	Female	Hispanic	Kinesiology	Sophomore	Single	Yes
Al	25	Male	Mixed	Biology	Sophomore	Single	Yes
Oscar	26	Male	Mixed	Computer Information	Sophomore	Single	Yes
Olivia	24	Female	White	Communication	Sophomore	Single	Yes

*Note:* The participant names presented in Table 1 are pseudonyms.

**Design of the Study**

Unlike other methodologies, qualitative research is suited for gathering rich data from students who had to cope with various challenges and opportunities during the pandemic. The nature of the current exploratory research design and open-ended research questions called for a methodology that encouraged collaboration between the researcher and participants and facilitated the gathering of rich data from a small sample. The qualitative methodology helps researchers learn why participants feel, think, and behave in a certain way (Sutton & Austin, 2015).

A phenomenological approach was used for the research design of this study. Phenomenology takes an approach to discovery that rejects pure positivism. Instead, phenomenology is based on the naturalistic approach in which knowledge is achieved through

the interaction between the researcher and participants (Reiners, 2012). The strength of the phenomenological study is in the ability to include participants as an integral part of the research and to deeply understand participants' experiences. Phenomenology helped achieve the study goals and answer the research questions based on the participants' subjective views.

Phenomenology was appropriate for the current study because it allowed the students to describe their feelings about online learning and to make sense of their experiences as they remembered them and judged them (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). Phenomenology was effective because it is a qualitative and inductive approach to research where researchers and participants collaborate. There are two main types of phenomenology: descriptive and interpretive. Descriptive phenomenology describes the participants' experiences while bracketing the researchers' assumptions. On the contrary, interpretive phenomenology encourages researchers to reflect on the topic to draw interpretations (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

### **Instrument Used**

In-depth interviews were used to collect data to achieve the study's purpose and objectives. In-depth interviews are an effective tool in phenomenological methodology. Interviews are a proper data collection method in qualitative research, especially for an unmapped phenomenon (Hays & Singh, 2011). Qualitative interviews assisted in achieving the objective of the study because they gave voice to the participants (Hatch, 2002) as primary stakeholders in shaping higher education policy and practices, and they allowed me to rebuild the events, even if I did not take part in the events (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

### **Database Collected**

In-depth interviews were used to collect data from the main source of information, e.g., participants. Seven participants preferred virtual interviews using the Zoom application. I

scheduled the interviews according to the desired date and time set by the participants. I sent the Zoom link to participants to join the interview. Zoom interviews offered the participants more convenience because they eased the burden of time and place restrictions. I recorded the interviews using the built-in function of the Zoom application.

One participant preferred a face-to-face interview. The interview date and time were set based on the student's preference to conduct the face-to-face interview in a private and secure classroom at the research location.

The recordings and the transcription of all interviews were shared with participants so they could make any changes. After two weeks, the participants made no requested change, so they certified the interview transcripts. There were twenty interview questions determined based on the interview protocol. However, some interviews required more follow-up questions when further clarification and exploration were needed. Semi-structured interviews allow for further expansion of questions to obtain deeper and thicker information. The interviews lasted between 30 and 90 minutes, with an average approximate length of 48 minutes. Table 2 shows the length of each interview for each of the eight participants.

**Table 2**

*Length of Interviews*

Participant	Length
1	1:22:10
2	54:44
3	31:27
4	50:17
5	34:50
6	44:15
7	42:30
8	43:20
Total	6:38:55



## Results

RQ1a described student anxieties regarding their ability to navigate academic institutions and complete their degree programs during the transition, general pandemic-related stresses must not be ignored. The transition period was at a standstill because the lockdown prevented participants from engaging in activities that helped relieve stress.

Pandemic-related stress, when paired with the anxiety caused by the difficulty in contacting enrollment services, student advisors, or even professors during this time of transition and uncertainty, increased the stressful nature of the transition.

For RQ1b, many participants struggled with waning motivation and time management skills. Technology proved a great challenge, as several admitted to being less than technologically savvy. Many had struggles with Internet connectivity, and this had the potential to have devastating impacts on their coursework. Others became frustrated with their professors' struggles with technology and perceived refusal to adapt to the online learning modality. Many found it challenging to find quiet places in their homes to attend class while surrounded by family. The participants also found the lack of socialization and engagement in virtual classrooms to lead them to struggle with anxiety and isolation. As with RQ1a, the pandemic compounded common academic challenges, creating a situation that the participants perceived to be more difficult than expected.

RQ1c explained the best faculty and student services practices that aided students during this stressful period. Students praised the faculty who maintained regular availability and flexibility with office hours, allowing students to contact their professors when they had questions or issues arise. Faculty who used games and discussion to boost interactivity, increase engagement, and build camaraderie proved popular. Finally, faculty who successfully used

technology, specifically Zoom and its breakout room feature, to offer individualized instruction for those needing more assistance during class time earned praise from the participants.

The participants often cited the library as an example of a service that expanded its online availability and offerings to help students. Other helpful practices were those that provided financial relief, providing laptop computers or webcams as needed, and setting up Wi-Fi hotspots in the parking lot so students could have stable Internet access while being safe.

RQ1d revealed that the participants perceived three benefits to arise from online education. The first benefit was financial savings. While the traditional costs of attendance remained unchanged, the participants perceived a financial benefit in the form of saving money on gas by not having to drive to campus. Also, online learning saved the participants time, as they did not have to prepare to drive to campus. This led to a perceived benefit in the ease of attendance. The participants with full-time jobs and families could attend classes around their schedules and familiar obligations. The participants recognized that they could attend class from any convenient location as long as stable Wi-Fi was available.

The participants' final benefit was increased technological savviness. Participants learned more productive and systematic ways of using software applications and computers that increased their familiarity with and understanding of what technology could do for their education.

### **Conclusion**

The study concludes that environmental, personal, and institutional factors shaped students' experiences with the rapid transition to online learning. The shifting learning environment from the classroom to home or elsewhere impeded communication and academic service reception. The "new" way of communicating with peers and educators was complicated

by educators' flexibility and access to the internet and technology. An appropriate learning environment was not guaranteed because of a lack of consistent access to technology, support from family, and shifting priorities from learning to safety. The decision to continue in higher education was questionable.

The flexibility of instructors' and advisors' office hours was deemed effective in meeting students' needs. Moreover, providing students with laptops and Wi-Fi, although Internet service was limited to the vicinity of the school, mitigated some of the technological challenges associated with online learning. Activating more counseling services to meet students' financial and well-being needs was highly valuable in fighting stress and anxiety resulting from fear, uncertainty, and the economic challenges accompanying the pandemic. Finally, some instructors' humanizing approach to class interaction proved effective because it allowed students and instructors to reflect on their challenges and to act as a learning community regardless of the obstacles.

The online learning modality offered students an excellent opportunity to engage in practical approaches to utilizing technology, especially learning about new apps and initiating new socialization processes of technology in higher education that could facilitate their learning. Notably, online learning appealed to community college students, especially those economically disadvantaged, because it saved them money and time. Finally, online learning introduced a balanced opportunity for students to juggle various tasks, chief among them family and work obligations.

The first direction for future research concerns the research's scope. The boundaries of the current research, especially the selected participants, limited the current study because it focused on the experiences of community college students with online learning due to COVID-

19. To expand the scope of the study, future research on the experiences of other stakeholders, especially instructors, will provide a broader picture of the learning process in periods of crisis using online learning as an alternative modality to traditional learning. Future studies could also focus on expanding on the questions related to the use of technology in the classroom. Reliance on technology in classrooms, whether online or face-to-face, is increasing in higher education. However, the current study did not fully answer why young college students might struggle to use technology to engage in classes or to complete their assignments. Therefore, I recommend that a future study focuses on factors influencing the use of technology by students in higher education.

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**A Qualitative Study of Principal Leadership Behaviours that Motivate  
Teachers in Private Secondary Schools in Oyo State, Nigeria**

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**Abstract**

The study aim was to establish the leadership behaviours that motivate teachers in two private schools in Oyo State. Five teachers from the two schools were interviewed regarding leadership behaviors that motivate them. Consent was sought from all the participants before they were involved in the research. Furthermore, the names of the participants were concealed to uphold privacy and confidentiality. The thematic analysis approach was adopted to guide the interpretation of the research data. The thematic analysis method was chosen because it contributed to specificity in evidence, limiting biases that could have stemmed from the generalization of the research evidence and respective implications. The findings revealed that principal behaviors that motivate teachers include respect, empowerment, persuasion, embracing fairness, building confidence, and responsibility, and accountability. The evidence suggests that selflessness and dignifying what teachers accomplish contributed to their motivation. Other practices that contribute to teacher motivation include recognition of teachers, teacher empowerment, ensuring workplace inclusivity, and mentorship. The strategies promote teachers' career growth and development, increasing their employment prospects. Differently, victimization, bullying, and coercion contribute to the demotivation of teachers. Accordingly,

teachers argued that they lost teaching morale when victimized, intimidated, bullied, and coerced, hence negatively impacting their motivation. Under-resourcing and understaffing were established as hindrances to education leaders' efforts to achieve teacher motivation. As a result, adequate resourcing and appropriate institutional staffing could promote the successful implementation of teacher motivation strategies.

*Keywords:* Motivation, demotivation, leadership, education, teachers, empowerment, recognition, fairness, inclusivity, respect, accountability, responsibility, understaffing, under-resourcing.

### **Introduction**

This thesis seeks to establish the leadership behaviours by the principal that motivate teachers in private secondary school in Oyo State, Nigeria. The study's aim is to examine education leaders' behaviors that motivate teachers. Participants comprising of 5 teachers were interviewed concerning the behaviors they consider motivating. Further consideration was given to factors that contribute to the demotivation of teachers and the challenges faced by education leaders in attempts to motivate teachers.

Leadership behaviors include leader characteristics and strategies that impact teacher performance (Khaola & Oni, 2021). According to Yariv (2011), motivation and quality assurance have become common in contemporary education leadership and management systems. According to Anastasiou and Garametsi (2021), education leaders have adopted teacher motivation and quality assurance as primary performance management strategies. Hyseni Duraku and Hoxha (2021) further argue that motivation is a psychology-based strategy to boost the morale and commitment of teachers. In developing countries, awareness about teacher motivation is considered one of the critical strategies in achieving high education standards in the

education system. Anastasiou and Garametsi (2021) and Khaola and Oni (2020) agree that any nation that seeks to build a high-quality and robust education system encourages teacher motivation. Accordingly, Onjoro, Arogo, and Embeywa (2015) and Anastasiou and Garametsi (2021) posit all education leaders must be capable of motivating teachers to achieve high academic standards in their respective institutions. From this perspective, teachers' motivation remains a fundamental integral factor in promoting excellence in schools.

This qualitative phenomenological study was focused on determining leadership behaviors that motivate teachers focusing on two private schools in Oyo State, Nigeria. Private schools were considered for the current study because they have clearly outlined teacher motivation programs, strategies, and practices that are consistently implemented. The defined motivation programs are implemented to ensure teachers remain committed to their workplace roles and responsibilities.

Hyseni Duraku and Hoxha (2021) and Yariv (2011) stated teachers remain the most elemental individuals in fostering learning. According to van der Hoven, Mahembe, and Hamman-Fisher (2021), teachers are the pivot of every education system, implying they must be prioritized by all education leaders in the formulation of performance strategies. For instance, Onjoro, Arogo, and Embeywa (2015) hold that teachers can negatively or positively influence teaching and learning outcomes, depending on how their leaders treat them. Notably, the quality and commitment to instruction delivery rely on motivating teachers and offering them the desired support. The aspect depicts a teacher as an individual requiring maximum attention from education leaders. As a result, education leaders must be concerned with the support and resources needed by teachers in education delivery to promote and support curriculum and policy implementation. Accordingly, a quality education context is created by leaders who motivate and

support staff. Therefore, the study focuses on the qualitative analysis of principal leadership practices and behaviors that inspire teachers. Accordingly, teachers and their respective leaders will be interviewed to determine their perceptions and views about the leadership principles and behaviors that motivate teachers. As a result, consent will be sought from teachers and head teachers, whose identities will be concealed to uphold their privacy and confidentiality.

### **Research Questions**

The overall question of this study was what leadership behaviors and leadership capabilities from the view of teachers can be listed as a positive manner of behaving and improving teacher motivation? The sub questions for this study are:

1. What are the leadership behaviors that provide motivation for teacher's work in the classroom? The problem statement in the study based on literature suggests leadership behaviors provide motivation for teachers to perform.
2. What leadership capabilities do teachers believe will promote teacher motivation in the classroom? The problem statement of the study based on literature suggests leadership capabilities provide motivation for teachers to perform.
3. Outline some of the leadership behaviors/aspects and practices that contribute to the demotivation of teachers/you?

### **Literature Review**

The current qualitative study focused on determining leadership behaviors that motivate teachers in two private schools in Ibadan in Oyo State, Nigeria. The literature review provides a critical overview of evidence about the behaviors that motivate teachers. In line with the current research, the literature review chapter provides an in-depth definition of the concept of motivation and how education leaders achieve it. Evidence is synthesized from previous studies

on approaches to motivating teachers, and the strategic behavioral aspects leaders adopt to encourage teachers. Some of the sources of literature used in the review include previous research and journal articles, motivation policy publications, and papers on the strategic measures education ministries use to recognize and encourage achievement by teachers. Therefore, the literature review provides an extensive and in-depth perspective of motivation and how leaders achieve it.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The study is based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. According to Maslow's theory, motivation is derived from satisfying a person's five basic needs: safety, social, physiological, esteem, and self-actualization (Maslow, 2019). Accordingly, motivation can only be achieved after employees, including teachers, develop a sense of fulfilling their basic needs. In line with the evidence, Taormina and Gao (2013) and Stoyanov (2017) argue that motivation stems from satisfaction which stimulates excitement and persistence in voluntary actions targeting a particular goal. However, both Suyono and Mudjanarko (2017) and Maslow (2019) argued that motivation can be individualized. As a result, there is no one outright approach to motivate all people. Thus, motivation is an outcome of satisfaction following the fulfilment of personal needs and desires. Respectively, teacher motivation results if education leaders behave and implement strategies that lead to the fulfilment and satisfaction of personal needs, goals, and objectives.

### **The Concept of Motivation**

Saleem et al. (2020) and Daniels (2017) agree that motivation is a concept used to explain people's influential behavior and interests. However, Utomo et al. (2019) hold that motivation refers to an inner urge or drive influencing one's behavior. As a result, Onjoro, Arogo, and Embeywa (2015) and Anastasiou and Garametsi (2021) agree that motivation is a desire and

willingness to perform. On the contrary, Ahmed (2021) and Gümüş et al. (2021) argue that motivation is an inner attempt and drive of an individual to strive to meet basic needs and establish a balance. Despite the differences in defining motivation, interpreting the term indicates that motivation entails stimulation that makes one perform a task. Therefore, a behavior or an intervention must stimulate one to complete a job to be called motivation. Differently, Kheir-Faddul and Dănăiață (2019) and Ahmed (2021) argue that motivation is an external intervention that drives one to perform a task. In that regard, motivation is considered an external stimulus that causes one to perform a task willingly. From the definition, one has to have an external influence to be motivated to complete a task. Therefore, motivation stems from a driving force that evokes enthusiasm to achieve desired goals and objectives.

### **Methodology**

The current qualitative study with a phenomenological design focused on determining leadership behaviors that motivate teachers in two private schools in Ibadan in Oyo State, Nigeria. The problem statement of the study, based on a literature review, suggested leadership capabilities provide motivation for teachers to perform. The overall research question of this study was, what leadership behaviors and leadership capabilities from the view of teacher's can be listed as a positive manner of behaving and improving teacher motivation? The sub questions for this study were:

1. What are the leadership behaviors that provide motivation for teachers' work in the classroom?
2. What leadership capabilities do teachers believe will promote teacher motivation in the classroom?



3. Outline some of the leadership behaviors/aspects and practices that contribute to the demotivation of teachers/you?

### **Research Design**

The qualitative phenomenological study was used to focus on determining leadership behaviors that motivate teachers in two private schools in Ibadan in Oyo State, Nigeria. The problem statement of the study, based on a literature review, suggested leadership capabilities provide motivation for teachers to perform. The data will be collected by means of transcribed interviews and observations using field notes to document responses from the participants. The researcher will explain to the participants during the interview process of giving them code names such as R1, R2 and so on in order to protect their privacy and confidentiality of the research study.

### **Population and Sample Selection**

The population for this study consisted of two private secondary school teachers in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. The sampled population included five secondary teachers. The participants were male and female teachers.

The study sample was determined using the purposive sampling approach. Purposive sampling involves judgmental and selective sampling to choose the most preferred individuals to participate in a study (Etikan, Musa, and Alkassim, 2016). The method requires prior knowledge about the study participants to help researchers determine the most eligible individuals to be included in the research (Tongco, 2007). As a result, the method is more specific and minimizes generalizations that contribute to biases in a study sample (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016; Tongco, 2007). The study was conducted in two private schools; Glory Model School Ibadan and D-way Group of Schools Ibadan in Oyo State, Nigeria. The schools have students from junior

secondary to senior secondary (grades 9 to 12). Private schools were considered for the current study because most of them have teacher motivation initiatives, strategies, and practices that are consistently implemented.

### **Data Collection**

Data was collected using interviews. Interviewing as a method of data collection was chosen because it allowed for the collection of comprehensive and extensive evidence about the leadership behaviors that motivate teachers. Notably, open-ended questions in interviews increase the scope of response to interview questions by participants (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2018; Roulston and Choi, 2018). The open-ended questions allowed study participants to provide more comprehensive and extensive evidence for detailed findings about the perceptions of teachers about leadership behaviors that motivate them. Due to COVID-19 restrictions on one-on-one interactions, the interviews were conducted over a device-based communication app. Three approaches ensured that all the 5 participants provided their responses and views without geographical limitations. Online interviews also allowed the researcher to collect more views within a limited period, given that the interviews were administered concurrently to all participants.

The participants ages of between 25-65 years old were required to participate in the research study. The participants were encouraged to participate in open-ended interviewed via zoom audio recording and duration of approximately one hour.

Table 1 presents the population of the participants and their rank.

**Table 1- Participant Population**

Participants	Total	Rank
Males	3	Classroom Teachers
Females	2	Classroom Teachers

## **Results**

### **Data Analysis Procedures**

Data was collected using interviews. Interviewing as a method of data collection was chosen because it allowed for the collection of comprehensive and extensive evidence about the leadership behaviors that motivate teachers. Notably, open-ended questions in interviews increase the scope of response to interview questions by participants. Three approaches ensured that all the 5 participants provided their responses and views without geographical limitations. Online interviews also allowed the researcher to collect more views within a limited period, given that the interviews were administered concurrently to all participants. All the five participants were given codes from R1 to R5, and they were made to respond to online interview questions.

In the research study, the interview responses were read and assessed for prevalent ideas. The ideas were then grouped and categorized under the emerging common themes for the synthesis of evidence. Notably, the process ensures the identification of the most specific concepts and ideas relating to educational leaders' behaviors that motivate teachers.

## **Conclusions**

Emergent themes from the interview responses included recognition, empowerment and mentorship, respect, coercion and bullying, victimization, responsibility and accountability, and fairness in the workplace. The study reveals that negative leadership behaviors result in teacher

demotivation, underperformance, and diminished commitment by teachers to accomplishing institutional goals. On the other hand, positive behaviors like respect, persuasion, and responsibility and accountability motivate teachers, making them committed to ensuring exemplary performance and fulfillment of other school-based objectives. Therefore, education leaders need to embrace positive behaviors to motivate teachers and meet their institutional goals and objectives.

Respectively, motivation among teachers can be achieved by leaders by embracing fairness, respect, persuasion, recognition, problem-solving, and building confidence. However, under-staffing and under-resourcing hinder teacher motivation by exposing them to strenuous work, contributing to workplace stress and burnout. Therefore, education leaders seeking to motivate teachers have to focus on addressing understaffing and under-resourcing and ensure fairness to motivate teachers.

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## **The Relationship Between Leadership Styles and Employee Job Satisfaction in a Corporate Pharmacy**

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### **Abstract**

This study had 11 leaders and 32 team members from pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, and leadership roles from Michigan that provided data remotely to help understand what leadership styles are most effective in corporate pharmacies. The participants were all personal contacts that the researcher has worked with at a corporate pharmacy level. The demographics showed a majority of Caucasian, female, and pharmacy technicians surveyed for this study. Other demographics were collected with ages ranging for participants from their 20s through their 50s. The collected ethnicities were Caucasian, Hispanic, and Other—a majority of females, some males, and one that chose not to identify. Marital statuses varied from single, married, partner, and widower. Education was the most diverse, with several categories. Various leadership theories were examined, for instance, transformational or authoritative leadership. Other studies uncovered the leadership styles in their organizations and academic importance in pharmacies, but none specified corporate pharmacy leadership. This study utilized a grounded theory qualitative research design showing that there are certain benefits to having servants, coaching, and



democratic leadership to improve employee job satisfaction. Leaders everywhere can build their skills by providing regular feedback, recognizing their team members for their hard work, effectively communicating, and challenging their team members.

*Keywords:* Leadership, Employee Job Satisfaction, Leadership Styles, Corporate Pharmacy, Corporate Leadership

### **Introduction**

In this study, the effect that leadership styles have on employee job satisfaction in a corporate pharmacy is the main focus. One possible contribution to the issue of employee satisfaction is that certain leadership styles are unsuccessful in these endeavors. The study has examined the most effective leadership styles. There has been some research regarding leadership and pharmacies, but a gap exists since there is nothing specific to the effect that leadership styles have on employee satisfaction in the corporate setting. Hall (2014) provided valuable information about the social intelligence of pharmacy leaders quantitatively. The concept of manages ambiguity is an important factor of leadership. Doyen (2020) discussed that this is an essential competency for a leader amidst a crisis. This kind of leader can deal with the uncertainty of change with a practical, calm demeanor. Although understanding emotional-social intelligence with leaders can bring better planning during unprecedented times, that is not the only factor that will provide employees with job satisfaction.

In a similar study, Henry (2019) discussed the importance of leadership styles for employee job satisfaction in massage businesses. The leadership styles focused on were transformational, transactional, and passive leadership quantitatively. The study found a positive relationship between transactional and transformational leadership and job satisfaction. The passive leadership style and job satisfaction had a negative relationship. They stated that factors

contributing to employee job satisfaction is essential to having valuable organizational procedures that improve job satisfaction, employee retention, and company performances.

### **Research Questions**

Main RQ: Do leadership styles affect employee job satisfaction? From that, there will be sub-questions that will be answered through the results.

The sub-questions of the study are:

SQ 1: How does employee job satisfaction affect job performance?

Job performance is viewed in various ways from a leader's perspective on behavior/attitude toward one's work and the productivity they are accomplishing. With this question, the hope is to find if a participant is experiencing high job satisfaction and what their performance is currently.

SQ 2: What are the most common leadership styles present in corporate leadership?

With a group of diverse leadership members in this company, this question would hopefully reveal the common leadership styles of a team.

SQ 3: What are the most effective leadership styles for high productivity amongst team members?

This is a follow-up question to the one above if there are certain leadership styles present on the team, which ones tend to have an output that is significantly more accomplished in terms of productivity measurement.

SQ 4: Does employee job satisfaction affect retention rates of corporate team members?

For this last question, the goal is to uncover why people are leaving. If there is a high retention rate, is it because they are looking for a better role or is it because they are unsatisfied with some aspect of their position/leader.

### **Literature Review**

## **Contextual Background**

There has been some research regarding leadership and pharmacies. However, there is a current gap since nothing specific exists on leadership styles' effect on employee satisfaction in the corporate setting. Dawson (2016) wrote in their dissertation that authentic leadership promotes innovativeness for pharmacists. This can be a helpful resource in the pharmacy for many reasons, but that does not give a full grasp of the leadership skills required to run a pharmacy. Research has provided some insight into understanding that there are positive inclinations toward having an innovative staff. The information found here must provide details that can be expanded upon and better understood for leadership in the corporate pharmacy and potentially other areas. This study explored and examined the gaps in research as to what leadership styles best ensure employees' satisfaction.

In a similar study, Stringer (2006) stated the aim of their study found a positive result for organizations with clear connections between leader and employee can relate to job satisfaction. The findings were an excellent implication that this data is encouraging for finding similar data in the research being studied here. In the following sections of this chapter, the information provided will make the connection between leadership styles and employee job satisfaction in other fields more evident. Although there may be connections between leadership styles and employee job satisfaction in similar contexts, there is no information specific to corporate pharmacies. The following section will discuss the conceptual framework for this research study.

## **Conceptual Framework**

Leadership Theory is an essential concept for this research study. Different leadership styles may cause an increase or decrease in productivity for direct reports. These differing styles may also affect the employee's emotions regarding job satisfaction. In a recent study, Allen et al.

(2016) concentrated on the specific leadership styles of servant leadership and transformational leadership in an academic pharmacy. These leadership styles may be standard for the educational environment but are not extensive enough to establish the exact correlation for a corporate pharmacy.

The employees' leadership styles, productivity, and job satisfaction are considered essential factors. The primary factor being considered for this study is the various leadership styles and the style's effect on employee retention in the pharmaceutical industry. The theory used in this study will be practical leadership. Various leadership theories will be examined, such as transformational or transactional leadership. The view of each theory will be toward understanding the most appropriate option for a leader to provide team members with flexibility and structure that leads to a satisfied employee and a high-performance outcome. A better grasp of the leadership styles most valuable to a team for performance and fulfillment with their work can be used in various circumstances. Not only would this knowledge help other corporate pharmacies, but it could be translated to many leadership fields across the workforce.

## **Methodology**

### **Design of the Study**

The method of design used for this qualitative study is a grounded theory design. One of the questionnaires utilized is a leadership style quiz based on Kurt Lewin's leadership style theory. Goff-Dupont (2022) created the quiz to identify each person's leadership style. This questionnaire provides the leadership style the person taking the quiz identifies as and how they can make improvements based on their answers. The leadership styles available for this assessment are authoritative, coaching, bureaucratic, democratic, transformational, servant, and laissez-faire.

After identifying the types of leadership styles present on the team, the participants that report to these leaders will be given surveys that will be directly linked to the leader but facilitated anonymously. QuestionPro (2021) has a satisfaction survey that can understand and improve staff productivity levels, create better employee retention, and understand the training needs of the participants. Different categories will provide insight into the topics mentioned here. The benefits of this survey are anonymity, honest feedback, improvement in employee information on performance, reduced turnover, and staff members will be more productive.

### **Sample and Population**

There are four males and nine females on the leadership team. The specifics of the number of males and females on the technician team are unknown, but the scale is tipped more heavily toward females. Each of the leaders on the team has at least three years of leadership experience, with some having up to 20 years. There is a large scale of diversity on the team, and everyone is in Michigan. The location is not necessary for the study since the team works remotely, and it will be conducted via the internet. The type of sampling being collected is non-probability sampling since the participants will be recruited in a method that allows for convenience. More specifically, this is purposive sampling. According to McCombes (2022), purposive sampling is used when the researcher has a convenient sample type that uses participants that will help gain specific knowledge about expertise.

Everyone was contacted via phone for initial recruitment and permission to send them emails. Then everyone was contacted via email to secure their participation interest, accept the terms for the informed consent form, and have the survey/questionnaire links sent to them. Data was only collected after gaining approval containing the survey instrument, letter of invitation sent to participants, appropriate informed consent form, and IRB approval. Participants returned

the informed consent form's accepted terms and were provided with the survey/questionnaire links. The informed consent form was obtained, and a copy was returned to the participant before the data was published. They were provided with a copy of the findings to inform how the data is being used. This allowed the participants to recall their data, respecting the rights of human subjects in research.

### **Instrumentation and Data Sources**

The two primary instruments for this study's data collection are a leadership style assessment that will be given to the leaders of the corporate pharmacy department and a satisfaction survey that the technicians of the same department will be asked to complete. One of the questionnaires utilized is a leadership style quiz based on Kurt Lewin's leadership style theory. Goff-Dupont (2022) created the quiz to identify each person's leadership style. This questionnaire provides the leadership style the person taking the quiz identifies as and how they can make improvements based on their answers. The leadership styles available for this assessment are authoritative, coaching, bureaucratic, democratic, transformational, servant, and laissez-faire.

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### **Data Collection**

All participants are personal contacts of the researcher from their connections over their employment history as pharmacy technicians and leaders. This study's technicians, pharmacists, and leaders report to one person. Since the researcher has a relationship with these employees during their time as a leader in the same department, they can identify what technician reports to which leader. Each participant will be contacted through personal contact information such as phone number, email, and social media. The first step was through a phone call to explain the process of the dissertation and start the recruiting. Anyone that informally agreed to the study was sent an email with a recruitment announcement and informed consent form.

The first step in this study was to gather a list of the leaders and assign them a letter; anyone who reports to them would get the letter and a number (i.e., A1, A2). This is strictly to know what leadership style and the connection have come from the results of the technicians. Once the letter/number assignments are made for all team members, the tests will be sent in a way that ensures the questions randomized and cannot be replicated by other team members. The leadership style assessment only needs one copy so that their data can be directly linked to their team for the result of the leadership style. Multiple copies of the employee job satisfaction survey were created and assigned to each letter for the leader they reported. The data will only be viewed anonymously by the researcher for the employee job satisfaction survey. After the study has been completed, they will only be shared with the department manager; as a result to show the connection between the leadership styles and employee job satisfaction. No information of any individual will be shared other than an unidentified conclusion of the data from the results section of this study. Once the study has been conducted, the results have been compiled and analyzed; the data can be summarized for others to view.

The surveys addressed the main research question, does leadership style affect employee job satisfaction in a corporate pharmacy? There will be other questions related to the common leadership styles, retention rate, and productivity/performance of the team members. The employee job satisfaction from QuestionPro (2021) and leadership assessment Goff-Dupont (2022) have been converted from PDFs and online quizzes to Google Forms surveys. The benefits of this survey being converted to an online format are anonymity, the potential for higher completion rates, and easier access to survey results. The Google Forms survey is backed up on the researcher's personal email, which can be accessed from any device but is secure with password protection. The results from Google Forms were converted to Excel spreadsheets and saved on the private device of the researcher. The data was also backed up on a protected flash drive to ensure that the data would not be lost.

## **Results**

### **Research Questions**

With regard to the main research question, leadership styles can affect employee satisfaction. The statements that were made in the responses of those who were not as satisfied clearly indicate that the leader was a significant contributor to that. The other leadership styles from corporate pharmacies had very high satisfaction rates. However, there were not enough styles to make a full comprehensive judgment. One of the participants that reports to a leader with a coaching leadership style responded to the question ‘Overall, how satisfied would you say you are with your leader?’, with the response “I’m not.” There were many more respondents that had responses of satisfied, very satisfied, and mostly satisfied.

**Sub Question 1:** Those not satisfied in their role did not receive recognition or felt communication was as effective as it could be and were not regularly meeting their goals. One of



the positive responses to getting recognition and communication from their leader stated, “Lets me know when I have done a good job and is really good at explaining how to fix it without being aggressive about it”.

**Sub Question 2:** The most common leadership styles in a corporate pharmacy, based on the study's results, were coaching, servant, and democratic leadership styles. The styles listed here are not the full extension of the styles that could be present. Surveying more leaders may have yielded different results.

**Sub Question 3:** Based on the findings from this study, coaching leadership styles assisted the participants in reaching their goals regularly. Majority of the respondents reported to a coaching leadership style. The method of determining this result was to highlight anyone meeting the goals green, close to meeting goal yellow, and not meeting the goal red. The largest variation was for the coaching leadership style with one person that was not meeting their goals [..due to inconsistent feedback], and a few team members that were close to meeting the goal; they were newer and learning the role still. The democratic leadership style has two team members that were meeting their goals. The servant leadership style had a variation of team members that were close to meeting the goal, did not specify if they were meeting just what the goals were, and some that were meeting the goal.

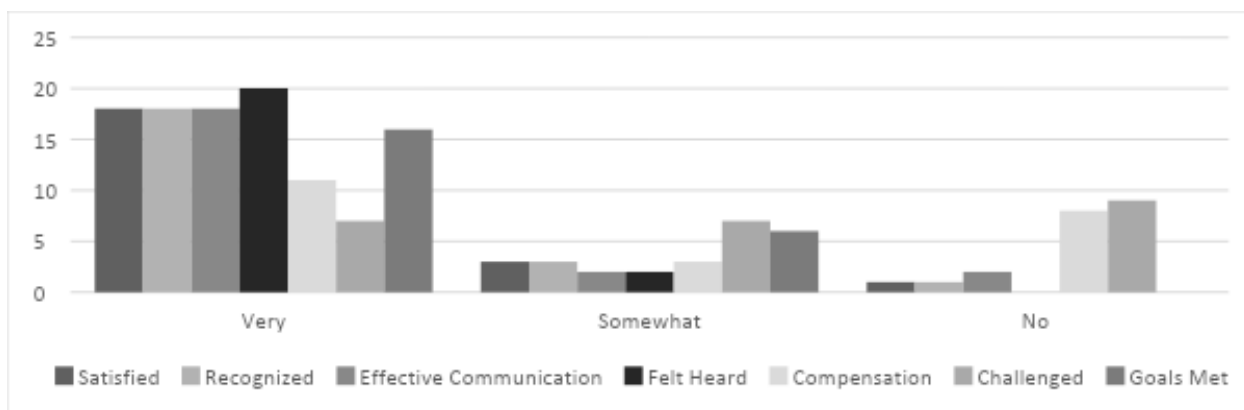
**Sub Question 4:** The data collected was difficult to get a comprehensive view on the retention rate of the department. That is data that the survey was not able to address.

### **Coaching Style Leadership**

The coaching style had the widest variety of answers, majority of team members felt heard, felt recognized in an appropriate amount, and were comfortable with the feedback they were given. However, most team members answered that they were not feeling challenged in

their position and did not receive adequate compensation. As for expectations, the team members discussed that they frequently meet the expected goals, are still learning the position, and a small portion sometimes was able to meet the expected goals. Figure 2 shows the comparison of each of the categories concerning the chosen category that the participant answered.

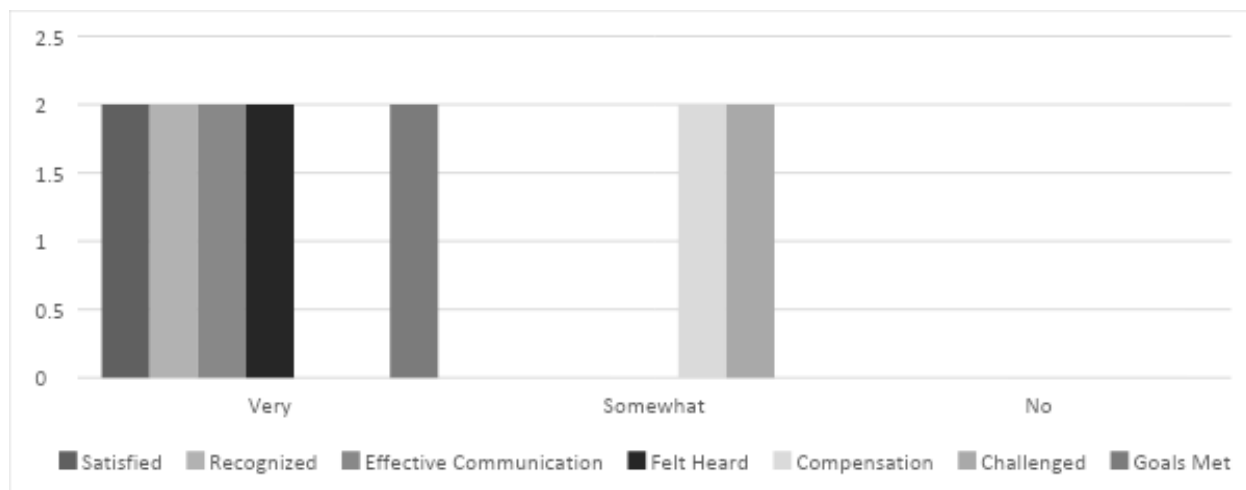
**Figure 2. Coaching Leadership Style**



### Democratic Leadership

Only one team member completed the leadership assessment and identified as a democratic leader. They had resounding employee job satisfaction results of being very satisfied, receiving plenty of feedback and recognition, and were comfortable sharing issues with their leader. The one suggested statement here that was unanimous was that the team members felt that they deserved more compensation to match the cost of living and inflation increases. Figure 3 shows that the majority of the responses were positive. Even though they stated that they would appreciate raises that were fair with inflation, other means kept them satisfied, like overtime opportunities in the past. The participants also mention plenty of opportunities to grow in the company.

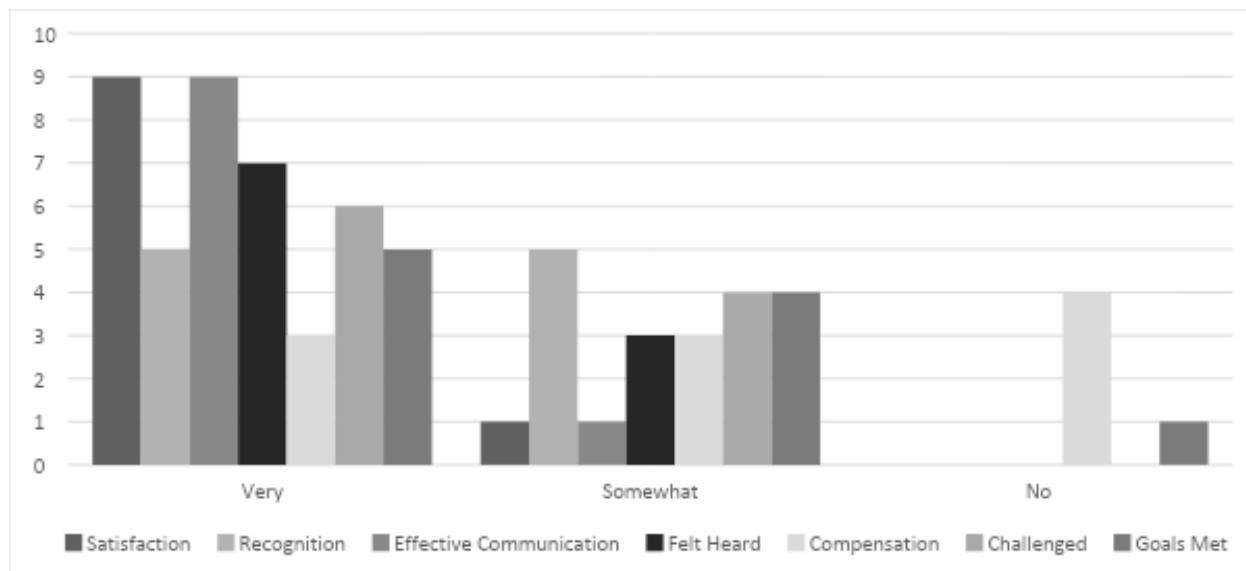
**Figure 3. Democratic Leadership Style**



### Servant Leadership

The team members that answered these questions were a range of pharmacy technicians and supervisors. Most of the team members were generally or very satisfied and felt they were receiving enough coaching feedback. There were some balanced feelings toward receiving or not receiving recognitions, that they were not compensated fairly, that they were meeting the goals they were expected to reach, and that they were or were not challenged in their position. Figure 4 shows that there is much positivity in this style of leadership. There is also an indication that one participant's goals are not met, but that answer was intentionally left blank. Most of the comments revolved around compensation but understood that it was not a result of their direct leadership.

**Figure 4. Servant Leadership Style**



## Conclusions and Recommendations

### Conclusions

The main points from the information discussed in this study are that employees can have varying points of view. The most substantial differences in the leadership styles presented are the recognition or coaching feedback one received, how effective the communication was, and if there was an opportunity to grow or be challenged. The most significant similarities were compensation that the direct leader cannot actively change on their own, the team members meeting their stated goals, and how satisfied they felt with their positions. Even with different leadership styles, there was an agreement that effective communication and feeling comfortable sharing thoughts with their leader were essential to the team member. If they are being recognized for their efforts, it affects the level of satisfaction the team member will have. The one factor not found in this study was the retention rate, considering all team members that participated currently work for a corporate pharmacy.

### Recommendations

There is an opportunity for future research to be done on this specific topic in the future. Not all of the leadership styles that could be present at the corporate level were. Although the study revealed data on what team members preferred to increase their satisfaction, some clarity still needed to be addressed. One factor that should be looked at in the future is the flexibility that a leader should possess. Different employees require qualities from a leader that may result in varying leadership styles with unique situations. In a future study, the leadership qualities should be reviewed to see what leadership styles correspond in those unique situations.

The information could have been done quantitatively to provide more precise answers rather than openly answered questions that created a variety of assumptions. The methodology differing from grounded theory design could have provided more opportunities for the study to collect and analyze the data differently. Lastly, not limiting to the pharmacy sector could have brought about the potential for gathering more leadership styles to compare. During the investigation, areas may have been discovered that are open for investigation but were not addressed in the study because they did not pertain to the focus or scope of the study.

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**Too Stressed for Success? A Mixed-Methods Investigation of Sources  
of Online Adjunct Faculty Stress**

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**Abstract**

The contingent status of online adjunct faculty, coupled with the increased competition for a limited total number of online teaching positions, causes stress for these faculty members. We conducted a sequential mixed-methods study to identify the specific sources of this stress. Part 1 consisted of individual in-depth interviews with 8 volunteer online adjunct faculty members. Based on preliminary findings from these interviews, we disseminated a 30-item rating survey of specific stressors to online adjunct faculty for Part 2 of the study. Descriptive statistical ranking of stress ratings from 62 completed surveys revealed specific stressors in the areas of student readiness, student communications, administrator communications, teaching expectations, and teaching load. Follow-up research can reveal specific concerns regarding student readiness as well as commensurate stressors from administrative perspectives.

*Keywords:* online faculty, student readiness, work stressors

**Introduction**

Adjunct faculty play a critical role in the education of students in the online environment. Adjunct faculty (referred to commonly as ‘adjuncts’) take on the role of instruction, facilitation, one on one meetings, attendance, outreach and other tasks that are all relevant and vital to the success of students and the institution’s ability to maintain student persistence and academic rigor. (Kazarian, 2008) Yet, many adjuncts and remote faculty members find themselves frustrated over micromanagement in an unstable working environment with excessive demands on their time, lack of job stability and a 24x7 on-call mentality, in place of the education model they choose to select as careers and uphold as educators. While these factors alone may not lead to poor job satisfaction, adding additional stressors related to communication styles become too much for some faculty. What has come to be known as the “student as customer” model in higher education arguably impacts adjunct faculty more so than full time faculty in the constant quest to retain students at almost any cost. The adjunct faculty member is often required to take on the role of advisor as well as educator, while ensuring they checked the box of items to do in the courseroom whether they contribute to the education and knowledge of students or not. (Sallustio, 2019)

Adding to this, many adjuncts report being ‘ghosted’, not hearing from their bosses, or being questioned based on data from automated reports or quick student escalation when fair grading resulted in an outcome less than the ‘student as customer’ expected or desired. Those who rock the boat or do not check every box often reported feeling insecure in their jobs or answering to vague manager emails or calls that increased their job-related stress and anxiety tremendously.

While our initial research was motivated by concerns from adjunct faculty members regarding terse communications or vague messages that increased anxiety and job stress, many other elements were uncovered through the discovery and discussion of these obstacles in the

online teaching world. Additional stressors for faculty were identified, including the increased competition for teaching jobs, the contingent status of adjunct faculty, the increased focus on student persistence in programs, poor management communication, lack of collegiality with others in the department leading to general unease (Firencz, 2017), heightened turnover and mass reorganizations, and the need to infer through text based communications what someone is thinking or feeling about their work, bringing its own stress. (Barley & Grodal, 2011).

In spite of all of these issues being identified as sources of problems, stress and lack of satisfactory jobs in the online teaching world, we specifically focus on messaging, after-hours communications, terseness in messages, vague messages and a general sense of worry over “did I do something wrong?” This is a common reported finding among faculty who are looking to change positions or replace work in their teaching loads. (Babb, D, personal communications, September 2022)

### **Research Questions/Hypotheses**

The research questions to be addressed in this study are:

1. What are some of the sources of stress that you experience in your job as an online adjunct professor?
2. How do you respond when your supervisor sends you an email that is terse, short or confusing, such as “contact me”, “email me”, “we need to discuss...” without additional detail?
3. How do you respond when you receive a voice mail from a supervisor asking you to call them back but with no additional detail?
4. How do you respond when you are summoned to a meeting with your supervisor to discuss an evaluation without seeing it beforehand?

## 5. How do you cope with online adjunct job-related stress?

### **Literature Review**

The growth of online education has resulted in many universities relying on adjunct faculty or remote faculty to teach classes and report concerns over students who may not pass courses. Adjunct or part-time faculty provide an important role in educating students, keeping them in their programs (persistence), meeting accreditation guidelines, assessing students and communicating about potential concerns or issues, as well as being tasked with issues like attendance and plagiarism. The satisfaction of workers has a direct impact on customers (students) engaged with their school or college. For this reason, it is important to maximize faculty satisfaction, given its direct impact on the student experience. It is in an academic institution's best interest to build and maintain a team of satisfied workers, including adjunct and remote faculty.

One of the stressors that has been well-documented is the reliance on emails for communication. Barley and Grodal (2011) noted electronic communication in general generates its own amounts of stress due to its 24-hour availability. Supervisors of online faculty do not necessarily work standard business hours and the faculty member may awaken to multiple emails from the university. The very nature of adjunct work means that faculty must work for more than one organization to make up full time work, leading to even more volume of emails and near-constant communications. Butts, Becker, and Boswell (2015) reiterated these effects after-hours communications can have on employees. Nelson, Monson, and Adibifar (2020) discussed the instability of the gig economy for adjunct faculty and while for many people this can be an asset, it can also be a source of stress. Teaching has changed and the focus on the student as customer has modified the demands on faculty members. With the increased competition among schools

and programs and the emphasis on DFWI rates (the number of students who earn D grades, F grades, withdraw or request an incomplete), the faculty member often becomes more of a customer service agent than an educator (Sallustio, 2019). This is added pressure, since faculty members understand their future contracts are contingent in student satisfaction and not necessarily student education.

Firencz (2017) discussed the lack of community among adjunct faculty and how this might generate unease. Employees who are under stress are generally not working to their full potential and are more prone to mistakes. Teaching online often results in the faculty member feeling isolated and without a collegial relationship with his or her peers nor with their supervisors. Communication usually occurs only when there is a problem.

## **Methodology**

### **Sample Studied**

Part 1 of this study consisted of 8 volunteer online adjunct faculty members recruited from Dr. Babb's "Making a Living Teaching Online" Facebook group. Part 2 consisted of 62 volunteer online adjunct faculty members also recruited from Dr. Babb's "Making a Living Teaching Online" Facebook group, as well as from Dr. Babb's and Dr. Minarcine's Facebook pages (Minarcine, 2022).

### **Design of Study**

This study constituted a sequential mixed-methods design methodology. The first part consisted of individual in-depth interviews lasting 30-60 minutes each conducted with eight volunteer subjects. Based on preliminary findings and conclusions, we developed a fixed-choice rating survey disseminated to the above three Facebook sources.

### **Dependent/Independent Variables**

The single dependent variable in both phases of this sequential mixed-methods study was perceived stressors reported by online faculty, in words (spoken interview comments) for Part 1 and rated by survey respondents for Part 2. There was no treatment or subgroup difference testing in this study; therefore, there was no independent variable. The goal of both phases of this mixed-methods study was descriptive: to identify/what are the perceived online adjunct faculty stressors.

### **Instruments Used**

Five open-ended interview questions were posed to the 8 volunteer adjunct faculty members in Part 1 of the study:

- What are some sources of stress that you experience?
- How do you respond when your boss leaves you a voice-mail message asking you to call back but without additional detail?
- How do you respond when your boss sends you an email message asking you to contact them but without additional detail?
- How do you respond when you are summoned to a meeting to discuss your evaluation without seeing the evaluation beforehand?
- How do you cope with stress?

Based on a preliminary analysis of the interview results, we developed a 30-item fixed choice survey asking online adjunct faculty to rate the severity of 30 hypothetical stressors on the following scale:

- Extremely stressful
- Moderately stressful



--Somewhat stressful

--Not at all stressful

### **Datasets Collected**

Emergent themes from the interviews in Part 1 included faculty stressors related to students escalating complaints to supervisors without making a good faith attempt to resolve the issue with their professor as a first step, perceived lack of administrative support regarding student complaints, last-minute requests from supervisors, and feeling anxious when receiving a call-me/e-mail me message from their boss without additional detail until they are able to connect with their supervisor to find out what triggered the outreach to the faculty member. At the same time, we sensed that some interviewees were less than candid about true concerns they experienced, despite assurances of confidentiality in the interviews. We labeled this reaction as “fine-fine-fine” and suspected it occurred because of our use of second person in the interviews (e.g., you, your).

As a result, we subsequently drafted 30 fixed-choice survey items identifying various online faculty stressors and written in third person for subjects to rate. We hoped that depersonalizing the rating items would eliminate the fear of self-disclosure that we sensed in several interviewees.

## **Results**

### **Statistical Analyses**

We added the ratings of ‘extremely stressful’ and ‘moderately stressful’ for each of the 30 survey stressors. Next, we clustered the 30 survey items into the following general stressor constructs based on content similarity of the groups of survey rating items:

--Student Readiness,

- Student Communications,
- Administrator Communications,
- Teaching Load,
- Teaching Expectations.

Finally, we listed the survey items within each of the above clusters in rank order from most to least stressful, based on the sum of “extremely stressful” and “moderately stressful” for each item. Our findings are as follows:

1. Students’ overall lack of readiness to learn online and lack of study skills tied for first place in the Student Readiness Factor (66.13% rated it as extremely or moderately stressful). Students’ primary focus on grades earned and lack of necessary technology skills tied for second place, with 62.9% rating it as stressful.
2. Students automatically escalating complaints to supervisors without giving their professor an opportunity to resolve a concern was the highest rated stress factor within the Student Communications Factor (67.74%). Next was dealing with student excuses for late or non-submitted work (62.30%), followed by disrespectful student communications (56.45%) and unrealistic student response time expectations to emails and phone calls (54.84%).
3. Factor 3, Administrator Communications, yielded the highest stress ratings of all 30 survey items. A total of 82.36% rated administrator perceptions of online adjunct faculty as disposable and easily replaceable as extremely or moderately stressful. The next-highest overall source of stress was no explanation given by faculty supervisors for reduced or no teaching assignment in an upcoming term (80.64%).

4. Factor 4, Teaching Load, yielded related results, with 70.95% of online adjunct faculty who rated having to wait too long to find out what, if any, their teaching load would be for the coming term as stressful. A total of 67.74% of faculty rated not getting their desired total teaching load (number of courses) to teach as extremely or moderately stressful.

5. The final factor, Teaching Expectations, resulted in 75.81% of online adjunct faculty reporting feeling stressed at not having sufficient time to set up their assigned courses for the coming term. A total of 64.52% of these faculty felt stress regarding large class sizes and 56.45% perceived stress from being required to hold live classes.

### **Conclusions**

There is no easy solution to these stressors. Higher education is increasingly relying on adjunct faculty for work as tenured positions are being phased out. Since tenure provides a level of job security, it protects a professor's academic freedom and provides a level of security and stability for colleges and faculty members. The American Association of University Professors has advocated tenure since its inception in 1915, but today only about 20% of faculty members are granted tenure. While tenure is not feasible for schools that are heavily reliant on adjunct faculty, extended contracts could be used to provide an increased level of stability for faculty. Rather than contracting with a faculty member for one course, contracts could be extended for one to three years, thus reducing the financial and psychological uncertainty for the faculty.

Positive communication with faculty would greatly reduce the stress. Ken Blanchard recommended taking time to celebrate the success of employees and focusing on what employees are doing well. This can build a positive culture where faculty feel supported. Conversely, where there is high turnover of supervisors of faculty, the supervisors may not even

encounter the faculty member until something goes wrong. This would require an overhaul of the culture of many work environments. Supervisors should get to know their staff and should take time to understand their unique needs and frustrations. A positive culture where respect is demonstrated will have a significant impact on adjunct faculty stress levels.

Adjunct faculty should be provided with clear and reasonable expectations. This is particularly important since many are working at more than one school. Knowing where to look for important information is a time saver. If the goal is a highly functioning faculty member who is supportive of the college's mission and vision, then the faculty should be empowered to do their best work without the strain of feeling they are disposable and always under a microscope.

There are many areas left to explore in the adjunct faculty and remote faculty work environments. Among them, we seek to understand the time spent by faculty members doing things other than teaching, the impact these potential tasks have on morale, the pay and compensation models provided in light of additional tasks placed on faculty, and the requirement to move to more synchronous sessions as a requirement for faculty (as well as the interest, or lack thereof, of students in an asynchronous digital world). We will continue to explore why faculty choose to leave positions and what they seek in their future employment, what leaders in education need to do to adapt to the changing landscape, and the demands that younger faculty members are placing on the environment to have a fully asynchronous climate that is free from weekend work and a 24x7 environment with little work-life balance.

### **Questions Unanswered and Future Explorations**

Concerns regarding student readiness for online learning emerged as a top stressor for online adjunct faculty. A follow-up survey study to identify the specific aspects of online student readiness and how significant they are to student success is currently in progress.

The preceding five emergent stress factors were identified in a descriptive statistical sense (e.g., summated score ratings arrayed in descending order). A confirmatory factor analysis can be computed and inferentially analyzed to verify if these same five factors emerge statistically based on factor loadings of each of the 30 survey items. Additional research could further pinpoint more specific differences among specific perceived stressors by online adjunct faculty members. For example, would ranges of years of experience of faculty make a difference in what they report as most stressful? Differences related to demographic characteristics of online adjunct faculty could be investigated via multivariate statistics such as discriminant analysis, canonical correlation analysis, or multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA). Finally, a follow-up study of administrator perceptions of their communications with the online adjunct faculty members they supervise would reveal any commonalities or differences in the challenges they perceive in such supervisory activities.

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## Teachers' Perceptions of Combining Social-Emotional Learning and Mindfulness Education to Support Self-Regulation of Students

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### Abstract

The study explored the educational interventions of mindfulness education and social-emotional learning on the self-regulation skills of youth. Learning to self-regulate can improve student outcomes socially, emotionally, and academically. This study was conducted to understand the details involved in improving student self-regulation for youth in kindergarten through eighth grades. A qualitative methodology applying phenomenological design was used in this study to best understand teachers' perceptions regarding the effects of social-emotional learning and mindfulness education on students' self-regulation skills. Eight participants participated in semi-structured interviews to focus on their perspectives of students' self-regulating abilities after participating in the social-emotional and mindfulness programs. The data was transcribed, coded, and analyzed to find meaningful concepts reflecting various aspects of the teachers' perceptions. The study results showed a positive effect of mindfulness education and social-emotional learning on students' self-regulation skills. Additionally, it was found that students used both mindfulness and social-emotional skills when self-regulating. This finding shows the positive effects of combining social-emotional learning with mindfulness education to support students' self-regulation skills.

*Keywords:* mindfulness, social-emotional learning, self-regulation, student



## **Introduction**

This study examines combining social-emotional learning and mindfulness education as a strategy to support self-regulation of students ages 4.5 to 14 years old at a school in Hawaii County, Hawaii. Self-regulation is the ability to manage one's emotions and behavior in any given situation (Rouse, 2021). If youth can build self-regulation skills, it can help them better manage their social, emotional, and academic endeavors (Baumeister et al., 2002; Duckworth & Schoon, 2010; Hoffman et al., 2020).

## **Statement of the Problem**

The problem is that youth who lack self-regulation skills encounter adverse life outcomes because the absence of the ability to self-regulate causes emotional, social, and academic struggles (Baumeister et al., 2002; Duckworth & Schoon, 2010; Hoffman et al., 2020). Learning to self-regulate can improve student outcomes. This study was conducted to understand the details involved in improving student self-regulation for youth in kindergarten through eighth grades at a school in Hawaii County, Hawaii. The students ranged from age 4.5 to 14 years old.

Students who struggle with self-regulation often struggle with academics, peers, and their own well-being (Baumeister et al., 2002; Duckworth & Schoon, 2010; Hoffman et al., 2020). Social-emotional programs that are implemented well have led to significant long-term and short-term results. These results include improved social-emotional skills, higher academic achievement, improved well-being, and reduced negative behaviors (Mahoney et al., 2019). Mindfulness intervention programs have shown success with various psychological conditions caused by a lack of emotional regulation (Guendelman et al., 2017). This study included a combination of social-emotional learning and mindfulness education to find if the combined approach would improve self-regulation skills in students.

The ability to self-regulate can lead to more successful outcomes in life. Individuals who can self-regulate can experience many advantages over those who cannot self-regulate. The benefits come in both task performance and interpersonal relations. Those who cannot self-regulate tend to engage in more high-risk, self-defeating behaviors (Baumeister et al., 2002). Those who can self-regulate are better able to stop and think instead of acting impulsively (Baumeister et al., 2002). This conveys the importance of self-regulation to experience better life outcomes.

### **Research Questions**

The research question in this study was:

RQ: What are Hawaii elementary and middle school teachers' perceptions of the effect of a combined approach of social-emotional learning and mindfulness education on students' self-regulation?

There are two sub-questions in this study. They are:

SQ1: What is Hawaii elementary and middle school teachers' perceptions of the effect of social-emotional learning on the self-regulation of students?

SQ2: What are Hawaii elementary and middle school teachers' perceptions of the effect of mindfulness on the self-regulation of students?

### **Literature Review**

#### **Importance of Self-Regulation**

Self-regulation is an essential factor in both academic and life outcomes. When youth lack self-regulation skills, it can affect their performance and engagement in the school environment and can go on to affect them later in life (Blair & Diamond, 2008; Cambron et al.,

2017; Kwon et al., 2016; McCabe & Frede, 2007; Neuenschwander et al., 2012; Webb et al., 2018). This makes self-regulation a critical skill for youth to learn and apply.

Frédérique et al. (2019) assessed 48 children via an emotional identification task, near-infrared spectroscopy, and a Stroop task. The researchers found that those with self-regulatory abilities had better academic functioning and fewer behavioral issues. This indicates the importance of self-regulatory skills for youth.

### **Social-Emotional Learning and Self-Regulation**

Social-emotional learning is one method that schools use to support self-regulation skills in students. Multiple studies have been carried out to measure the effects of social-emotional learning programs on students (Liman & Tepeli, 2019; Neth et al., 2019; Tur-Porcar et al., 2021). These studies have shown positive outcomes regarding supporting the self-regulation skills of youth. This shows promise for implementing such programs in schools to increase youth self-regulation skills to promote positive school and life outcomes.

Neth et al. (2019) investigated the Strong Kids social-emotional learning program in adolescent school children. The purpose of the study was to evaluate the impact of the Strong Kids program on middle school students who were at risk socially, emotionally, and academically. The students in this program had grades below grade level and exhibited behavioral problems. The students who participated showed increased social-emotional knowledge after participating in the program. The students also showed decreased internalizing symptoms that lead to loneliness and social avoidance. This study is notable because the findings show that at-risk students can benefit from social-emotional learning.

## **Mindfulness and Self-Regulation**

Mindfulness education is another method used in some schools to support the self-regulation skills of youth. Various mindfulness programs that have been implemented in schools have shown positive results in improved self-regulation skills (Jackman et al., 2019; Kemple et al., 2019; Razza et al., 2020; Sheinman et al., 2018; Viglas & Perlman, 2018). These studies suggest that implementing mindfulness programming in schools can lead to improved students' self-regulation skills. This can, in turn, lead to more positive life outcomes for students.

Jackman et al. (2019) conducted a study of the OpenMind Mindfulness Program implemented for preschool children. This study included results of positive improvements in the self-regulation skills of youth after taking part in the mindfulness program. However, the youth in this study were not separated by age. The recommendation for future studies was to ensure mindfulness education is taught to students based on age so it can be taught at appropriate developmental levels. In this study, students remained in their grade levels for classes, which allowed the teacher to offer developmentally appropriate content to teach class.

## **Methodology**

### **Introduction**

A qualitative phenomenological design was used in this study to best understand teachers' perceptions regarding the effects of social-emotional learning and mindfulness education on students' self-regulation skills. Semi-structured interviews were used to focus on the perspectives of teachers. Using open-ended questions allowed for a deeper probe into the effects of these two programs on self-regulation skills and understanding which program, if any, has a more significant impact on students' regulation skills.

## **Design of the Study**

A qualitative approach tends to use observations and interviews. It tends to be a better design for a small sample size. It is generally used for discovering or exploring concepts (Roberts, 2010). The research questions in this study made this an ideal approach.

The research questions were addressed by applying a descriptive phenomenology design. Descriptive phenomenology is used to describe observations or experiences without interpretation, which can help eliminate bias (Reiners, 2012). Descriptive phenomenology can be beneficial in describing teachers' perceptions of students' self-regulating abilities after participating in mindfulness education and social-emotional learning classes.

## **Sample and Population**

The target population used in this study was teachers. This study included a purposeful sample of teachers at the school employing the social-emotional learning and mindfulness education programs. There are eight staff members involved in this study.

This study was conducted at a private school in Hawaii County, Hawaii, with eighty-two students participating in social-emotional learning and mindfulness education programs. Hawaii County has 17 private schools. Due to the number of private schools all employing teachers in various subject areas, it is not likely the teachers involved in the study can be identified through the characteristics described in this study. Additionally, most schools in this county do not publish the number of students, so it would be difficult to determine which school in Hawaii County was involved in this study.

## **Instrumentation and Data Sources**

A set of 12 interview questions was prepared and used as a guide for the participant interviews (Appendix A). The interviews were conducted in person. The location was a school,

and all Covid 19 protocols were followed per school requirements. Following Covid protocols did not impact the interviews. The questions sought to explore teachers' experiences with students who participate in social-emotional learning and mindfulness education courses. The first four questions were asked in a pre-interview at the beginning of the study. These include questions such as asking what teachers' observations are of students' abilities to self-regulate and what social-emotional and mindfulness skills teachers have observed students using and have observed students lacking.

All 12 interview questions were asked in a post-study semi-structured interview to gain a deeper understanding of the observations of teachers with regard to students' self-regulation skills. Some of the post questions asked included: What improvements, if any, did students show in self-regulatory skills after participating in both mindfulness education and social-emotional learning programs? From your perspective, did you see students who improved their self-regulation skills use both mindfulness skills and social-emotional skills?

The questions were posed to participants in an open-ended manner to allow for detailed responses of each participant's perspectives and experiences with students. The interviews were conducted in the privacy of each teacher's classroom. Pre-interviews lasted approximately 10 minutes, and post-interviews lasted about 20 to 30 minutes. The teachers provided consent for the interviews, including consent to be recorded. The recordings were transcribed for accuracy, with every word being recorded and transcribed for accuracy (Corden & Sainsbury, 2006). Once transcribed, the audio recordings were deleted to preserve confidentiality. Once transcribed, significant insights were highlighted and then coded by theme to be analyzed and presented.

## **Data Collection**

Pre-interviews and post-interviews were used to collect data for this study. Twelve interview questions were asked. Four of those questions were asked in the pre-interview, and all 12 questions were asked in the post-interview. Each of the eight participants was interviewed privately and asked the same questions as all other participants.

## **Data Analysis Procedure**

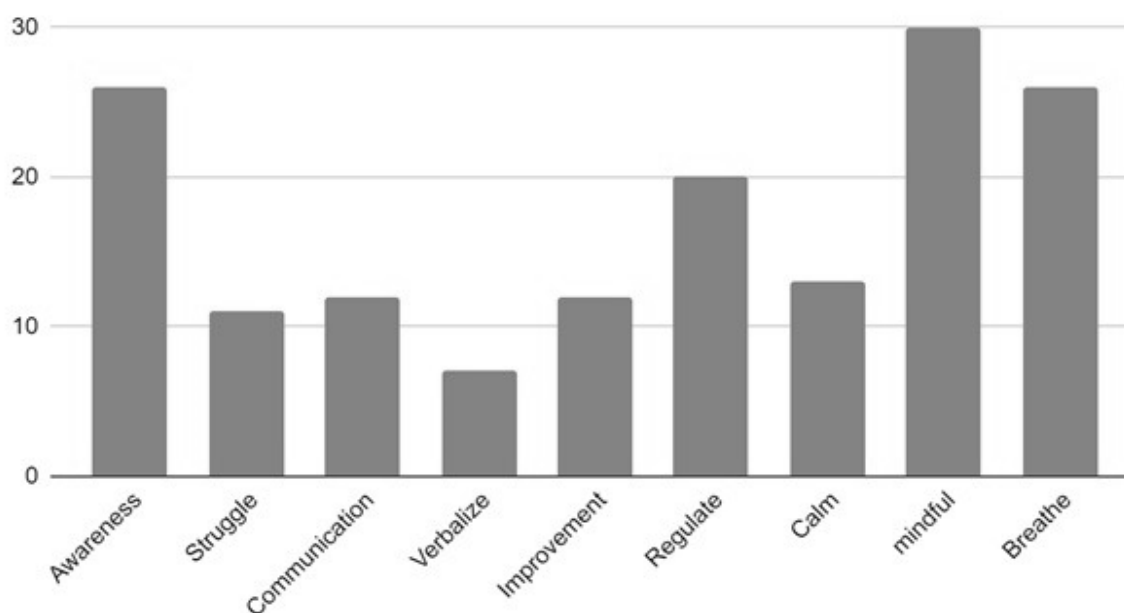
This study was conducted over the span of six weeks. There were pre-interviews and post-interviews of all participants. All interviews were recorded and fully transcribed. Transcriptions were read several times to become familiar with the content. The transcribed data was then coded and separated into themes using Delve Software. The researcher searched for meaningful concepts reflecting various aspects of the teachers' perceptions. These concepts were integrated into a seemingly typical experience of teachers to analyze the effect of social-emotional learning and mindfulness on the self-regulation skills of youth.

## **Results**

Based on the interviews, the most frequent words were coded and then organized into themes using Delve software for qualitative analysis. There were nine most frequent words used that were then coded. These terms included awareness, struggle, communication, verbalize, improvement, regulate, calm, mindful, and breathe.

## **Figure 1**

*Coding Data*



The results showed that teacher perceptions of the effect of a combined approach of social-emotional learning and mindfulness education on students' self-regulation were unanimously positive. Each teacher interviewed reported seeing improvements in students' self-regulation after the six-week mindfulness and social-emotional learning programs. While teachers varied in the outcomes they noticed, they each reported positive effects of student participation in the programs, and they each reported generalized improvement in students' self-regulation.

The themes that came up through the interviews included the self-awareness that improved in students over the course of the study, along with the strong ability students had to breathe to support self-regulation. Breathing was mentioned in most teacher pre-interviews as a strength of students and was mentioned in all teachers' post-interviews. Most teachers said improvements in students' abilities to communicate and verbalize what was going on after participating in social-emotional and mindfulness courses.

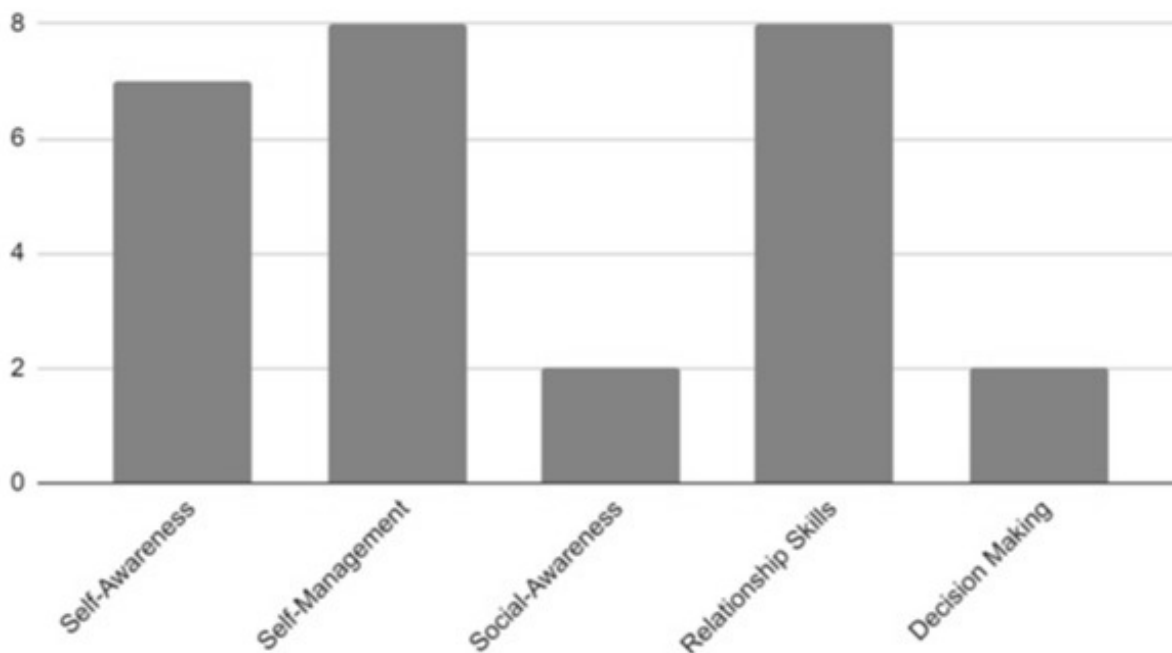
With the five areas of social-emotional learning used in this study based on the CASEL Core 5 Competencies (CASEL, 2020), all eight interviewed teachers saw improvements in



student self-management and relationship skills. Seven of the teachers saw improvements in self-awareness, while only two teachers saw improvements in social awareness or responsible decision making.

**Figure 2**

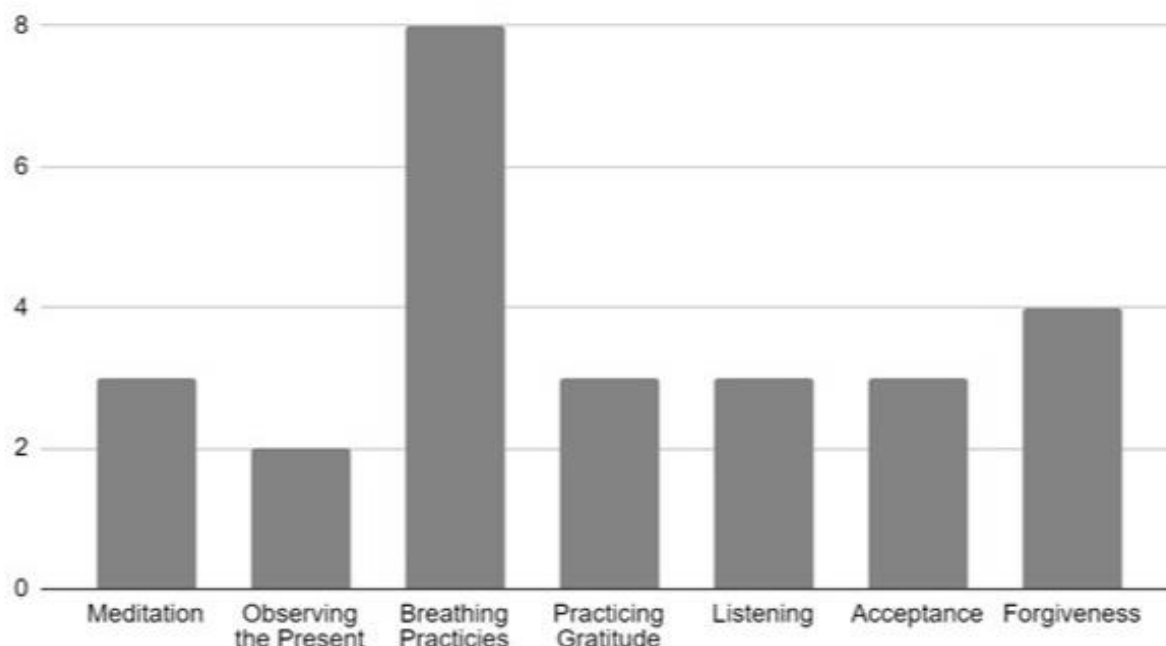
*Social-emotional Learning Outcomes*



Regarding mindfulness outcomes, all eight teachers reported that students who improved their self-regulation skills used mindfulness techniques to do so. All eight teachers reported seeing students use breathing as the primary mindfulness technique. Half of the teachers reported seeing students use forgiveness of others. Three teachers said students use meditation, practicing gratitude, listening, or acceptance. Only two teachers reported seeing students use observing the present.

**Figure 3**

*Mindfulness Outcomes*



With regards to the sub question: What are Hawaii elementary and middle school teachers' perceptions of the effect of social-emotional learning on the self-regulation of students? All teachers interviewed reported that students who improved their self-regulation skills used social-emotional skills. According to the teachers, self-awareness, self-management, and relationship skills were the most used social-emotional skills of students. Four out of eight teachers felt social-emotional learning was more impactful on students' self-regulation skills than mindfulness, and two teachers felt that they were both equally important.

With regards to the sub question: What are Hawaii elementary and middle school teachers' perceptions of the effect of mindfulness on the self-regulation of students? All teachers interviewed reported that students who improved their self-regulation skills used mindfulness skills. The most used skill was breathing. Two out of eight teachers felt that mindfulness education was more impactful than social-emotional learning on students' self-regulation, and two teachers felt they were equally important.

## **Conclusions**

The findings showed an overall improvement in students' self-regulation skills after participation in social-emotional learning and mindfulness education courses. All participants agreed that students improved both their social-emotional skills of self-management skills, and relationship skills and that students all used the mindfulness skill of breathing to self-regulate. All participants stated they observed positive effects on self-regulation due to student participation in social-emotional learning and mindfulness education.

## **Questions Unanswered and Future Explorations**

There is little research on schools that simultaneously employ social-emotional learning programs and mindfulness education. To ensure the results can be repeated, it is recommended to repeat this research at other schools. By conducting further research on this topic, it will lead to credibility and better generalizability of the results. It is also recommended to repeat this study with a larger sample of students and at schools in different geographical areas to support the generalizability of the results.

The teachers who participated in this study all felt that social-emotional learning and mindfulness had a positive effect on the abilities of students to self-regulate. Due to the limitations of the small number of students included in this study, it is recommended that this study be repeated at a larger school to see if teachers still felt that students were using social-emotional skills and mindfulness skills to regulate and if teachers still felt that social-emotional learning and mindfulness education had a positive impact on the self-regulation of students. Additionally, it is recommended to repeat this study at schools in other geographical areas to ensure the generalizability of the study.

### **Other Recommendations**

A recommendation for future studies is to replicate this study at a school that does not currently have any social-emotional learning or mindfulness education. It was noted by several teachers interviewed during the pre-interview that students already showed higher levels of social-emotional and mindfulness abilities than students at other schools where they had previously worked. It would be important for future research to see if these results were repeated by students who were learning these skills for the first time.

In order to ensure results can be generalized, it is recommended that this study be conducted in a quantitative manner. It would be beneficial to conduct a quantitative study to see if the objective, statistical results yield the same outcomes. It is also recommended that this study be conducted as a narrative or partially narrative study to see if the responses are different.

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## **Faculty Attitudes and Perceptions of Academic Dishonesty**

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### **Abstract**

Academic dishonesty is a complex problem that has been around for centuries and still exists today (Stephens et al., 2021; Willis & Alexander, 2019; Wisesa et al., 2019). It is a pandemic that is evolving in colleges and universities globally (Hafsa, 2021; Luck et al., 2021; Seeland, 2020; Turnbull & Pember, 2021; Wolksy & Hamilton, 2020). Many studies have focused on student academic dishonesty, but an area that is not well investigated is Faculty Attitudes and Perceptions of Academic Dishonesty. Faculty members have a significant influence on the students. This research examines how a school of social sciences faculty prevents, detects, and responds to academic violations (Keith, 2018; Stowe, 2017). Prevention is better than detection (Khan et al., 2020; Luck et al., 2021; Peters, 2019; Stowe, 2017). By identifying the gaps, the university can implement systems and procedures to better address academic dishonesty in twenty-first-century higher education.

*Keywords:* faculty attitudes, academic dishonesty

### **Introduction**

Academic dishonesty is a complex problem that has been around for centuries and has continued to evolve over the years. It is a global phenomenon across all cultures and academic disciplines (Beugelsdijk et al., 2017; Khadilkar, 2018; Mittal & Elias, 2016). Many studies have

focused on students' academic dishonesty, motivations, and contextual factors that lead to dishonest behaviors (Alsuwaileh et al., 2016; Hafsa, 2021; Jereb et al., 2018). Student academic dishonesty starts in their formative years when parents are tasked with instilling proper ethical behavior in their children (Willis & Alexander, 2019). It is often a conscious, deliberate act rather than an accidental incident.

Academic dishonesty is often used interchangeably with academic cheating, academic fraud, academic integrity, and academic misconduct. There is no direct translation for academic dishonesty, academic integrity, and plagiarism in some languages. And there is no clear definition of academic dishonesty as it varies between disciplines and institutions.

The U.S.-based International Center for Academic Integrity surveyed seventy-one thousand three hundred undergraduates (McCabe & International Center for Academic Integrity, n.d.). Thirty-nine percent admitted to cheating on tests, sixty-two percent admitted to cheating on written assignments, and sixty-eight percent admitted to written or test cheating. Graduate students were better at seventeen percent, forty percent, and forty-three percent, respectively. Other studies have consistently reported that over two-thirds of college and university students engage in some form of academic dishonesty (Robinson & Glanzer, 2017; Santosa, 2019). The causes include social pressures, getting the grades needed to stay in the academic major, cultural and diversity factors, desire to help friends, extracurricular activities, failure to understand academic conventions, fear of failure, lack of moral obligations, laziness, poor time management, hoping to find a better job, and opportunities for higher wages upon graduation. There are reports that academic dishonesty is rising, and the modus operandi has changed.

Most studies focused on academic dishonesty from the students' perspective and their motivation to cheat (Cahyadi et al., 2021; Stephens et al., 2021). This article focuses on the

faulty perception of academic dishonesty. The dyadic relationship between faculty and students also plays a role in student academic honesty and outcomes students (Lee et al., 2019; Power 2018).

Higher education organizations are held together by a loosely held matrix organizational structure. There is a significant discrepancy in guidance to the subject. Faculty members are an independent and autonomous group with a high degree of academic freedom (Shuh, 2021; Taylor, 2019). Many decisions are made independently. The diversity and academic freedom in higher education also allow them to make independent choices that influence their relationships with the students. Seventy-eight percent of the faculty believes that adequate information and guidance are provided to the students, but only 43% of the students think they do (Stowe, 2017). Each faculty member may have different values, guidelines, operating procedures, and disciplinary actions taken. There is also the concern for escalation to harassment and litigation.

Addressing the problem of academic dishonesty requires change. A better understanding of faculty attitudes and perceptions would allow the university to establish practical professional development activities and help develop effective academic protocols for students to follow. There may be a need to reorganize course content, delivery, new assessment processes, and apply stricter rules in the process. Collaboration between faculty is critical in fostering academic integrity (Shuh, 2021; Taylor, 2019).

### **Research Questions/Hypotheses**

The following research questions will be used in this study.

1. What were the faculty attitudes, perceived prevalence, and experiences of student academic dishonesty at this institution?

2. What tools and methods were used to prevent, monitor and detect student academic dishonesty?
3. What courses of action were taken, and what kinds of penalties or corrective actions were imposed when academic dishonesty was detected?
4. How did demographic factors (faculty position, gender, age, years of teaching, years of teaching at this university, and the number of classes taught per semester) and familiarity with the university's academic honesty policy impact the way academic dishonesty is addressed?

### **Literature Review**

Universities and colleges have policies of academic dishonesty and procedures, but they may lack clarity. Higher education institutions have a loosely organized horizontal and vertical matrix of cross-functional business units. This structure allows the faculty to have a high degree of academic freedom, autonomy, and creative thinking that creates silos of productivity, rather than work towards a broader, more common objective (Dhalvig, 2018; Herfeld, 2018; Robert, 2018, Ruter, 2018; Shauntey, 2020). It also gives faculty members an expansive interpretation and response to academically dishonest behaviors (Shauntey, 2020). This is further complicated by the fact that there is no generally accepted definition of academic dishonesty, and there are differences between different cultures (Alsuwaileh et al., 2016; Hafsa, 2021; Jereb et al., 2018). The advancement of the internet and online learning has given students more opportunities to cheat (Husseinet al., 2020; McKenzie, 2020; Wolksy & Hamilton, 2020). Students can now resort to screenshots and social media to communicate almost instantaneously.

The problem with academic dishonesty is multifaceted (Arshadet al., 2021; Bashir & Bala, 2021). Before digital technology, the issue of student academic dishonesty was limited

mainly to the classrooms. Globalization has allowed students to come together from different parts of the world, but this has also led to different standards and expectations from faculty members (UB Center for Educational Innovation, 2016). Higher education is supposed to impart knowledge and develop morally decent human beings, but universities may have drifted away from these principles and focused more on higher student enrollment and graduation, helping students get credentials, find better jobs, have better careers, and provide a better life for their families (Blachnio, 2019; Dahlvig, 2018; Lin, 2019).

The university's administration, faculty, and students form a vital triad that has a significant impact on student engagement, outcomes, and success. Together, they create a collaborative, holistic environment where academic integrity is embraced and practiced. Universities and colleges can provide better academic honesty training for the students and faculty, upholding the honor code, minimizing the opportunities to cheat, how they respond to cheating, and the appropriate penalties imposed. Faculty have conflicting values and must reconcile these before more effective academic integrity strategies and practices can be developed.

The faculty-student dyad is critical to preventing academic dishonesty (Pelletier, 2021; Randolph-Seng et al., 2016). Faculty must spend time addressing the problem of academic dishonesty, interact with students in a social exchange based on trust, respect, liking, and loyalty (Cropanzano et al., 2017). High-quality relationships between faculty members and students create in-groups, and low-quality relationships produce out-groups. There is a need to discuss the university's academic honesty policy, disciplinary procedures, and consequences (Lin, 2019; Wisesa et al., 2019; Yu et al., 2016). Broeckelman-Post (as cited in Yu et al., 2016) found that when the faculty spend time discussing academic dishonesty, students are "less likely to report

engaging in academic dishonesty incidents” (p. 5). It also hypothesized that universities with high honor codes would significantly affect academic honesty (Williams, 2017; Yu et al., 2016).

Much research focuses on students as the main culprits, but few concentrate on faculty attitudes and perceptions of academic dishonesty. The purpose of this study was to determine the faculty attitudes, perceived prevalence, and experiences of student academic dishonesty at this institution.

The Rational Choice Theory was chosen for this study. The theory was helpful in determining the faculty's preferences in dealing with academic dishonesty, but it cannot accommodate all empirically documented choice patterns, nor does it claim patterns of psychological mechanisms students use.

### **Methodology**

This research will focus on the following: faculty attitudes, perceived prevalence, and experiences of student academic dishonesty at this institution; tools and methods used to prevent, monitor and detect student academic dishonesty; and courses of action taken.

### **Sample Studied**

Convenience sampling was used for this study. One hundred and five faculty members were invited to complete the questionnaire and forty-one responded.

### **Design of the Study**

The Rational Choice Theory was used to investigate faculty expectations, decisions and actions. A quantitative descriptive survey was used for this research (Bruce, 2018; Christensen et al., 2020). This study was non-experimental and used participants that already existed in the natural environment. Convenience sampling is used as a population subset was not required and data could be collected within a short period. SurveyMonkey was convenient to deliver and

administer compared to offline surveys, was easy to learn, and could yield data comparable to face-to-face interviews (Leedy & Ormrod, 2019). The tools and equipment include Institutional Review Board (IRB) applications and approval documents, faculty members' names, invitation letters, instructions to participate, follow-up letters, informed consent, a computer with Windows 10, Microsoft Office, and SurveyMonkey. A descriptive, non-experimental quantitative research was chosen to examine Faculty's Attitudes and Perceptions of Academic Dishonesty (Christensen et al., 2020). Convenience sampling was used because the sample size was small.

Three faculty members were asked to test the survey instrument before the rollout, and the results were used to determine the relationship between the six dependent variables and the independent variables.

The survey was a self-reporting data collection system that asks the participants questions about their opinions and experiences (Bruce, 2018). Self-reporting questionnaires allowed participants to fill out the survey at their convenience and helped elicit responses from the participants. It was not time-consuming and did not require many researchers. The survey instrument has seven sections: Demographics, Faculty Awareness and Familiarity of Academic Dishonesty, Faculty Attitudes, Perceived Prevalence, and Experiences, Prevention, Monitoring and Detection, Penalties, and Decisions. A six-point Likert scale was used to collect the data. The six-point Likert scale was chosen for its accuracy and the lack of a midpoint forced participants to select a position other than remaining neutral. Participation in the survey was voluntary, and the Informed Consent outlined the purpose of the study, the procedures used, and the risks and benefits.

Limitations include the small sample size. The participants were accessible, and self-selection could result in a higher participation rate from faculty members interested in the topic.



This study did not separate undergraduate and graduate faculty and did not examine changes in participants over time. The faculty at this school enjoys tremendous academic freedom. They can use different assessments and evaluations in their classrooms, and the type of academic misconduct may vary depending on the course delivery method.

Internal validity was assessed using backward elimination regression analysis, and the relationship between independent and dependent variables was determined using the other six categories (Williams, 2017). The results might not be transferable to other universities due to academic disciplines, variations in assignments, quizzes, exams, and honor codes.

### **Dependent and Independent Variables**

The dependent and independent variables are listed in Table 1 below.

**Table 1**

*Independent and Dependent Variables*

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables
Position	Awareness and familiarity with academic dishonesty
Age	Faculty's attitudes, perceived prevalence, and
Gender	experiences
Year of teaching at this university?	Prevention
Year of teaching (total)	Monitoring and detection
Number of classes taught per	Penalties
semester	Decisions

### **Instruments Used**

This study was approved under exempted review status as minimal risk was involved. SurveyMonkey was used for data collection. The faculty was invited to participate in the study by e-mail. Included in the e-mail was a link directing the participants to the survey. The data collection process was conducted over three weeks using the upgraded online version of SurveyMonkey. Two follow-up letters were sent to remind the potential participants. Those who participated were offered a copy of the report at the end of the study.

### **Datasets Collected**

The data were tabulated, analyzed and univariate analyses were performed. A backward regression elimination analysis was done using Microsoft Excel (Williams, 2017). The first step in the analysis was to calculate the means and standard deviations of each survey item and then analyze the aggregate total for each category. The second step involved using backward elimination regression analysis to examine the relationship between demographic factors and the dependent variables.

## **Results**

Forty-one of one hundred and five faculty members responded with a response rate of 39.05%. The male-to-female ratio was 43.90% to 56.10%. The age range was normally distributed between twenty-eight to seventy-two with a mean of 50.56 years. The teaching experience has a skewed distribution to the left, ranging from one to forty-five years with an average of 13.90 years and 4.66 years of teaching at this university. Each teaches 2.85 courses per semester on average.

### **Question 1**

The first question was on the faculty attitudes, perceived prevalence, and experiences of student academic dishonesty at this institution.

### **Faculty Attitudes and Perceptions of Student Academic Dishonesty**

A six-point Likert scale was used in this study. There was a general agreement that academic dishonesty affects the morale of faculty members ( $M = 5.34$ ,  $SD = 0.75$ ) and students ( $M = 5.13$ ,  $SD = 1.00$ ). They agreed that equity is affected by students' academic dishonesty ( $M = 5.47$ ,  $SD = 0.72$ ), and cheating will affect the students' future in life ( $M = 5.50$ ,  $SD = 0.84$ ). Most of the faculty knew where to retrieve the university's Policy of Academic Honesty ( $M = 5.15$ ,  $SD = 1.11$ ). The results were slightly lower with where to retrieve the Procedures for Dealing with Acts of Academic Misconduct ( $M = 4.93$ ,  $SD = 1.37$ ). The faculty also indicated that they reviewed all suspected cases of academic dishonesty ( $M = 5.35$ ,  $SD = 0.61$ ). They assigned the penalty, completed a Record of Academic Dishonesty, and forwarded it to the Dean or Office of the Provost ( $M = 5.15$ ,  $SD = 1.13$ ). The rate at which the faculty query the academic misconduct database at the university was slightly lower ( $M = 4.61$ ,  $SD = 1.58$ ), and reporting of suspected cases ( $M = 4.41$ ,  $SD = 1.33$ ).

When asked how they felt their colleagues dealt with student violations; the ratings were lower. For example, their colleagues' vigilance in discovering student academic dishonesty was lower ( $M = 4.53$ ,  $SD = 1.29$ ), reporting suspected cases ( $M = 4.41$ ,  $SD = 1.33$ ), and reporting confirmed incidences ( $M = 4.62$ ,  $SD = 1.33$ ). The faculty was asked if they thought academic dishonesty was taken seriously at this institution, the rating was two to three decimal points lower ( $M = 4.29$ ,  $SD = 1.35$ ) and the severity of the penalties was also lower ( $M = 4.21$ ,  $SD = 1.65$ ). There were some divergence in responses resulted in two peaks and were not visible by examining the means and standard deviations.

### **Faculty's Perceived Prevalence and Experiences of Academic Dishonesty**

The distributions were skewed to the left, suggesting that faculty experiences with academic dishonesty were rare. The highest perceived prevalence was using references and not citing them in papers ( $M = 3.45$ ,  $SD = 1.50$ ). The lowest perceived prevalence was students taking the examination for someone else or having someone else take the test for them ( $M = 2.09$ ,  $SD = 1.50$ ).

Some of the responses had double peaks (a smaller peak on the right), suggesting a divergence in perceived prevalence. For example, cutting and pasting, writing a draft of the assignment and having someone correct the grammar and sentence structure, working on an assignment with others when the instructor asked for individual work, using a private tutor, obtaining exam questions from students who have previously taken the exam, taking screenshots of online exams and passing them on to classmates, all have smaller peaks to the right of the mean. Ten out of forty respondents reported that references were used, but there were no citations in the papers ( $M = 3.45$ ,  $SD = 1.50$ ). The faculty also identified visiting the instructor to influence grades as rare ( $M = 2.27$ ,  $SD = 0.99$ ).

### **Question 2: What tools and methods were used to prevent, monitor and detect student academic dishonesty?**

#### **Tools and Methods Used to Prevent Student Academic Dishonesty**

The participants were asked what tools and methods they used to prevent, monitor and detect student academic dishonesty. The faculty reviews the university's Policy of Academic Honesty on Day 1 of each course ( $M = 4.92$ ,  $SD = 1.83$ ); reviews the procedure used to deal with academic dishonesty on Day 1 ( $M = 3.71$ ,  $SD = 2.09$ ); reviews the violations' penalties were even lower ( $M = 3.75$ ,  $SD = 2.15$ ). There was a very high insistence on using proper American

Psychological Association (APA) citations and references in student assignments ( $M = 5.67$ ,  $SD = 0.97$ ). Most also discussed their views on the importance of honesty and academic integrity with the students ( $M = 5.67$ ,  $SD = 0.97$ ).

The faculty was asked if they reminded students of academic dishonesty before each assignment, quiz, or exam, the responses were much lower at  $M = 3.34$ ,  $SD = 2.04$ ;  $M = 3.24$ ,  $SD = 2.08$ ; and  $M = 3.52$ ,  $SD = 2.12$  respectively. Students were insisted to use American Psychological Association, seventh edition (APA, 7<sup>th</sup> Ed.) in their assignments ( $M = 5.67$ ,  $SD = 0.97$ ). One of the questions asked the faculty if they discussed their view of academic dishonesty with each student ( $M = 5.38$ ,  $SD = 1.35$ ). Most faculty changed their assignments and exams each semester ( $M = 4.30$ ,  $SD = 1.73$ ). Faculty that used tests and exams also used different versions to prevent cheating ( $M = 4.90$ ,  $SD = 1.63$ ). They also monitored the students closely during exams ( $M = 5.47$ ,  $SD = 0.75$ ). When the faculty was asked if students were required to turn on their cameras during online sessions, the rating was low ( $M = 3.32$ ,  $SD = 2.28$ ).

The three responses with the highest means were insisting students use proper citations and references for all assignments, discussing the importance of academic dishonesty, and closely monitoring students during exams. All three means were over 5.0 and with the smallest standard deviations. All the other questions had means in the 3.0 range with standard deviations over 2.0, indicating wide variations in responses.

### **Monitoring and Detecting Student Academic Dishonesty**

The means for the two questions relating to the use of Turnitin, the plagiarism detection software were low. They were ( $M = 3.74$ ,  $SD = 2.20$ ) and ( $M = 3.57$ ,  $SD = 2.25$ ) respectively. There were two peaks, one at each end of the Likert scale. Eleven respondents did not use Turnitin, and thirteen did not use it every time.

The majority of faculty insist on the use of citations as a deterrent to academic dishonesty ( $M = 5.67, SD = 0.92$ ). They were also vigilant in checking all relevant information and discussing the situation with students suspected of academic dishonesty ( $M = 5.59, SD = 1.03$ ). Not all faculty were using the university's academic dishonesty database ( $M = 4.30, SD = 1.87$ ). Most indicated that they use other methods to monitor and detect academic dishonesty, ( $M = 4.85, SD = 1.78$ ). Other methods include using the learning management system in Moodle, tracking IP addresses, scaffolding the lessons and following the writing step-by-step, requiring students to submit their drafts, checking citations and sources, giving in-class assignments, relying on the academic voice, comparing student attendance with their assignments and quizzes, comparing writing styles, comparing the students' oral communication with their written assignments, and conferring with colleagues.

**Question 3: What courses of action were taken, and what kinds of penalties or corrective actions were imposed when academic dishonesty was detected?**

**Actions Taken, Penalties or Corrective Actions Imposed**

The faculty responded immediately to academic dishonesty ( $M = 5.58, SD = 0.68$ ). The students were reprimanded or warned when the violations occurred ( $M = 5.53, SD = 0.82$ ). The type of penalties range from redoing the assignments or retaking a quiz or exam ( $M = 4.47, SD = 1.90$ ), assigning a lower grade ( $M = 4.60, SD = 1.67$ ), or failing the students by giving a grade of zero ( $M = 3.57, SD = 1.91$ ). The faculty were also asked if they impose an appropriate penalty, completing the Record of Academic Dishonesty and submitting the form to the Office of the Provost ( $M = 4.13, SD = 1.95$ ). The last question asked the respondents if they consult the Dean to recommend the appropriate for subsequent offences ( $M = 5.18, SD = 1.36$ ).

***Decision Process in Addressing Academic Dishonesty***

There was variability in confronting students suspected of academic dishonesty ( $M = 2.92$ ,  $SD = 1.53$ ). Insufficient evidence ( $M = 2.03$ ,  $SD = 1.25$ ) and the time required to address the issues were areas of concern ( $M = 2.00$ ,  $SD = 1.57$ ). There was also the fear of administrative support and retaliation.

**Question 4: How did demographic factors (faculty position, gender, age, years of teaching, years of teaching at this university, and the number of classes taught per semester) and familiarity with the university's academic honesty policy impact the way academic dishonesty is addressed?**

The final question analyzed the correlation between the independent variables and the dependent variables. Stepwise Regression Elimination Analysis was performed to understand and assess this relationship and to determine the best predictors for faculty attitudes, perceptions, and how they deal with academic violations ( $p < 0.05$ ) (Williams, 2017). There was a close relationship between classes taught per semester and the dependent variables:

- Awareness and familiarity with academic dishonesty
- Faculty's attitudes, perceived prevalence, and experiences
- Prevention
- Monitoring and detection
- Implementation of penalties

One exception is the dependent variable, the decision process in addressing academic dishonesty, which appears to be age-related ( $p < 0.05$ ).

The findings are consistent with another study which indicated that how the faculty addressed plagiarism is an individual decision independent of their faculty positions (Shuh, 2021; Stowe, 2017; Taylor, 2019). How the independent variable, the number of classes taught

per semester, affects the faculty's attitudes and perceptions of academic dishonesty are worth further investigation. The age of the faculty appears to be a factor in the decision process, and additional studies are needed.

### **Conclusions**

Academic dishonesty has continued to evolve over the centuries and has continued to evolve. The detection of student academic dishonesty has become more complicated, and the likelihood of detection is low. Most studies concentrated on academic dishonesty from the students' perspective and their motivation to cheat. This study focuses on faculty attitudes and perceptions on the subject.

The faculty's awareness of the university's Policy of Academic Honesty and Procedures in Dealing with Acts of Academic Dishonesty at this institution was high. The perceived prevalence and experiences of academic dishonesty appeared low compared to other studies. Most faculty reviewed the university's Policy of Academic Honesty with the students on Day 1 of each course but the practice of reminding students of academic dishonesty before assignments and exams were not used consistently. Most insisted that the students use APA 7 for their assignments. For online classes, the requirement of students to turn on their cameras was low (McKenzie, 2020; Wolksy & Hamilton, 2020). Just over half the faculty uses Turnitin for plagiarism detection. However, they offered other detection methods for academic dishonesty. This faculty was vigilant in proctoring exams but were less diligent in changing assignments, quizzes, and exams between semesters.

Most faculty responded to academic violations promptly but were inconsistent in checking with the Dean or the Office of the Provost for previous violations. Although penalties should commensurate with the infractions, they also vary depending on the faculty members'



rational choices. The perception of colleagues responding to academic dishonesty were lower. The diversity and academic freedom allowed faculty members to make independent choices which contributes to inconsistencies in how academic violations are addressed. There was a divergence in opinion amongst the faculty as to whether or not the penalties were severe enough. Some saw academic dishonesty as an offence while others felt that it should be a learning opportunity.

The stepwise regression elimination analysis did not review any demographic factors that affected the faculty's attitudes and perceptions. A correlation was found between the number of classes taught per semester and the faculty's attitudes and perceptions of academic dishonesty which deserves further investigation.

Academic freedom works well in other areas of the educational system, but addressing academic dishonesty requires a shared vision, commitment, and shared goals. Addressing the problem requires a more structured, more detailed approach to student violations. The university administration, faculty, and students must have greater collaboration (Shuh, 2021; Taylor, 2019). The faculty needs to communicate more, identify the gaps, and find commonalities that they can build on to tackle student academic misconduct. There must be sufficient time allocated to complete the job.

This study addresses student academic dishonesty from the faculty perspective. Additional studies should include student surveys to assess their understanding of academic violations and prevalence.

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## **Grandparents Raising Grandchildren: An Analysis of Post-Secondary Success**

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### **Abstract**

Research shows that necessities may often go unmet for children whose custodial grandparents are raising them. Thus, the lack of unmet needs may lead a grandchild who a grandparent has reared to grow and lead a life of poverty and despair (Young-sik, Hyun-Jun, & Lee, 2018). However, research shows that if accessed early, resources can help young people to avoid pitfalls that may end in a life of hopelessness. This qualitative phenomenology study aims to determine if secondary education students raised by their grandparents will pursue post-secondary education if provided with the resources to do so. This qualitative phenomenology study examined the lived experience of seven participants – two custodial grandparents, four adult grandparent-reared grandchildren, and one staff member of an organization. The hermeneutic phenomenology approach guided the framework of this study. The findings of this study revealed that access to resources played a vital role in grandparent-reared grandchildren's post-secondary educational success. However, the investigator discovered a significant gap between counselors and grandparent-reared students.

*Keywords:* custodial grandparents, resources, post-secondary education

### **Introduction**

Grandparents all over the United States are parenting for the second time for several reasons (Beltran & Cooper, 2018). Over 2.6 million children are being reared in America by grandparents, other loved ones, and close acquaintances with no mother or father (Beltran & Cooper, 2018). As a result, families with a grandparent raising a grandchild are often referred to as grandfamilies. Grandparent caregivers often are in this position because they believe their son or daughter is incapable or reluctant to be their child's caregiver (Gilmore, 2011). Research has revealed that sometimes due to this factor, grandfamilies have several needs and concerns (Youjung, 2017). Youjung maintains that one of the concerns that studies have shown is that grandparents frequently feel helpless in the schools their grandchildren attend. At times, school professionals frequently misconstrue their family circumstances and distinctive needs. Therefore, the needs of their grandchildren may often go unmet. A grandchild's needs going unmet may lead to a grandchild who a grandparent has reared growing and leading a life of poverty and hopelessness (Young-sik, Hyun-Jun, & Lee, 2018). However, in contrast, the theory is that access to post-secondary education resources could help grandparent-reared grandchildren to avoid this fate. A large amount of data indicates that the reason for education is to offer each individual the chance to excel (West, 2013). West maintains that because educational attainment is positively correlated with life achievement, schools play a significant role in the lives of children. Thus, Young-sik et al. contend that if accessed early, resources can help young people to avoid pitfalls that may end in a life of despair.

Studies reveal that if resources are offered early on in school, students are more likely to go on to pursue post-secondary education (Keung & Ho, 2020). However, sometimes there may be a gap in how grandfamilies receive the resources necessary for their grandchildren to succeed. Although there is research concerning grandfamilies and their needs, there has been limited

research regarding grandparents' and their grandchildren's access to post-secondary educational needs. This limitation reveals a gap in the study. The current literature has not thoroughly analyzed the phenomenon of grandparents raising grandchildren and pursuing post-secondary education. Research is needed to comprehend the experience of grandparent-reared grandchildren pursuing post-secondary education and this particular need.

In response to bridging the gap between secondary education and post-secondary education, this qualitative phenomenology study aims to determine two questions:

1. Will secondary education students raised by their grandparents pursue post-secondary education if provided with resources to do so?
2. Will post-secondary education be within their reach if grandchildren are provided specialized college preparatory resources while attending secondary school classes?

This study will utilize case studies from grandfamilies whose grandchildren were raised in Oklahoma and other states to ascertain whether the grandchild(ren) received a post-secondary education and successfully used resources provided by schools and the community. If so, were those resources provided through their grandchild's school or community-based agencies? What were outside resources provided to make a difference in a successful grandchild's choice to further their education after high school? The investigator believes that through the utilization of the Community Mobilization Model and Collective Action Theory the research questions will be answered.

### **Literature Review**

Over the years, grandparents' roles in their grandchildren's lives have varied. One of the biggest phenomena that may explain the increasingly significant roles is grandfamilies. Grandfamily is a term coined to describe a family in a home consisting of a grandparent(s) and

grandchildren where the biological parent is not living in the house and is not the custodial caretaker (Pilkauskas & Dunifon, 2016). The change came in the form of a grandparent-to-custodial grandparent. Since many grandfamilies are created out of emergencies such as mistreatment and abandonment of a child, the biological mother or father being on drugs, the parent losing a job, the death of a parent, military deployment, or incarceration (Peterson, 2018), supported services and resources may be needed. This may be because the grandparent's income may be insufficient to effortlessly assist with the unexpected cost of taking on the primary care (Harnett, Dawe, & Russell, 2014). Thus, although grandparents may wish for their grandchild to pursue post-secondary education, a family's socioeconomic level, especially parental education and household income, have distinctive impacts on children's educational success (Tighe & Davis-Kean, 2021). Unfortunately, for children who have low socioeconomic status, obtaining post-secondary education is less obtainable (Cox, 2016).

Along with this type of family dynamic comes the need for many resources. Research indicates that when grandmothers or grandfathers utilize community and supportive services for their grandfamilies, their grandchildren are more likely to have better outcomes (Shovali, Emerson, & Augusta, 2019). Community support services can entail unofficial and official assistance. Unofficial assistance is when people the family knows, like acquaintances and relatives, help without getting paid, while official aid is when the individuals assisting the family are more than likely getting paid. A lot of the formal services that the grandfamilies receive come in the form of support groups. In addition, formal services may come from the family's long-time doctor, childcare programs, respite programs, mental health agencies, legal aid, foster care programs, and educational seminars (Shovali et al., 2019).

An examination of the educational system coupled with formal supportive services revealed when grandparents are confident in utilizing these services, their grandchild's scholastic performance is much better (Shovali et al., 2019). Adolescent children who reside in homes where grandparents are the primary caretaker frequently are at elevated risk for educational failure. Peterson (2018) suggests if there is no early intervention of services, many grandchildren that attend school have a hard time educationally and continue to be at risk of not completing school with a high school diploma. Thus, findings have indicated that more approaches inside schools to team up with grandfamilies are vital to the success of the academic steppingstone and achievement of grandchildren in school (Peterson, 2018).

### **Methodology**

The phenomenological methodology concentrates on values, experiences, and viewpoints (Anasuri, 2015). As it relates to qualitative research, there are many understandings of phenomenology. Research maintains there is a vital epistemological explanation that connects the reexamination of conceptual frameworks, or there are more non-important understandings of phenomenology (Williams, 2021). As of late, Williams contends it appears as if the description of phenomenology as related to what experiences are like is now occasionally used by qualitative researchers presumedly operating inside the phenomenological theoretical perspective. It is normal to structure qualitative phenomenological research methodology to reveal "what experiences are like." The theory and investigation of 'lived experience' are complicated (Abbott & Wilson, 2015). Thus, this study must examine and synthesizes various methodologies utilized in previous empirical research linked to this study to present the best method.

Phenomenology is a qualitative study investigating a person's lived experiences (Neubauer, Witkop, & Varpio, 2019). Even though many philosophers have helped

phenomenology evolve, many kinds of phenomenology pull mainly from the teachings of Edmund Husserl or Martin Heidegger (Gill, 2020). Gill contends that Husserl took a descriptive approach, whereas Heidegger took an interpretive approach to phenomenology. For this study, Heidegger's interpretive approach was utilized. Martin Heidegger was a learner of Husserl who produced his form of phenomenology that was arguably distinctive regarding substance and method (Sheehan, 2014). Sheehan documented that Heidegger's method encouraged hermeneutic or interpretive phenomenological approaches.

Hermeneutics, also known as interpretative phenomenological exploration, is a qualitative method that seeks to thoroughly analyze individual lived experiences (Smith & Osborn, 2015). Smith and Osborn maintain that this type of qualitative phenomenological analysis creates a description of lived experiences instead of giving readers one suggested by conjectural biases that came along in the past. Further, hermeneutic phenomenology understands that the investigator cannot close off their point of view because they cannot be free of their lifeworld. Alternatively, the investigator's previous experiences and comprehension benefit the investigation. Research contends that the investigator's education and knowledge foundation guided them to contemplate a phenomenon suitable for analysis (Neubauer, Witkop, & Varpio, 2019). Because, as the investigator of this study, I work with grandfamilies and am married to a man his grandmother raised, I believe a qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological study would be the best fit since hermeneutic would entail me as the investigator to work alongside the participants to investigate and cultivate our understanding of the phenomenon of grandparent-reared adult grandchildren who have gone on to pursue post-secondary education and the community resources that may have helped them to do so (Lauterbach, 2018).

## **Design of the Study**

Before starting the collection of research, the investigator must figure out the type of design necessary to answer the research questions. Since this study will analyze if secondary education students raised by their grandparents will pursue post-secondary education if offered the resources, it was decided that case studies would be the best design to analyze this phenomenon. Detailed in nature, a case study explores a specific research question instead of an all-encompassing statistical assessment or broad comparative investigation (University of Southern California, n.d.).

## **Sample and Population**

Utilizing convenience sampling (non-probability sampling frequently used for qualitative study, Stratton, 2021), the target population for this study will be grandfamilies whose grandparents have adult grandchildren that they have raised and who have completed post-secondary education. The grandparents could have been formal or informal caregivers. The population was pulled from the following convenient sample:

- Random individuals whom I met stated that a grandparent had raised them.
- Some were participants whose families were a part of the organization I founded, Grandparents Raising America's Children to Excel (Project GRACE).
- One was a childhood friend's brother, who their grandparents raised.

In addition, the grandparent-reared adult grandchildren have either pursued post-secondary education or are seeking it. Also, as the investigator, I will talk with community agencies to inquire about what resources they provide to grandfamilies now or in the past.

## Instrumentation and Data Sources

The data will be collected from various sources, such as interviews, open-ended questionnaires, and historical documentation. Case study investigation provides investigators with a method by which a phenomenon can be analyzed from several viewpoints inside a bounded framework, permitting the investigator to provide an abundant account of the phenomenon (Taylor & Thomas-Gregory, 2015). Utilizing the instruments above will help to achieve this goal.

## Data Collection

Once participants accept to be a part of the study and informed consent has been obtained, the participants will be contacted to negotiate a time, date, and place for the interviews, which will also include open-ended questions. If participants agree, audio and video tape will be used to record the interviews. The investigator will adhere to the best practices of the Institutional Review Board regarding human subjects as it relates to using audio and videotape recordings during the investigative stages of the research (University of Oregon, n.d.).

## Results

The research questions help to develop codes to create themes to analyze the phenomenon of grandparent-reared grandchildren's pursuit of post-secondary education. Since the number of custodial grandparent caretakers has risen (Stearns & Nadorff, 2020), the need for resources to sustain these families has emerged. Research revealed that access to community resources and supportive services might be essential to grandfamilies' grandchildren becoming self-reliant and productive (Shovali et al., 2019). One specific resource that investigators maintained could be key to the success of grandparent-reared grandchildren growing to become productive adults is access to post-secondary education (Katz & Geiger, 2019). However, history



has shown that the resources needed have not always been readily accessible to grandfamilies (Sampson & Hertlein, 2015). Thus, bridging the resource gap between secondary and post-secondary education is necessary.

In response to bridging the resource gap between secondary and post-secondary schools, this study examined the linkage between grandfamilies and community support and services offering college preparatory resources. Previous research has revealed that school counselors could support school administrators in seizing a chance to link up with grandfamilies and uncover existing and missing resources (Peterson, 2017). This research was consistent with the recurring theme of the participants wishing they would have had more contact with counselors during their secondary school years. In addition, participants wished they could have benefited from existing resources that they later found out about but did not have access to. However, with the assistance of the communities, the Community Mobilization Model, along with the Collection Action Theory, was viewed as the best fit for the theoretical framework of this qualitative phenomenology study. Gram et al. (2019) maintained that collective action theory could permit a fuller perception of how community mobilization interventions get to raised stages of involvement (Gram et al., 2019).

Previous data revealed that education gives individuals a chance to do exceptionally well in life (Owasim et al., 2020). Since studies have shown that grandparent-reared grandchildren are at-risk for academic failure (Peterson, 2017), it stands to reason that offering educational and non-educational resources would be necessary to combat the scholarly demise of this at-risk group of children. Therefore, grandfamilies must be linked to school services to assist these specific students' academic plights (Lee & Blitz, 2016). Since one of the concerns of this study is to examine if grandparent-reared grandchildren are afforded a bridge between secondary

education and post-secondary education, the use of the community mobilization model, which is grounded on community organizations coming together for a common focus, was hypothesized to aid in answering the research questions.

The significance of answering the research questions was vital because grandparent-reared grandchildren who are deemed to be a part of an at-risk population, if offered educational resources, may be less likely to end up in a life of poverty (Owasim et al., 2020) or even worse, indulge in criminal activity as adults (Nordin, 2018; Youth.gov, n.d.). The investigator assumed that if the collective actions of external individuals came together to offer grandparent-reared grandchildren readily available community resources as well as those revealed as being needed as a result of this study, the probability of that child going on to follow through with post-secondary education is probable.

This study interviewed two grandmothers, four adult grandchildren, and one organization. In addition, since one participant worked for an organization discussions took place regarding their work and how their organization can assist grandparent-reared grandchildren and their families. This study revealed that each participant's family benefited from some resource in some way or another, whether direct or indirect. However, only a few participants expressed receiving direct resources for post-secondary education.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The findings of this study revealed that if offered, grandparent-reared grandchildren will utilize specialized college resources provided by the school and the community while attending secondary school. Participants wished they had received more resources from counselors and the administration of schools that pertained to post-secondary education. One participant even conveyed that she attended a magnet school; thus, the school did a great job ensuring she would

be academically prepared for college. However, the resource she wished she had received from counselors is more information on how to be better prepared to deal with a non-diverse atmosphere. She was unaware that the university she had chosen was not ethnically diverse. Therefore, she maintained that although she was inevitably successful, it made it difficult for her to focus wholeheartedly on her studies without added distractions from racially discriminatory behaviors from other students. She maintained that resources on how to cope with this type of dynamic could have helped her immensely. The other participants received college preparatory resources but a minimum at best.

The state of Oklahoma offers a scholarship called Oklahoma's Promise. This scholarship allows eligible Oklahoma students to receive a scholarship for college tuition. According to the organization participant that was interviewed, this particular scholarship has an income guideline attached to it. However, if a grandparent is raising a student and the grandparent has legal custody of the student-grandchild, the income guidelines are waived, and no proof of income is required. One of the participants, from the state of Oklahoma, did not take advantage of this resource because he was unaware of the program. But he did convey that he was a part of a program in middle school where the main aim was to identify students with an aptitude for math and science. As a part of this program, students could take a field trip to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) building once a month to tour different facility areas. He also expressed that he remembered a handful of assemblies where the ASVAB (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery) was talked about, and dually enrolled was discussed. However, no emphasis was put on either. Yet, another participant took classes through a college while in high school. This helped her to go on to complete her chosen profession right after finishing high school. Yet, the most alarming revelation was that one of the participants felt that his high school counselor

*“brought nothing but pain.”* His experience with some of his teachers was positive, but his experience with counselors was less helpful. This participant had experienced what he felt was a form of discrimination because he was told he was not smart enough to be in AP classes with his peers and was made to take regular classes. He had passed the classes just like his counterparts, but his counselor disenrolled him from the AP classes he was taking and enrolled him in classes beneath his learning curve. He maintained that later before graduating, the counselor apologized after realizing that he was smart, if not smarter than his peers. Nevertheless, most participants revealed that they had some form of college preparatory resources that assisted in their pursuit of post-secondary education. Still, some expressed that many resources that could have been extremely helpful were not found until after they had enrolled in college or a technical trade school.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that future research is conducted to improve the probability of grandparent-reared grandchildren pursuing post-secondary education. In addition, the lack of counselor engagement resonated with every participant. Thus, it is recommended that an investigation that includes the counselors be conducted. This way, counselors could add their input on the missing links and gaps they view needing to be bridged together. In addition, more community agency involvement is necessary to help get these resources to counselors. This is supported by previous research (Peterson, 2017) as well as the findings of this study.

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**Black Middle School Teachers' Perceptions of Retention in Low  
Socioeconomic Urban Schools in Virginia: What School Leaders Should Know**

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**Abstract**

Urban education is a new terminology in many public school districts (American Psychological Association, 2021). Many teachers who work in the urban school setting work with low socioeconomic statuses and have more classroom behaviors (A.P.A., 2021). The teachers feel less satisfied within their position and are more likely to leave, which shows that morale is low and teacher turnover is high (A.P.A., 2021). In low socioeconomic schools, students in attendance will benefit from infrequent teacher turnover and stable and experienced teachers (A.P.A., 2021). The purpose of this replication qualitative research study is to “identify Black middle school teachers’ perceptions of retention in low socioeconomic urban schools, identifying reasons why teachers stay at that same school, transfer to another school within the district, or leave the profession in entirety” (Parker, 2014). The challenge for urban schools is how to improve teacher quality and manage retention. The participants in this replication study consists of a sample population of twenty-seven certified novice and veteran Black teachers from urban Title I middle schools located in Virginia. The participants completed a confidential online questionnaire that consisted of eight open-ended questions.

*Keywords:* student retention, teacher perceptions, urban schools

## **Introduction**

Students who typically live in low socioeconomic homes attend low-performing schools. These schools are constantly faced with challenges such as the lack of resources/materials, safety issues, excessive tardiness/absence, increased students with disabilities, exposure to violence in the community, developmental delays from early education, and behavioral challenges (A.P.A., 2021).

There is a growing perception that school districts do not adequately address the needs of public urban schools (Jones, 2016). Many of the problems that the urban schools struggle with are ways to retain highly qualified teachers, the hiring of experienced teachers who can work with the socioeconomic statuses of the students which travel from home to the classroom, and most important, equity and equality in education (Jones, 2016). The factors that are the most influential on the retention of teachers are support from leaders and having a positive school culture, which can be seen as the key to either having success or failure in a low socioeconomic urban middle school (Ingersoll et al., 2019). Therefore, in this replication study investigated by Parker (2014), I aimed to investigate "instructor impression of how the problematic variables of educator groundwork for urban education, urban teacher working conditions, and role and backing of urban administrators can influence teacher retention in a high need, low financial, public urban middle school".

The teacher deficiency is genuine, huge, developing, and more terrible than suspected in the high poverty, low-socioeconomic schools (Garcia & Weiss, 2019). An absence of instructors' harms students, educators, and the state-funded educational system in general (Garcia & Weiss, 2019). The shortfall of satisfactory, qualified instructors' shakiness hurts students' ability to learn

and lessens instructors' reasonability, and high educator turnover devours monetary resources that could be better spent somewhere else within the classroom (Garcia & Weiss, 2019). The educator shortage makes it harder to gather a solid standing for training and professionalizing it, further contributing to instructor deficiency.

This study intended to replicate and expand the research to determine if the same results will occur in low socioeconomic urban middle schools located in Virginia. Parker (2014) used the two sub-questions below to identify the primary factors that can cause low retention in a high-need, low-socioeconomic urban middle school. The central research question was highlighted and created to discover teachers' perceptions of both internal and external factors that impact or that may cause barriers for teacher retention within the school building and district. The following research sub-questions formed the center of the research to identify if there were external factors or internal administrator characteristics that influenced teacher retention within the school building. The sub-questions looked to expand upon the responses given from the central question and delve into specific factors that yield high urban low socioeconomic middle school teacher retention.

### **Central Research Question**

**RQ.** What factors do teachers perceive as a significant impact on teacher retention success?

### **Research Sub-questions**

**SQ1.** What do teachers perceive as factors that impact teacher retention in a low-socioeconomic urban middle school?

**SQ2.** How do teachers perceive the effect of low teacher retention in a low-socioeconomic urban middle school?

## **Literature Review**

The lack of professionally trained teachers with education degrees and teaching certificates affects the students' ability to learn and achieve success in all grade levels and their ability to be productive working citizens beyond their academic careers (Garcia & Weiss, 2019). Secondly, the high teacher turnover rates take up many economic resources because of the need to continuously train teachers when those resources could be deployed in other areas of teacher development (Garcia & Weiss, 2019). Third, the high teacher shortage makes educators struggle to build a strong reputation for teaching and be seen as a vital profession, further perpetuating the teacher shortage (Garcia & Weiss, 2019). It is also important to note that the teacher shortage is not distributed evenly across the different socioeconomic backgrounds in the United States education system, which builds a reputation of providing an equitable education to all students despite their economic levels (Garcia & Weiss, 2019).

The Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA) replaced the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). The ESSA is the federal K-12 education law of the United States, which is more flexible and lays out the expectations of transparency regarding student academic achievement for both communities and the parents. The previous NCLB act was the driving force in developing highly qualified educators to improve academic achievement in the United States. ESSA calls for schools to require states to empower the parents to make the best decision for their children based on reports to provide transparency on the per-pupil expenditures and states listing their lowest-performing schools in the 5%. ESSA also calls for schools to provide transparency in their graduation rates, absenteeism of students, suspensions, teacher qualifications, and many other areas. Similar to the NCLB, the goal of ESSA is to close the achievement gaps of students with disabilities, minority students, low socioeconomic students, and students who are limited English proficiency (L.E.P.). Closing the achievement gap is the

greatest challenge that the United States of America faces due to the lack of a recruitment pool of highly qualified and classroom teachers who are leaders and have excellent classroom management (Learning First Alliance, 2021).

The strategic placement of teachers in low socioeconomic urban middle schools is important because teaching is often discouraging for new teachers who are just entering the field, especially when they have little experience and the students have varying needs (Pareek & Kulshrestha, 2021). As a result, when teachers are not placed in the appropriate teaching positions, especially in the low socioeconomic urban schools that they are skilled in and they lack support from administrators, there is a risk that they will leave the school or the profession because of the overwhelming responsibilities (Parker, 2014). Student achievement continues to fall short each year (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2008). Research shows that 157,000 men and women leave the profession each year, while 232,000 teachers change schools or districts (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2008). The teachers who leave make up about 12% of the total teacher workforce (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2008). Ingersoll (2017) stated, "teaching has become a revolving door in which one-third of all teachers flow and where 90% of all new hires are replacement." Ingersoll (2017) found that 29% of all new teachers leave after just three years, and after five years, 39% leave it altogether, and it varies from school to school, with the baseline being from 5% to 40%. For the past six years, the turnover rate in Virginia has been above 12.7% during the 2017-2018 school year, and the transfer rate was 6% (Virginia Department of Education, 2021).

### **Methodology**

The geographic focus of the study was Virginia, primarily focused on low socioeconomic school communities. The sample target population for this research study was fifty certified

teachers from various teaching content areas, in which twenty-seven of the fifty certified teachers responded to the online questionnaire. Participants in the study were chosen based on two criteria. Participants were required to 1) have a current teaching license 2) currently teach in a low socioeconomic urban school in districts across Virginia. Participants were invited to participate in the interview using an open-access Facebook group, Black Educators Rock, and Black Educators Rock DMV. All participants were educators with at least one year of classroom experience and were currently teaching in low-socioeconomic urban schools located in Virginia.

The qualitative approach collects and employs non-numerical data that were used to interpret meaning from a confidential online questionnaire of a specific and targeted population to identify teacher perceptions regarding teacher retention in a high-need, low-socioeconomic, public urban middle school located in Virginia.

The instrument used in this replication research study was a confidential online questionnaire comprising eight open-ended survey questions for individual participants. The sample population was selected by soliciting all middle teachers through social media who are teaching in low socioeconomic urban schools. The confidential online questionnaire was developed by the original researcher of this replication study and responses were solicited through Google Form, to approximately fifty teachers with only twenty-seven teachers responding.

This qualitative replication research study aimed to identify teacher perceptions regarding teacher retention in a high-need, low-socioeconomic, public urban middle school. In a confidential questionnaire, teachers were asked to share their beliefs regarding the factors that impacted teacher retention and how low teacher retention affected the school (Parker, 2014).

The schools chosen for this study were based on purposeful sampling that was taken from a social media site such as Facebook. Using social media allowed the researcher to have access to a high number of respondents with diverse experiences and diverse backgrounds. The chosen schools for this replication study were derived from a purposeful sample to be taken from The Facebook groups Black Educators Rock (BER) and Black Educators of the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia (DMV).

The instrument used in this replication research study was a confidential online questionnaire comprising eight open-ended survey questions for individual participants (Parker, 2014). Due to the nature of the sampling, the invitation and questionnaire were sent via email to educators once they volunteered to participate in the study via social media sites. The sample population of fifty teachers was selected by soliciting all teachers assigned to middle school campuses via a social media site. This researcher used the original researcher's questions to distribute a confidential online questionnaire using Google Forms to approximately fifty teachers at the middle school campuses across Virginia using Facebook.

The following eight open-ended questions created by Parker (2014) were used to elicit teacher perceptions to answer primary research questions:

1. Did you obtain your teacher certification through a university-based educational degree and certification program or an alternative certification program?
2. How long have you been a certified teacher?
3. How many years have you taught at this school? If you left and returned, please indicate that period and why.
4. Teacher retention is the ability for a school district or school to sustain or increase teacher satisfaction and to meet their needs to remain employed by the school district or



remaining at the same school. Do you believe that teacher retention is a problem in your school? Please explain.

5. How long do you plan to stay at this school? Why?
6. What are the factors that you believe have led to low teacher retention in your school?  
Please explain.
7. How do you perceive that low teacher retention impacts the school? Please be specific in your explanation.
8. What is your perception of the role that campus leadership plays in retaining teachers?  
Please explain.

## **Results**

*What do teachers perceive as factors that impact teacher retention in low-socioeconomic urban middle schools?*

The findings from the online teacher questionnaire revealed that the major factors that impacted teacher retention in low socioeconomic urban middle schools across Virginia were lack of campus leadership appreciation, lack of support, and the high needs of students regarding behaviors and academic interventions.

First, the online questionnaire revealed that 100% of teachers perceived that the lack of teacher appreciation and support by campus leaders were the main factors that impacted teacher retention at their schools. In low socioeconomic urban schools, lower levels of support in mentoring, hiring, and curriculum exist for teachers who work with low-income students than for those who teach high-income students (Johnson, S., Kardos, S., Kauffman, D., Liu, E., & Donaldson, M., 2004). Waddell, 2010 as cited in Parker, 2014 stated that teachers believed that supportive campus leaders help to influence their future decisions on whether or not they want to

remain teaching in a low socioeconomic urban school. The theme that resonated throughout this research is the continued support of campus leaders. Secondly, the online teacher questionnaire reflected that 29% of teachers perceived the lack of support in the growth of teachers was another factor that impacted teacher retention in low socioeconomic urban public schools. (Grissom, 2011 as cited in Parker, 2014) stated that campus leaders and how they effectively support teachers is aligned with high teacher satisfaction and will likely reduce the likelihood that teachers will remain more than a year at a low socioeconomic urban school. It is pertinent that campus leaders support the growth of teachers in challenging schools, which may be an effective strategy for decreasing the high teacher turnover rates in low socioeconomic urban public schools.

Furthermore, it is essential to note that campus leaders in low socioeconomic public schools must be reliable and efficient climate and culture builders and great decision-makers and can provide ongoing professional development for teacher growth (Leithwood, 2007 as cited by Parker 2014). Lastly, the online teacher questionnaire revealed that 64% of teachers perceived that the high needs of students' behaviors and discipline were another factor impacting teacher retention with their schools. (Allensworth, 2012 as cited by Parker, 2014) stated that low socioeconomic urban schools require more extensive work due to serving students who are the most at risk and experiencing higher teacher turnover rates and a smaller chance of consistency in the improvement in instruction. How a teacher safely navigates the classroom and various aspects of students in low socioeconomic schools is a great indicator of how effective that teacher is within the classroom (Haberman, 2005 as cited by Parker, 2014). Often teachers working in low socioeconomic urban schools have a sense of efficacy and are well trained within their content area, the strengths, and weaknesses of their students, and have a great collaboration

with the parents and all stakeholders to help support the success of their students (Haberman, 2005).

*How do teachers perceive the effect of low teacher retention in low -socioeconomic urban middle schools?*

The findings from the online teacher questionnaire revealed that teachers' perceptions of low teacher retention impacted the low socioeconomic, urban middle schools by causing an adverse impact on both the student and community relationships, low school climate, loss of quality instruction, the hiring of inexperienced teachers, and increased need for academic intervention.

First, the online teacher questionnaire reflected that 100% of teachers received that the adverse impact on student and community relationships is a direct result of low teacher retention at their school. (Epstein, 1995 as cited in Holt, 2013) stated that when schools maintain the partnerships between families and communities it can improve the success of the programs in the school and school climate. Hence, when there is success in the school climate, the progress of students in low socioeconomic urban public schools increases along with teacher retention. Secondly, the online teacher questionnaire reflected that 100% of teachers perceived that a low school climate is a result of low teacher retention at their school. (Cohen, Guffey, Higgins-D'Alessandro, and Thapa, 2012 as cited in Parker, 2014) stated that school climate is the quality and character of school life that is identified based on patterns of all school personnel, students', and parents' experience of school life that reflects goals, values, norms, interpersonal relationships, goals, organizational structures, and teaching and learning practices. Thirdly, the online teacher questionnaire reflected that 43% of teachers perceived that the loss of quality instruction is a direct result of low teacher retention at their school. Teacher quality and student achievement are strongly related more than other kinds of educational investment, although it

often is redefined and controversial (Rice, 2003, p. 3). Fourthly, the online teacher questionnaire reflected that 64% of the teachers perceived that the hiring of inexperienced teachers is another direct result of low teacher retention at their school. Unfortunately, new inexperienced teachers are oftentimes placed in the most challenging situations in low socioeconomic urban public schools (Adams & Adams, 2003). To aid in assistance with teacher retention in low socioeconomic urban public schools, campus leaders may offer frequent mentoring (Adams & Adams, 2003). Continuous training sessions throughout the first year can be provided to new teachers in urban districts, while aggressively training mentor teachers and offering support (Adams & Adams, 2003). Campus leaders should also push for better content taught in teacher preparation programs for educators who are planning to work in low socioeconomic urban public school districts (Adams & Adams, 2003). Lastly, the online teacher questionnaire reflected that 50% of the teachers perceived that the increased need for academic intervention is a direct result of low teacher retention at their school. As with many aspects of academic intervention and success, the retention of teachers is a challenge and issue (Knoff, 2009). To be successful academic intervention requires intensive time, planning, commitment, ongoing monitoring, and resources in which is difficult for new teachers and those who are working in low socioeconomic high-needs schools when there is a strong need for teacher mentoring, supportive working environment, positive school climate, and an increase of teacher workload (Knoff, 2009).

### **Conclusion**

Quality teachers who are willing to meet the level of demands in high needs low socioeconomic urban schools are in demand across school districts and those teachers are critical towards students' academic success (Darling-Hammond & Young, 2002). Low-socioeconomic urban public school districts may adequately retain teachers by implementing the following:

1. Using the Human Resources department to create a pool of administrators who are knowledgeable towards the needs of the school personnel, students, and communities in which the high-needs schools service.
2. Longitudinal studies should be performed to identify and access teacher retention trends in Virginia.
3. This current study should be replicated with one school in Virginia on beginning teachers in the current school only.
4. The current study should also be replicated in other schools across the United States to determine if there are similar themes related to teacher retention in low socioeconomic urban schools.
5. Future research should examine teacher mentoring programs across districts.

Teacher quality often focuses on how well educators can meet the needs of students, obtain full teaching licenses, maintain the behaviors in the classroom, and adhere to all standards and procedures of the school. The impact of teacher quality on students helps to determine how well those students will be serviced in the classroom in respect to academics and the social emotional status of each child. Therefore, it is highly important that campus leaders help foster teacher quality through support, ongoing and meaningful professional development to help teachers grow in their content area, and cultural proficiency. It is crucial that teacher training programs prepare educators who are willing to teach in low socioeconomic schools and provide continuous mentoring programs by trained mentors which will to less teacher turnover and higher rates of retention.

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## **What's Going On In The Workplace? The Impact of Quiet Quitting and The Great Resignation in Corporate America**

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### **Abstract**

The Great Resignation and Quiet Quitting marked a shift in the way American workers viewed their careers, taking their power back from employers by leaving their careers in mass numbers. This paper examines the trends of the Great Resignation and Quiet Quitting and its impact on the workplace, focusing on understanding the core reasons that caused individuals to leave their jobs voluntarily. It also looks at the new trend of Remote and Hybrid Work Evolution, which gives employees more freedom and flexibility in getting their work done and managing their work-life balance. Company culture is a key finding in the cause of the Great Resignation and Quiet Quitting.

*Keywords:* great resignation, quiet quitting, remote or hybrid work, company culture

### **The Great Resignation**

The great resignation began in March of 2021 when an unprecedented number of individuals voluntarily decided to leave their careers. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2021) found that the voluntary turnover rate in the U.S. went from 2.3% in 2019 to 3% by the end of

Although there was an average turnover rate of 3% towards the end of the year, there were industries where the great resignation was felt harder. These industries included the accommodations and food services (reaching 6%) and highly skilled professions like healthcare and technology (resignations increased by 4.5%) (Cook, 2021).

The Great Resignation had a major impact on the workplace, as it marked the start of a new era in which employees had more rights and more freedom to pursue their own interests. Employees took their power back from employers by leaving their careers in mass numbers. This shift in the way American workers viewed their careers made it even more important for employers to understand the core reasons that led to the great resignation, so they can better plan for and manage employee retention and satisfaction. Cook (2021) indicated that resignation was:

- Highest among mid-career employees (these are employees from the ages 30 to 45)
- Highest in the healthcare and technology sectors

Knowing the resignation trends throughout 2021 allows employers to take a data-driven approach to address why employees are leaving in the first place. Cook (2021) proposes a three-step process which is to:

- The problem needs to be quantified – both scope and impact. To do this, employers need to know their overall retention rate. After figuring out the retention rate, we need to be able to identify those leaving the workplace voluntarily and those leaving involuntarily (being terminated). When we isolate the voluntary departures, we can then look at their impact on the business. The business should look at what department the individual who left was from, what skillset they possessed that their team did not, and the department's

new workflow without that specific individual in order to understand the impact of them leaving.

- After quantifying the problem, employers need to evaluate the information to understand why so many individuals voluntarily resign. This could include looking at compensation, benefits, work schedule, flexibility (remote/hybrid options available), employee tenure, growth opportunities, and more. This should then be further narrowed down by specific location to understand the trends in each geographical area of the business. By doing this, the employer can identify a weak area and anticipate resignations before they occur.
- Ensure the business has a retention program in place. By now, the business should have quantified the problem and identified the core reasons for the problem as well. Now, programs can be created to address these issues. An example of a retention program would be restructuring compensation and promotion timelines if the length of time to promotion and level of raise was an issue causing people to leave in large numbers.

This three-step approach allows the employer to get ahead of the issue by understanding what is causing it and allowing them the time to address it before it continues.

Although one may think that compensation was a driving force during the Great Resignation, company culture was actually a leading factor in why massive numbers of individuals left their careers. Company culture is important because it sets the tone for how employees interact with each other, how they work together, and how they treat customers. A strong company culture fosters loyalty and trust between employees and helps to create an environment where employees can be productive and successful. A positive company culture encourages innovation and collaboration, which can lead to better business performance in the long run.

Sull et al. (2022) stated, "A toxic corporate culture, for example, is 10.4 times more powerful than compensation in predicting a company's attrition rate compared with its industry" (para. 10). As a toxic culture is a powerful predictor of why individuals leave, it is important to understand what makes up a toxic culture. This includes items like a lack of focus on DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion), not feeling respected at work, and unethical behavior being tolerated (Sull et al., 2022). The Great Resignation helped to create a more balanced and equitable work environment as employees were now taking matters into their own hands. If they did not feel like they were being fairly paid and respected at work in a welcoming environment, they would leave and find an employer who could offer them what they wanted.

Individuals may request a remote or hybrid work schedule to maintain a work-life balance, reduce their commute time, reduce work stress, access more flexible hours, or be able to work from anywhere. Employers usually prefer the traditional schedule of going into the office every day to ensure that employees are available in person for collaboration and communication. In some cases, it is necessary for certain positions, such as customer-facing roles, where in-person interaction is essential.

### **Quiet Quitting**

Quiet quitting is a term used to describe the practice of employees gradually disengaging from their job, or "slipping out the back door," once their shift is over. This can take the form of decreased productivity, missing deadlines, and avoiding social interaction with colleagues. Employees are no longer going above and beyond in their roles and are rather just doing what their job role is from 9 to 5, and not a minute longer. Quiet quitting can have serious implications for an organization, since it can have a negative impact on morale and productivity.

It is important to understand the motivations behind why employees might be engaging in quiet quitting. In some cases, it is a conscious decision to avoid confrontation when leaving a job, and can be an effective way to avoid the difficult conversations that come with resigning. It can also be a sign of employees who are feeling overwhelmed and overworked, and are unable to cope with the demands of their job any longer. The pandemic has highlighted some of the other motivations behind quiet quitting. With many employees now working remotely, and with limited access to their usual support networks, some workers may feel isolated and disconnected from their colleagues and the company as a whole. This can lead to feelings of disengagement, which can manifest in the form of quiet quitting. Employers may also be contributing to the problem by not providing their employees with the necessary resources or support to do their job effectively. A lack of adequate communication, a lack of recognition for their efforts, and a lack of career progression opportunities can all lead to employees feeling unmotivated and disengaged. Research also shows that quiet quitting is also occurring due to bad management or leadership. Zenger and Folkman (2022) stated, "Many people have worked for a manager that moved them toward quiet quitting. This comes from feeling undervalued and unappreciated. It's possible that the managers were biased. Employees' lack of motivation was a reaction to the actions of the manager" (para. 8).

A poll completed by Monster (2023) found the following statistics:

- 96% of employees are either are looking for a new job or plan to
- 66% of employees indicate they would quit their job if required to return to the office without a remote or hybrid work schedule permanenetly
- 60% of employees indicate they are currently quiet quitting or plan on disengaging from work in the near future

These statistics should not come as a shock as employers are rapidly trying to get employees back in the office without thinking about the overall impact on the organization and its employees.

Quiet quitting is a bigger issue than people actually quitting like the Great Resignation. Klotz and Bolino (2022) stated, "A workforce that is willing to go beyond the call of duty is a critical competitive advantage. Jobs can't be fully defined in a job description or contract, so organizations rely on employees to step up to meet extra demands" (para. 2). When an employee does not go above and beyond in their role and decides to stay instead of quit, this puts an extra burden on their team and leadership. An individual who goes above and beyond usually benefits from career progression, wellbeing, and more while the organization benefits from a competitive advantage in the marketplace. The good news is that employers can take steps to address the issue of quiet quitting and create a workplace environment that is conducive to employee engagement.

The first step that employers can take is to ensure that they are providing their employees with the necessary resources and support to do their job effectively. This includes providing employees with access to the right tools and technology, and ensuring that there are adequate processes in place for communication and collaboration. It is also important for employers to provide their employees with the necessary training and development opportunities, and to ensure that there is a clear career progression plan in place.

Employers should also focus on creating a culture of openness and inclusion, where employees feel comfortable speaking up and voicing their opinions. This can be achieved through regular feedback sessions and creating a safe space for employees to express their ideas and concerns. Employers should also make sure that they are providing their employees with

recognition and rewards for their efforts. This could include things like bonuses, promotions, and other forms of recognition. Finally, employers should ensure that they are providing employees with the necessary mental health support and resources. The pandemic has highlighted the importance of mental health in the workplace, and employers should ensure that they are providing their employees with the necessary support and resources to ensure their mental wellbeing.

### **The Remote and Hybrid Work Evolution**

Throughout the Great Resignation in 2021 and Quiet Quitting throughout 2022, employees are placing more value on overall flexibility on how they get their work done. The COVID-19 pandemic proved that for many businesses, employees could be just as productive, if not more, working from their homes rather than going into the office. A poll completed by Gallup in 2022 found that, “Approximately half of the U.S. full-time workforce -- representing about 60 million workers -- report that their current job can be done remotely working from home, at least part of the time” (para 8). From the 2022 Gallup poll, it is clear that employees throughout the U.S. value remote and hybrid work and want it to become the new norm. “Employees largely like where these changes are headed. Currently, nine in 10 remote-capable employees prefer some degree of remote-work flexibility going forward, and six in 10 specifically prefer hybrid work” (para 15).

It's important for employers to recognize what happens if their organization does not support this new way of working. Unfortunately, as long-term remote work on a mass scale are not yet measurable, it will be important to monitor its impact over the coming decade. For employers that require their employees to work onsite when remote work is possible, there is often lower

engagement, lower wellbeing, a higher intent to leave their current company, and higher levels of burnout.

Employees value hybrid and remote work because it gives them more flexibility and control over their work schedules. This allows them to better manage their work-life balance, as they can work from home or anywhere else convenient. Hybrid and remote work also eliminates long commutes, saving time and money. It can also give employees access to better job opportunities that may not be available in their local area. Remote work can help reduce stress since employees are not as tied down to a physical office space.

With all the technology available in our era, having access to many corporate resources at the office is easier than ever. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, technologies that promote virtual collaboration became household names. Technologies such as Microsoft Teams and Zoom were instrumental in the transition, adaptation, and implementation of remote and hybrid work. These allowed for video conferencing, screen sharing, and virtual collaboration to be quickly learned and used by an abruptly misplaced workforce.

### **Company Culture**

As business leaders look to address the core issues that drove the Great Resignation and Quiet Quitting, company culture will be a key area to focus on and improve to retain employees and keep them motivated in their roles. With many employees being forced to quickly adapt to virtual work means, the company culture is no longer confined to a physical address. Companies are faced with new challenges at macro levels to develop a progressive culture that keeps employees engaged across vast geographical commercial and residential locations. The unprecedented times faced by employees and employers call for a restructuring of our thinking



related to company culture. The significant shift to remote and hybrid working conditions is not conducive to building connections and relationships in the workforce. There is a need for new means of growing culture through means of virtual collaboration.

Companies will need to adapt to the new working climates in which many employees have found new comfort. Many families have needed to adapt to the changing circumstances that remote work has brought on for them. Flexibility and understanding will be key characteristics that help to shape new cultural movements. The future sustainable performance of remote and hybrid work long term remains unclear. While flexibility seems to remain positive for those that prefer the virtual landscape, this comes with new challenges of monitoring progress. Virtual company cultures will need to be transparent in their expectations regarding employee performance. This will help to show that they care enough to listen and adapt to employee needs and will also be expecting certain levels of performance. Companies will benefit from finding new cultural initiatives that support the flexibility and efficiency of their workforce.

### **Conclusion**

The Great Resignation and Quiet Quitting have revolutionized how employees view their careers. Employers need to understand why employees leave and create retention programs to address these issues. Company culture is essential and must be taken into consideration when developing these programs, as a toxic culture is a powerful predictor of why individuals leave. Employees also request more flexibility in their work schedule, such as hybrid and remote work, to manage their work-life balance and reduce stress. Understanding the trends of the Great Resignation and Quiet Quitting will help employers to better plan for and drive employee retention and satisfaction.

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**Organizational Knowledge Management Practices Among Ghanaian Enterprises:  
Assessing Knowledge Management Practices In The Service Industry In Accra**

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**Abstract**

Knowledge capital, which was not previously considered part of an organization's overall worth, is considered so now. Many organizations define organizational knowledge based on their organizational focus, so there is no generally accepted framework for managing and adapting it to organizational strategy. The study reviewed J.B. Probst's Practical Knowledge Management Model. This study was premised on the question, “how do the service enterprises in Accra manage their organizational knowledge and its effect on organizational productivity?” This study used a quantitative survey to collect data from 250 participants from 20 service enterprises in Accra. The research examined the creation, acquisition and utilization of knowledge capital, and knowledge and strategy evaluation in Ghanaian enterprises in Accra. The study explored the acquisition, utilization, knowledge capital production and its assessment by the businesses and the extent to which their knowledge capital management strategy were affected by their organizational focus. The findings indicated that the acquisition of knowledge and strategies adopted by the businesses in the city of Accra is influenced by their organizational focus and improve productivity. The findings showed that the enterprises in Accra were using a mix of strategies to manage their organizational knowledge.

*Keywords:* knowledge, organizational focus, organizational knowledge, productivity, knowledge acquisition, utilization, knowledge capital.

### **Introduction**

Knowledge is a fundamental component of the modern economy (Alimehmeti & Prifti, 2017). As a critical resource, knowledge encourages, and even forces change in production across different industries. As a result, organizations invest significant budgets in research and development (R&D) to acquire or develop knowledge fundamental for optimal operations (Doruk, 2022). While knowledge capital may be defined differently based on various contexts and perspectives, all characterizations agree that knowledge, if appropriately harnessed and deployed, has intrinsic value that can provide an organizational competitive advantage. Laperche and Liu (2007) explain knowledge capital as the accumulated knowledge embedded in the enterprise's individuals, machines, technologies, and routines.

The key to an organization's success is creating an environment that supports knowledge creation and application. Thus, acquiring knowledge through recruitment, development, and retaining talent is essential to generating value through innovation. In addition, managers need to know their organization's knowledge capital in size and growth since it is a significant component in providing a competitive edge (Lev, Radhakrishnan, & Evans, 2016; Mudrychova, Berankova, Houska, & Horakova, 2020).

The problem is that there is limited available knowledge on how the service enterprises in Accra are currently managing and how they relate the volume of knowledge to their productivity and organizational focus. Studies regarding how most corporate business entities in Ghana manage and relate their organizational knowledge to productivity as capital offers an opportunity to conduct in-depth research to fill a void in the literature. The limited available data shows that,

the greatest manifestation of knowledge management in Ghana appears to be in the construction sector of the economy (Guribie & Tengan, 2019; Guribie, Tengan, & Kuebutornye, 2018; Hackman, Agyekum, & Smith, 2017), and a majority of the studies focused on knowledge sharing and enablers in the field of construction, the public sector (Ohemeng, 2011), the local governance system (Frimpong, Williams, Akinbobola, Kyeremeh, & Kwarteng, 2018; Boateng & Agyemang, 2015), the industrial sector (Agyemang, Ngulube, & Dube, 2019; Boateng & Tang, 2016), the telecommunication industry (Ofori, Osei, Ato-Mensah, & Affum, 2015), ICT (Ofori-Dwumfuo & Kommey, 2013) and education (Dei & der Walt, 2020; Musa, 2012).

This study however seeks to focus on organizational knowledge management in the non-financial service industry in Ghana. The belief is that exploring knowledge management practices among the selected enterprises in Ghana will call for more research on such practices and will eventually help improve the practices for better management and productivity among such enterprises. In addition, it will help managers properly evaluate the overall worth of their enterprises and attract appropriate investments for their firms.

The research questions and hypotheses arising for this research include the following;

#### Research Questions

RQ1: How do businesses acquire and utilize organizational knowledge to produce capital?

The research question had two sub-questions: RQ1a and RQ1b.

RQ1a- Organizational knowledge acquisition: How do business organizations in Accra acquire organizational knowledge?

RQ1b- Knowledge Utilization and Knowledge Capital: How do business organizations utilize organizational knowledge to produce capital?

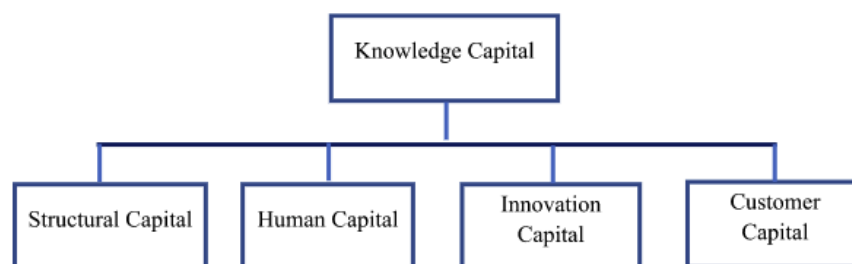
RQ2: To what extent do knowledge capital management strategies adopted by business organizations in Accra relate to their organizational focus?

### **Literature Review**

Although knowledge as an essential resource and as a form of capital is widely accepted has for a long time been absent from most organizations' statements of financial position. This during the 1990s called for researchers to undertake studies into knowledge capital measurements, reporting, and evaluation of its contribution to the overall worth of an organization. Researchers call intellectual capital the capital or the intrinsic value added to an organization's worth. The challenge businesses faced was what to measure and how to measure it. After all, the large of resources that produce value remained largely intangible. This is not only limited to its measure but also the aspect of managing an intangible asset such as knowledge. McIver and Wang (2016) note that a significant challenge is understanding how organizations effectively and efficiently measure and assess knowledge to manage it for value creation."

**Figure 1**

*Definition of Organizational Knowledge Capital*



Structural capital refers to the mechanisms and processes that help employees achieve organizational goals. It includes processes, databases, and infrastructure that enable the organization's human capital to function.

Goldin (2016) states that human capital is the workforce's skill set. Goldin (2016) adds that investments in education grow workforce skills, which 'outweigh the real and opportunity costs of such investments. Innovation capital known as the renewal capabilities of a company in the form of intellectual properties and other intangible assets used to create and introduce new products and services to the market (Camara et al., 2022). Customer capital is the value an organization derives from its customer relationships. According to Duffy (2000), an organization's ability to turn customer relationships into long-term competitive advantages is critical to measuring its performance.

The Probst model for knowledge management incorporates compatibility, problem orientation, comprehensibility, action-oriented, and appropriate instruments following aspects of organizational themes. The intention is to make it as practical as possible. It takes into consideration organizational focus or strategy and operational activities (Probst, 1998). It contains all the knowledge management activities or elements that constitute knowledge management as conceived in all the various models of knowledge management reviewed.

Effective implementation of organizational knowledge sharing and management practices have been evidenced to be associated with positive impacts on the productivity and performance of a company. It has become necessary that organizations position themselves to develop their strategic goals, considering knowledge goals and the knowledge economy. By this, organizations must identify their knowledge assets and how they are placed to achieve their knowledge goals or organizational focus (von MIMOZA-ALLARAJ, 2016).



Prior research all point to the fact that knowledge is essential to superior performance and survival of an organization (Lehtimaki & Lehtimaki, 2016; Beccera-Fernandez & Sabberwarl, 2015). Nwaiwu and Imafidon (2017) add that organizations need efficient knowledge management practices to properly acquire, store, share and utilize knowledge so that the organization can sense the required flexibility and adaptive capacity necessary for their survival.

The problem with knowledge management practices in Ghana is that there is generally little authoritative literature on how Ghanaian enterprises manage knowledge and measure the impact of knowledge activities (Tornam & Mensah, 2018; Alhassan & Nicholas, 2016). By understanding the different dimensions of knowledge and its applicability in Ghanaian settings, enterprises participating in the study may be able to reorient their operations and locate and evaluate their knowledge asset towards productivity.

### **Methodology**

The study was conducted using a quantitative research method for data collection and analysis. The data collection was completed using a quantitative survey method. The choice of quantitative research method was based on the fact that it allows for a larger study to be conducted, involving a greater number of individuals and increasing the generalizability of the results. According to Babbie (2010), the quantitative approach permits increased objectivity and accuracy of the results. Mujis (2010) notes that quantitative methods help generate data summaries supporting broad generalizations about the subject being studied.

The quantitative approach to be adopted was descriptive. This quantitative data collection and analysis approach was beneficial in testing all the hypotheses. The study used ordinal and nominal scales like the Likert rating scale in the instrument design for the data collection. A survey questionnaire was the instrument that was used in the data collection. The survey

questionnaire served as a comprehensive measure of collecting the quantitative data regarding the study and also assisted in measuring the responses using a Likert scale. The survey questionnaire data collection was systematic and relevant to the research questions and the hypotheses.

In testing the hypotheses of this study, correlation analyses were used to test relationships between two variables. The Spearman Correlation Coefficient and Related-Samples Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test were to test the hypotheses. Also, Shapiro-Wilk was used to test for the normality of the data.

The defining aspect of the analyses besides the visuals like pie charts, histograms, bar charts, and line graphs included determination of the central tendency: mean, median, mode; dispersion around the central tendency using standard deviation and range; and distribution of responses through frequency distributions and percentage of responses.

The staff and management of the selected firms shall participate in the study.

The study objectives shall guide the questionnaire in designing the data collection instruments. The main variables to be considered include biodata of the respondents, acquisition and utilization of organizational knowledge, organizational focus of the selected enterprises; knowledge acquisition and its effects on organizational productivity; and the effects of organizational knowledge management strategy on knowledge capital were investigated.

The study considered secondary data from scholarly books, journal articles, magazines, published and unpublished papers, working papers, and some internet sources for literature review and understanding the various assumptions underpinning organizational knowledge management research conduct and the definitional issues in this study.

All secondary data sources for this study were analyzed using content analysis methods. The primary data analysis was done using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and Microsoft Excel software. Questionnaires were serialized, variables thoroughly coded, data properly cleaned, and then imputed into the SPSS for analyses. The relevant frequencies, cross-tabulations, and percentage frequencies generated statistical graphs and charts.

This study uses a quantitative survey to explore organizational knowledge management and measurement among Accra-based Ghanaian service enterprises. Two hundred and ten out of the 250 questionnaires were fully completed and submitted and the data they provided formed the bases for the research.

## Results

The demographic profile of respondents who participated in the research included personnel from service twenty service focused enterprises with 63% who had worked in their industry at least four years. All respondents also held job designations associated directly or indirectly with the service sector. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient was used to test the data for reliability, and for 127 Likert style survey items, the value achieved was 0.958, which is above the recommended 0.700. The respondents were required to show the extent to which their firms gained knowledge through the under-listed source in Table 1 using a Likert scale from 1-Strongly Disagree to 5-Strongly Agree.

**Table 1**  
*Sources of Organizational Knowledge*

	Mean	
	Statistics	Std. Error
Licensing / Copyrights / Patents / Trade Secrets	3.72	0.06
Internal Sources	4.16	0.045
Training / Workshop	4.33	0.053

Records / Books / Publications / Guidelines / Standards	4.29	0.052
Customer Feedback	4.31	0.054
Recruitment	4.02	0.062
Products / Services of Rivals	3.96	0.071
Research & Development	3.72	0.076
External Partners	4.19	0.052
Our Products and Services	4.39	0.046
Lesson learned from Successful Products and Services	4.49	0.046
Lesson learned from failed Products and Services	4.39	0.055
Government rules/regulations/ directives	4.70	0.032

The statistics indicated a grand mean of 4.18 for all the sources, which translated to "Agree" on the Likert Scale. This indicated that the sources were all relevant to the firms' acquiring knowledge. The standard errors of the means from Table 1 were close to zero, which indicated that the sample mean closer to the population mean.

**Table 2**

*The linkage between organizational focus and organizational knowledge sources*

Organizational Knowledge Source- Organizational Focus Linkage	Respondents	Mean		Std.
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Deviation Statistic
@16Q13	210	4.20	0.045	0.65

A mean of 4.20 translated on the Likert Scale as "High," indicating that respondents agree that organizational focus influenced their knowledge sources. Table 7 shows that firms looked for knowledge sources supporting their goals.

From the results shown in Table 8, it was observed that overall, the respondents considered these areas as high since the grand mean was 4.42, which is high (4) on the Likert scale. The highest utilization of knowledge acquired was for decision-making and human capital, which had an individual mean of 4.50.

**Table 3***Areas of Knowledge Utilization*

Areas of Knowledge Utilization	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Mean</b>		<b>Std. Deviation</b>
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
Organizational Focus	210	4.39	0.047	0.685
Innovation Capital	210	4.34	0.055	0.804
Customer Capital	210	4.48	0.043	0.628
Structural Capital	210	4.29	0.067	0.976
Specific Customer Demands	210	4.44	0.050	0.731
Human Capital	210	4.50	0.047	0.687
Decision Making	210	4.50	0.047	0.687

**Hypothesis HP1 Testing: Correlation Between Acquisition of Knowledge and****Organizational Productivity**

The question then brings into focus the study's first hypothesis, which seeks to find if there is any correlation between knowledge acquisition and organizational productivity within firms in Accra. In testing this hypothesis, a nonparametric test was used to undertake test HP1 because the data was not normally distributed, as shown in Table 4, and there were outliers in the variable "Differences of Means" Kim (2015).

A test for normality using the Shapiro-Wilk test produced a p-value ( $p=0.001$ ) that was less than the alpha value of 0.05. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis that data is normally distributed and conclude that the computed variable, Differences of Means (Post and Pre - Acquisition of organizational knowledge) data is not normally distributed.

**Table 4***Tests of Normality*

	<b>Test Statistic (W)</b>	<b>Degree Freedom (Df)</b>	<b>of Significance Level (P)</b>
Differences of Means (Post and Pre-Acquisition)	0.971	210	<.001

*Note. A Shapiro-Wilk test showed a significant departure from normality,  $W(210)=0.971$ ,  $p=0.001$*

**Table 5***Descriptive Statistics for Nonparametric for HP10*

	N	Mean	Std Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	Percentiles		
						25th	50th (Median)	75th
Post-Acquisition Productivity Level	210	4.5	0.419	4	5	4.09	4.55	4.91
Pre-Acquisition Productivity Level	210	1.86	0.274	1	3	1.64	1.91	2.09

**Table 6**  
*Ranks Test on Knowledge Acquisition*

	N	Mean Rank	Sum Ranks	of
(Post-Acquisition Productivity Level) - (Pre-Acquisition Productivity Level)	0 <sup>a</sup>	.00	.00	
Negative Ranks				
Positive Ranks	210 <sup>b</sup>	105.50	22155.00	
Ties	0 <sup>c</sup>			
Total	210			

*Note. a. Post-Acquisition Productivity Level < Pre -Acquisition Productivity Level*  
*b. Post-Acquisition Productivity Level > Pre- Acquisition Productivity Level*  
*c. Post-Acquisition Productivity Level = Pre- Acquisition Productivity Level*

**Table 7**  
*Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test Statistics a*

	Post-Acquisition Productivity Level - Pre-Acquisition Productivity Level
Z	-12.574 <sup>b</sup>
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001

**Table 8**  
*Hypothesis HP10 Test Summary*

Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig. <sup>a,b</sup>	Decision
The median difference between Post Acquisition Productivity Level and the Pre-Acquisition Productivity Level equals 0.	Related-Samples Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.

**Table 9**  
*The extent to which knowledge capital management strategies adopted by business organizations in Accra are related to their organizational focus*

				<b>Knowledge Capital Strategy</b>	<b>Organizational Focus</b>
Spearman's rho	Knowledge Management Strategy	Capital	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.415
			Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
			N	210	210
	Organizational Focus		Correlation Coefficient	.415	1.000
			Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	
			N	210	210

The Spearman rank correlation testing in Table 9 showed a p-value of 0.001, which is less than the significant level,  $\alpha=0.05$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. The conclusion was that at  $\alpha=0.05$ , the Spearman correlation coefficient  $\rho = 0.415$  is statistically significant; there is therefore enough evidence to suggest that a moderately positive relationship between organizational focus and Knowledge of Capital Management Strategy. Accordingly, a shift in organizational focus is likely to cause a change in Knowledge Capital Management Strategy in the same direction.

### Conclusions

The findings from this study indicated that the service industry sources its organizational knowledge from government regulations and the passage of new laws or rules and directives for the businesses involved. These ranked very high in the data collected. Other sources of knowledge that the firms indicated they used included feedback, training, recruitment, internal sources (knowledge developed internally), and external partners. Feedback included lessons learned (from their Products and Services, customer feedback, lessons learned from Successful Products and Services, and lessons learned from failed Products and Services). Crespi, Criscuolo, Haskel, and Slaughter (2008) noted that an increase in knowledge might be ascribed to primary sources, namely investment in new knowledge within the firm; (ii) use of existing knowledge

from within the firm, and (iii) use of knowledge from outside the firm. The findings in this study agree with Crespi et al. (2008), although the sources in my research went further.

It was noted that the organizational focus highly influences the choice of knowledge sources by the firms. According to Probst (1998), identifying knowledge aligned with the organizational focus should eventually lead to creating a knowledge map that supports the organization's knowledge. The firms participating in the study indicated that their organizational focus guides their sourcing knowledge. Their organizational focus was a filter in determining which sources and their related content are relevant to business and competition. This, according to Choo (2002), allows an organization to focus on how information is chosen and how an organization uses it and informs the action of the organization (Dalkir, 2011) through sense-making, knowledge creation, and decision making (Husain & Ermine, 2021).

The findings showed a statistically significant positive relationship between the knowledge capital management strategies and organizational focus. This means that when an organization changes its focus, its strategy will likely change in the same direction. The findings also indicated that the alignment of knowledge capital management is based on factors such as the flexibility of such strategy to allow managers to have their approach for understanding and selecting experts to meet the needs of their unit or department and that such strategy should be stakeholder as well as allowing comparison with knowledge asset of successful companies within the same industry.

It is recommended that managers should pay particular attention to their firm's existing internal knowledge asset when contemplating new knowledge acquisition and how they can harness such capabilities in achieving the organizational focus. In addition, managers should contemplate how new knowledge will be verified in light of the organizational focus.



It is recommended that enterprises in the service sector in Ghana establish a comprehensive knowledge management information system or database where customer and business analytics can be used to compare internal organizational performance with current market and customer expectations (Kane, 2017). This will improve knowledge application, acquisition, and utilization processes.

Managers should have knowledge of the goals of knowledge management concerning the organizational focus, stakeholders, and employees. This will give the manager an idea of managing the knowledge resources. Typically, a manager should decide whether the purpose of the management is for value communication or value management. By this, the manager can determine the knowledge asset assessment strategies that will be incorporated into the knowledge management framework.

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**The Problem of Police Suicide from an International Perspective:  
Multiple Case Studies**

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**Abstract**

Police suicide is a major problem and there is a gap in the literature on this important topic. This study examined the underlying problems and causes of police suicides from an international perspective in Colombia, South America, Belize, Central America, and the United States. Suicides among the police have been at higher rates than the general public, and this qualitative multiple case study will explore factors that contribute to this phenomenon. The study was guided by research questions that discovered why the police population are at risk of suicide at rates higher than the general public, specific factors about policing that make officers more susceptible to this problem, and what can be done to mitigate the problem of police stress. A review of the literature was conducted to determine what is known about police suicide. Further contributions to research will be gained through collecting data to answer the research questions

from police leadership in the United States, Central America, and South America. This will provide a robust view into the problem of police suicide from an international approach. Data was analyzed through the lens of Agnew's General Strain Theory. Findings provided a deeper understanding of the problem of police suicide and what can be done to mitigate this international problem. The themes that emerged from this study that answered the research questions included job-related stressors, lack of mental health services, substance abuse, access to firearms, the need for mental health and stress management, and programs to help officers manage stress.

*Keywords:* police suicide, job stressors, stress management

### **Introduction**

Suicides in the law enforcement profession is a problem in the United States and globally. This qualitative case study examined the problem of police suicide in Colombia, Belize, and the United States. Data were collected and analyzed that answered the research questions. The research questions that guided the study were why is the police population at a higher risk of suicide compared to the general public? What are specific factors associated with policing that makes officers more susceptible to the problem of police suicide? What can be done to mitigate the threat of police suicide to reduce its occurrence? Thematic analysis was applied to the participant data and the following themes emerged to answer the research questions.

In Colombia, stressors that may lead to police suicide include sociopolitical conflicts, deteriorated security conditions, frequency of armed confrontations, and being stationed away from the officers' families (Castillo, 2009). In the United States, law enforcement officers have a 54% increased risk of suicide compared to civilians (Violanti & Steege, 2021). This is especially true for detectives, which have the responsibility to interview victims, process violent crime



scenes, and are exposed to trauma through investigations beyond patrol officers. As such, detectives represent a 64% high risk of suicide compared to workers in other fields (Violanti & Steege, 2021). Belize has also experienced an increase in police suicides.

The general strain theory was the theoretical framework used in this study. Below are the themes that answered each research question.

**Table 1**

Research Questions	Themes
Q1. Why is the police population at a higher risk of suicide compared to the general public?	1. Job-related stressors 2. Lack of mental health services
RQ2. What are specific factors associated with policing that makes officers more susceptible to the problem of police suicide?	3. Substance abuse in policing 4. Access to firearms 5. Focus on mental health and stress in policing
RQ3. What can be done to mitigate the threat of police suicide to reduce its occurrence?	6. Programs to help with police stress

In the United States, a lack of organizational support, experiencing traumatic events, shift work, the stigmas for seeking mental health counseling, problems in domestic relationships, and

alcohol contribute to police suicide (Violanti et al., 2019). Conversely, in Colombia, stressors that lead to police suicide include ambushes, being kidnapped, being attacked with explosives or firearms, violent armed confrontations, armed conflict among insurgency groups, and PTSD (Castillo, 2009).

### **Literature Review**

Extant literature exists on the problem of police suicide. This review of literature will provide a deeper understanding of the problem of police suicides, based on what is known in the literature.

#### **Police Suicides**

In Colombia, there is an urgent need to examine the problem of suicide among officers in the National Police of Colombia (Castillo, 2009). Officers are at risk of mental health problems in Colombia more than the general public and there is a much higher rate of suicide in the police population in Colombia compared to the general public (Castillo, 2009). Also similar to the United States, the vast majority of police officers in Colombia who committed suicide did not receive mental health services and there is a common nexus to substance abuse in the officers that commit suicide (Castillo, 2009).

#### **General Strain Theory**

The theoretical framework used in this study was Agnew's General Strain Theory. Agnew's general strain theory is appropriate for a study on police stress as the theory provides a nexus between stress and strain leading to negative outcomes (Menard & Arter, 2013; Yun & Lee, 2015). The tenants of the general strain theory include (a) loss of stimuli that is positively valued, (b) strain related to failing to achieve goals, and (c) strain based on stimuli that is negatively valued (Menard & Arter, 2013).

## **Stress**

A survey by Mills et al. (2020) found that law enforcement's repeated exposure to trauma and dangers created an environment of officers are more likely to experience suicidal thoughts. Mills et al. found that law enforcement who experienced traumatic reactions in three of five incidents were two times more likely to have suicidal thoughts. There is a reluctance to seek help by law enforcement officers who experience suicidal thoughts because of agency cultural barriers, such as work status changes and future advancement opportunities, as well as fear of stigmatization and isolation (Barton, 2019; Collins & Genovese, 2020; Donnelly et al., 2015). Burns and Buchanan (2020) also point to officer training that promotes courage, control, and strength which can conflict with officers seeking help and the belief they are weak if they seek assistance. Unfortunately, this leads many officers not to get help, and as chronic stress builds through handling consistent traumatic events in the field, the stress can lead to suicidal ideation as indicated in the Mills et al. study. Burns and Buchanan (2020) add that the perception or stigma of being weak may show others they may not be fit for duty.

## **Substance Abuse**

Substance abuse is often an indicator that an officer is having difficulty with coping with police stress. This is significant because links have been established that indicate about forty percent (40%) of all who seek treatment for their alcohol use/abuse have attempted suicide at one time (Pompili et al., 2010). Among those who have committed suicide, alcohol was in the blood of almost thirty percent (30%) of Americans (Pompili et al., 2010).

## **Methodology**

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to apply a case study design to gain a deeper understanding of the problem of police suicides in Colombia South America, Belize Central America, and the United States. This study provided an analysis of participants'

experiences in the field of law enforcement and the phenomenon of police suicides in their respective countries. and their perspectives regarding the scope of human trafficking in Colombia. Surveys and interviews provided the opportunity to collect data through multiple case studies. Questions can be framed through multiple case studies that can have an impact on the study itself and the ability to generalize findings to a wider population (Yin, 2013). Triangulation was applied to participant responses and the literature to strengthen the study's findings.

### **Sample**

The sample used in this qualitative multiple-case study included participants who have at least 10 years of law enforcement experience. Participants are considered experts in their field based on their experience and education. Participants included members the National Police of Colombia, the Belize Police Department, and a mid-size sheriff's office in Southwest Florida. The sample provided external validity as participants had varying roles and backgrounds in law enforcement. Each participant was a supervisor in law enforcement, which brought reliability to the findings because supervisors have a responsibility to monitor their subordinates for signs of emotional problems.

### **Instrument Used**

Instruments used in this qualitative study included interviews and survey questions based on the research questions. Open-ended questions were provided to participants who provided responses that were documented by the researchers. Inferences can be drawn from the sample to other persons or situations to support external validity (Creswell, 2014). Therefore, findings from this study have implications for the larger police population globally.

### **Design of the Study**

Interviews and survey questions based on the research questions were the primary instruments used in this qualitative study. Qualitative questions were used to elicit responses that enabled the researchers to gain a deeper understanding of the problem of police suicide in their respective country and what can be done to mitigate the problem of police suicide. Interview and survey questions provided the opportunity for participants to share their perception of how serious the problem of police suicide is from an international perspective.

### **Dependent and Independent Variables**

Dependent and independent variables were not used because this was a qualitative multiple case study.

### **Datasets Collected**

Data were collected through interviews and survey questions based on the research questions. Identification of themes and primary strategies for mitigating police suicide was documented from the data. Agreements and contradictions between participant data and literature were used to emphasize data triangulation. Thematic analysis was used to identify themes that emerged from participant data, which answered the research questions. Different perspectives among the participants regarding the scope and size of the problem of police suicide was noted. Participants included data from their respective country on the problem of police suicide.

## **Results**

The following themes emerged that answered the research questions:

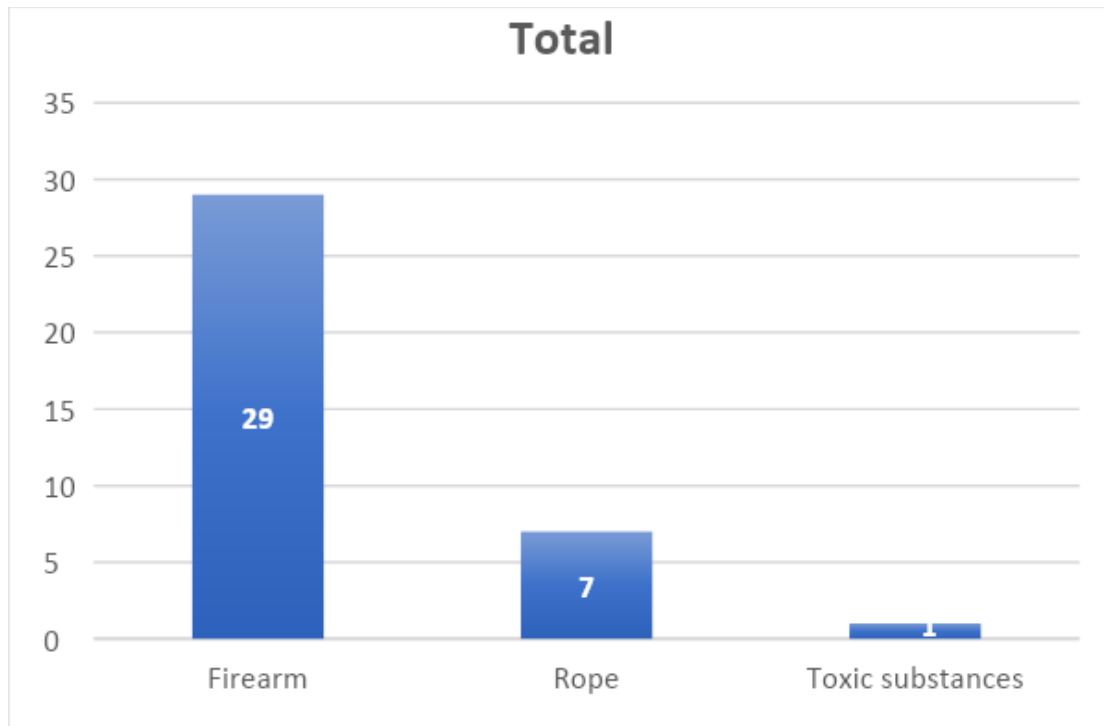
**RQ1. Why is the police population at a higher risk of suicide compared to the general public?**

Participants revealed that police officers are at a higher risk of police suicide due to job-related stressors that include emotional distress, relentless shiftwork, failing to reach goals such as promotions, financial problems, dangers on the job, traumatic events, and limited availability or use of professional mental health services. Participants explained that “I believe that the police population is at higher risk of suicide in comparison with the general public because some officers are constantly under stress, firstly, the shifts are relentless, and the treatment by peers and supervisors is unbearable at time which creates a hostile environment to work in. The easiest way out is suicide.”

Another participant explained that “police suicide is a growing problem in law enforcement agencies around the world, resulting in the deaths of thousands of officers each year. Police officers experience many unique and dangerous stressors while on the job that can put them at high risk of suicide. These include long hours, fatigue, fear of making a mistake, emotional distress from responding to difficult and traumatic events, and difficult relationships with civilians.”

**RQ2. What are specific factors associated with policing that makes officers more susceptible to the problem of police suicide?**

Participants posited that substance abuse is a factor that increases police suicide. Access to firearms is another emerging theme. Participants reported that firearms are the most common weapon used in police suicide. The chart reflects the use of firearms in these suicides.



Source: *National Police of Colombia. SIEDCO, obtained in 18/08/2022, from 1/01/2020 to 08/16/2022.*

In response to the specific factors associated with police being more susceptible to police suicide, one participant explained “the use and abuse of alcohol and other drugs.” This response was triangulated with existing literature. With substance abuse estimated at twenty-five percent (25%) of the law enforcement population (Ballenger et al., 2010), compared to only an estimation of under ten percent (10%) for the general population (Ballenger et al., 2010), the nature of the profession, events and incidents encountered, coupled with the closed law enforcement culture influence law enforcement officers needing to self-medicate with alcohol and other substances to cope and relax (Ballenger et al., 2010). Another participant highlighted factors such as “depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), marital/family issues, substance abuse, financial difficulties, accumulated stress from the job, and a feeling of alienation from their peers.”

### **RQ3. What can be done to mitigate the threat of police suicide to reduce its occurrence?**

All participants cited the need for a focus on mental health. Participants called for mental health screenings in police officers. Access to mental health professionals was another theme. One participant stated, “I would definitely recommend a quarterly mental health evaluation for our officers.” Other participant data included “officers are not provided with the training or resources they need to recognize and address the warning signs of suicide.” Maintaining mental health can be essential to preventing suicide. Therefore, it is important for law enforcement agencies to provide resources such as access to mental health professionals, peer support groups, stress management training, and resiliency building to equip officers with the tools they need to cope with the stress of their jobs. Additionally, departments should provide confidential counseling, as well as up-to-date policies and procedures to ensure that officer wellness is a priority.”

### **Conclusion**

Participant data was analyzed and answered the research questions. In the evaluation of evidence, participant responses were associated to how they are affiliated with the general strain theory and how the identification of these emerging trends from participants and extant literature can address the problems existing for officers due to strain that is associated with police suicide (Menard & Arter, 2013; Yun & Lee, 2015).

Through thematic analysis, six emerging themes were identified. The themes of job-related stressors and a lack of mental health services answered the first research question in regard to why the police population is at a higher risk of suicide compared to the general public. The themes of substance abuse in policing and access to firearms were specific factors associated with policing that makes them more susceptible to the problem of police suicide. Participants explained that continuous stress leads to police suicide. This is consistent with the theoretical



framework involving Agnew's General Strain Theory, which posits that strain occurs from (a) loss of stimuli that is positively valued, (b) strain related to failing to achieve goals, and (c) strain based on stimuli that is negatively valued (Menard & Arter, 2013). The general strain theory applies to understanding police suicide since strain has been associated with negative behaviors and outcomes throughout various samples and contexts in research (Menard & Arter, 2013; Yun & Lee, 2015). If police officers do not effectively manage the strain associated with their profession, suicide risk increases because of the mounting pressure on officers.

A focus on mental health and stress management in policing, along with the need for programs to help officers manage police stress are needed to mitigate the threat of police suicide. Police officers typically go through a psychological evaluation when being hired, but there is not a system in police to screen for mental health once someone is a police officer. Failure to seek out professional mental health support when an officer is struggling with PTSD or other mental health problems is a major factor that leads to police suicide. What is clear from participant responses is that the difficulty associated with being a police officer contributes to their risk of suicide and it is imperative that officers identify when stress has them feeling overwhelmed and take steps to mitigate stress. It is evident that there needs to be an emphasis by police agencies on police mental health and effective stress management. A participant explained, "It is essential for law enforcement agencies to provide comprehensive suicide awareness and prevention training for all officers. Including such training as part of a comprehensive mental health program can help to reduce suicide risk factors, increase officers' ability to recognize the warning signs, and promote coping strategies for officers who are struggling. With proper resources and training, law enforcement officers can be empowered to make well-informed decisions about their wellbeing and, in doing so, help protect their own lives."

For future explorations, there is a need for research on strategies that implement practices that encourage officers to seek mental health assistance and there is a need to educate police employers about the risks associated with police stress that can lead to police suicide. Aside from a police officer's family members, coworkers are often in the best position to recognize if a colleague is highly stressed and at risk of suicide. Future research can explore the training that is needed in policing to help officers recognize warning signs of police suicide in co-workers.

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