

University of Central Florida

STARS

Electronic Theses and Dissertations, 2020-

2023

Examining the Impact of COVID-19 on Elementary-Aged Minoritized Students

Ashlynn Ramirez

University of Central Florida



Part of the [Educational Administration and Supervision Commons](#)

Find similar works at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/etd2020>

University of Central Florida Libraries <http://library.ucf.edu>

This Doctoral Dissertation (Open Access) is brought to you for free and open access by STARS. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Theses and Dissertations, 2020- by an authorized administrator of STARS. For more information, please contact STARS@ucf.edu.

STARS Citation

Ramirez, Ashlynn, "Examining the Impact of COVID-19 on Elementary-Aged Minoritized Students" (2023). *Electronic Theses and Dissertations, 2020-*. 1782.

<https://stars.library.ucf.edu/etd2020/1782>

EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON ELEMENTARY-AGED MINORITIZED
STUDENTS

by

ASHLYNN RAMIREZ

B.S. University of Central Florida, 2010

M.Ed. University of South Florida, 2015

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Education
in the Department of Educational Leadership and Higher Education
in the College of Community Innovation and Education
at the University of Central Florida
Orlando, Florida

Summer Term
2023

Major Professors: RoSusan Bartee and Larry J. Walker

© 2023 Ashlynn Ramirez

ABSTRACT

The Coronavirus Disease [COVID-19] pandemic was a public health crisis. As of January 2022, there were over 314 million infections and over 5.5 million deaths (Assefa et al., 2022). Unfortunately, COVID-19 disproportionately impacted minoritized populations. This study will investigate the relationship between COVID-19 and the impact on minoritized students attending Title I elementary schools in one urban school district. According to Lopez-Ibor (2006), “disasters are diverse events as a consequence of a danger that affects social groups and produces material and human losses resulting in insufficient resources of the community and insufficient coping through social mechanisms” (p. 22). COVID-19 affected large numbers of people through death, illness, or financial crisis. According to the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies (2016), disasters are considered traumatic experiences. After such disasters, it is normal for one to experience a number of stress-related reactions, followed by grieving and loss. In disastrous circumstances, the experience of safety, security, and predictability in the world is challenged, and a sense of uncertainty becomes the new normal.

The way the global crisis was handled by the United States government was questioned by public health experts (Dow et al., 2021). The federal response to COVID-19 impacted society, negatively impacting the economy. COVID-19 impacted minority communities at a significant rate. The children of the most impacted areas were also affected by grief resulting from the loss of a loved one, further distrust in the government, and continued financial distress. For this reason, this study will examine the impact structural racism had on minoritized populations during the COVID-19 pandemic. Minoritized students were most impacted by school closures, leading to caregiver job loss and a rise in mental health concerns for caregivers and children

(Lawson et al., 2020). Furthermore, the same discipline inequalities that existed pre-COVID-19 resurfaced during virtual learning and the online access issues virtual learning brought. Schools eventually reopened, but it has not been determined if schools were prepared to respond to trauma caused by COVID-19.

The conclusions and recommendations of this study can support school district leaders in determining how to design culturally responsive support systems for minoritized students as it relates to the impact of COVID-19. This research also has the potential to impact policy, specifically how funding is allocated to provide resources and support to minoritized students.

Keywords: COVID-19, discipline, expulsion, implicit bias, minoritized, pandemic, structural racism, suspension, trauma-informed, zero-tolerance

I dedicate this work to my husband, Chris. Your support, love, “I got you”, and endless cups of coffee as I was working (during naptimes and after bedtime) - without you I would not have been able to accomplish this. I am forever grateful. My two heartbeats, my purpose and my why - Carter and Asher. From sitting in online classes with me as newborns, to coming to class with me when I was pregnant, to Facetiming goodnights, to telling me “You got this Mami!” I do this for you. All of it. I dedicate this to my family (near and far), who have given me words of encouragement and have always told me how proud they are of me every step of the way. I dedicate this to the many educators I have crossed paths with that have inspired me to learn and unlearn. And to my students, past, present, and future. I love you all, and there is truly nothing you can ever do about it.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I started this journey with an interview via zoom with a two-week-old while the world was shut down for the first month of the pandemic. I was on maternity leave and read that the first year at UCF for the executive doctorate program would be virtual for at least a year. I could not pass this opportunity up, so I applied and showed up for my interview, all while holding a newborn. Little did I know this would be the hardest yet most momentous decision I would make.

I would like to start by thanking my husband, Chris. You have always somehow seen a light in me that I haven't always been able to see. You see how capable I am, how strong I am, and how much I will not go down without a fight. From the moment I came to you and told you I was considering applying, to the moment I was considering deferring - you have been there. You have given me the best basketball "would LeBron James quit" analogies (most of which I do not understand), endless cups of coffee, and always did everything in your power to support me while I worked to accomplish this goal. Your presence, love, and support have been everything. I know I could not have done it without you. Thank you.

My boys. My sweet reasons WHY. Carter and Asher, one day you will read this, and I hope you read these words "I love you and there is nothing you can do about it." Carter, I held you during the interview when the committee had to decide if they would accept me. Carter, you joined many late-night statistics classes, and I would often bathe you, feed you, and rock you to sleep while listening to my class and unmuting every once in a while so they knew I was still there. Asher, when I found out I was expecting you, I cried because I knew that I would have to leave you for face-to-face classes. When classes were virtual, I would turn my camera off and

feed you, and when they were face-to-face, I would prepare dinner the night before, step out of class to facetime you guys good night, pump in a room and race home to see you guys. I may or may not have been told by my chair not to open my laptop the day of your birth, but I may or may not have still opened it to meet a deadline. Mis niños, you are my why. I hope you know that I do it all for you. I hope you always know that I want this world to be better for you. Thank you for loving me, holding my hand, smiling at me in the hardest moments, and reminding me of my WHY. I love you. Griffin, thank you for keeping me company early in the mornings, giving me all the kisses and company late at night.

I could not have done this without the support of my family. My parents, who set an example of hard work. I always saw my dad going from work to school to the kitchen table to study - who knew the statistics you taught me at seven would pay off? My mom is the hardest worker I know, and our morning Facetimes kept me going. My sister, thanks for letting me play teacher when we were kids even though I am sure you were sick of it, you've always shared how proud you are of me, but the truth is you inspire me and make me proud too. My niece Pearl, your feisty little spirit mixed with your gentle love is something that motivates me. My Grams, oh my Grams. You have always told me how proud you and the family were of me. You give me so much love and encouragement and always have. Thank you for being you, I love you, my person. Noah, you are a risk-taker and your tenacity for life is something that moves me. I love you and am proud of you. I could not have gotten through this without my in-laws, who are my family. Vanessa and JB, you have always offered me a break, words of encouragement, let me use an office space, fed me, and loved me for so many years. I love you guys. Mindy, you have always offered words of encouragement and a beautiful view while I write in the early mornings.

I would not have been able to do this without you and your unconditional love. Will, thank you for always inspiring me with your example of hard work and discipline - you motivate me. To the rest of my in-laws, thank you for always being there for me and our family during this journey. I am forever grateful. My family, near or far, I thank you.

The mentorship and encouragement I have received from my professional colleagues during this journey to becoming Dr. Ramirez has been my light. Le Nguyen, you are a rock in my life - you have been there for me every step of this journey. You have supported me in more ways that you know, I could never repay you - love you. Cristina Ortega, you are an amazing human. Thank you for the coffees, support, and notes on my desk. I couldn't do life without you. Love you big. Dr. Jennifer Sasser, thank you for your time, detailed support, encouragement, and professional guidance. I accomplished this with confidence because of your support. Dr. Leigh Ann Bradshaw, thank you for your pep talks, professional guidance, and many perspectives that gave me the will to continue. You have always believed in me. Thank you to Dr. Tayler Boyer who supported me with edits, ideas, and encouragement at all hours of the night. I am so thankful. Thank you to my committee, especially my co-chair Dr. Larry J. Walker. You inspired me in your class during every lesson and told me 100 times to just breathe. You are an inspiration to me, and I will forever appreciate your guidance, experiences, and moral support.

Finally, my staff and students - past and present, near or far. You are the most beautiful humans. You have given me so much love and encouragement. You remind me how loved I am. How proud of me you are. You remind me of all the good in the world and in education. Thank YOU for inspiring me and for being there for me every step of the way. I love you, and there is nothing you can do about it.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	vi
LIST OF TABLES	xiii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Background of the Study	1
Statement of the Problem.....	4
Purpose of the Study	5
Significance of the Study	6
Definition of Terms.....	8
Research Questions	11
Population	11
Conceptual Framework.....	11
Limitations of the Research Study	15
Assumptions of the Research Study	16
Organization of the Study	16
Summary	17
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	19
Introduction.....	19
COVID-19 Impact on Society	20

Initial and Detrimental Response.....	20
Economic Hardship.....	22
Impact on Marginalized Communities.....	25
Failure to Report Leading to Further Mistrust.....	25
Lack of Cultural Awareness in COVID-19 Response	26
Risk Factors	27
Cultural Mistrust	28
Pandemic of Racial Injustice	29
Impact on Minoritized Youth.....	32
Secondary Impact of Caregivers	32
School Closures	33
Toxic Stress/Trauma	35
Needs Set Forth by COVID-19 that Impacted Minoritized Students	37
Background.....	37
Impact of Online Learning.....	38
Needs Set Forth by COVID-19 that Impacted Minoritized Students	42
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	44
Introduction.....	44
Method	45
Rationale for Qualitative Design	45
Research Design.....	46
Research Site and Population.....	47

Participants and Sampling Methodology	48
Data Collection Sources.....	49
Analysis of Data.....	54
Credibility	56
Dependability	57
Confirmability.....	57
Chapter Summary	57
CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS	58
Introduction.....	58
Participants.....	58
Overview of Initial Coding and Analysis	62
Peer Debriefing	63
Analysis.....	63
Research Question Findings	66
Principal Perception of Impact of COVID-19 on Minoritized Students (RQ1)	66
Principal Perception of Impact of COVID-19 on Minoritized Student Behavior (RQ2)	74
Support Provided to Address the Impact of COVID-19 on Minoritized Students (RQ3)	83
Chapter Summary	89
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND LIMITATIONS OF FINDINGS	91
Introduction.....	91
Explanation and Comparison of Findings.....	92
Limitations	97

Implications of Future Research	98
Implications for Practice	98
Recommendations for Future Research	100
Conclusions.....	100
APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL LETTER	102
APPENDIX B: RESEARCH NOTICE OF APPROVAL	104
APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW INVITATION EMAIL - SCHOOL PRINCIPALS	107
APPENDIX D: INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT - SCHOOL PRINCIPALS	110
APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL.....	114
APPENDIX F: PARTICIPANT SUMMARY FORM	117
REFERENCES	120

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 <i>Summary of the Literature Review</i>	39
Table 2 <i>Sampling Level Quota (n) Title I Principal, CP Level II Support</i>	49
Table 3 <i>Semi-structured Interview Questions by Research Questions</i>	50
Table 4 <i>Participant Years of Assistant Principal (AP) Experience (n=6)</i>	60
Table 5 <i>Participant Years of Principal Experience (n=6)</i>	60
Table 6 <i>Participant First Year of Principal Experience (n=6)</i>	60
Table 7 <i>Participant First Year of Principalship at Current School</i>	61
Table 8 <i>Demographic Information of Schools as of April 2023</i>	61
Table 9 <i>Federal Ethnicity of Schools as of April 2023</i>	61
Table 10 <i>Phases of Thematic Analysis</i>	64
Table 11 <i>RQ1 Emergent Themes and Categories Discussed by Principals</i>	67
Table 12 <i>RQ2 Emergent Themes and Categories Discussed by Principals</i>	76
Table 13 <i>RQ3 Emergent Themes and Categories Discussed by Principals</i>	84
Table 14 <i>Trainings Provided to Staff to Support Post COVID-19 Student Behaviors</i>	86
Table 15 <i>Do You Have the Resources Needed to Support Student Behavior?</i>	87
Table 16 <i>School Process for Obtaining Mental Health Support</i>	87
Table 17 <i>School Professional Development (PD) to Support Minoritized Students</i>	88

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Now more than ever, there is a need to ensure the psychological and physical safety of minoritized students. Schools need to examine the spaces designed for marginalized students to ensure a safe, welcoming, and culturally relevant experience, while understanding the barriers failed initiatives have created. Prior to COVID-19, minoritized students were already facing inequitable challenges in schools, including the impact of structural or systemic racism, which led to disproportionate discipline rates (Civil Rights Project, 2020). According to the National Association of Social Workers, “Institutional racism (also known as structural racism) is the manifestation of racism in social systems and institutions. It is the social, economic, educational, and political forces or policies that operate to foster discriminatory outcomes” (p. 9, 2007).

Systemic and structural racism are deeply embedded in systems, laws, and written and unwritten policies, which perpetuate the treatment of minoritized people (Braveman et al., 2022). A common example of structural racism within schools is planning initiatives without regard for race-focused needs. Another example of structural racism is supporting policies or protocols without understanding the impact or implications on non-White stakeholders (Crutchfield et al., 2020).

Marginalized populations experience trauma more frequently than White communities (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2021). Black, Hispanic, and Asian individuals are more likely to experience a crisis in comparison to White individuals (Mental Health America, 2023). Compared with Whites, minoritized students are at a significantly higher risk of mental disorders but less likely to access or use mental health services (Substance Abuse and Mental

Health Services Administration [SAMHSA], (2022). Data from the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey for 2010-17 assessed trends among youth ages 5-17 to determine mental health care use, outpatient mental health care, and psychotropic medication prescription refills. Results indicated significant disparities between the Black and Latinx youth when comparing mental health care despite reforms and policies. Research showed that outreach and treatment strategies lack cultural, linguistic, and structural components for youth of color (Rodgers et al., 2021). Untreated mental health disorders can lead to self-injurious behavior, substance abuse, violence, crime, chronic physical disorders, and suicidal behaviors (Trauma and Violence, 2022). Schools offer mental health services, but it has not been determined if there are measures to identify the cultural barriers to mental health access.

There is a disciplinary gap between Black and White students, showing a need for policy reform in education and psychological bias (Wide-Ranging Education Data Collected From Our Nation's Public Schools, 2018). Implicit bias has been used as a factor to explain why the number of disciplinary infractions between Black and White students is disproportionate. Implicit bias affects judgment, decisions, and behaviors (National Institutes of Health, 2022). Black students are more likely to be suspended or expelled and receive harsher punishments (USAFacts, 2021). There is consistent evidence that Black students' behaviors are perceived as more difficult or problematic and are punished more harshly than White students (CDC, 2018). Harsh and exclusionary actions such as this impact minoritized students long-term (Del Torro & Wang, 2021).

Prior to the Obama administration, the "school-to-prison pipeline" was consistently fed by school discipline. Fears of juvenile delinquency in schools were not supported by available

state and national crime data, which showed very few incidents of youth violence, including egregious behavior or actions including weapons. The Columbine High School shootings led to an increase in intense school-based policing and harsher zero-tolerance discipline. Zero-tolerance policies are considered to be those that mandate certain consequences (Heitzeg, 2016).

According to Mojica and Plata (2018), “The single greatest predictor of future involvement in the juvenile system is a history of disciplinary referrals at school” (p. 8). According to a study conducted by Texas A & M University, students involved in one or more disciplinary incidents were 23.4 times more likely to be referred to the juvenile justice system (yyyy).

Efforts have been made to encourage school discipline reform. The Obama administration embarked on multiple initiatives to encourage schools to find alternative methods of discipline instead of the traditional suspension. In 2011, The Department of Education (DOE) and the Department of Justice (DOJ) launched the Supportive School Discipline Initiative to allocate federal support. This initiative was designed to improve overall school climate, raise academic achievement, and support student success while ensuring disciplinary action equity (Supportive School Discipline, 2011). In January 2014, the DOE packaged instructional materials to support state and local efforts to improve overall school climate and discipline. In this package was the controversial letter titled “Dear Colleague” issued by the DOE and the DOJ and heeded teachers and staff on the detriment of intentional racial discrimination (Gordon, 2018). The letter discussed structural racism without mentioning race.

If a policy is neutral on its face—meaning that the policy itself does not mention race and is administered in an even handed manner but has a disparate impact, i.e., a

disproportionate and unjustified effect on students of a particular race,” (Department of Education, 2014, p.2).

School districts have also made attempts to reform punitive discipline policies. Fourteen states require school disciplinary officials to consider the specific circumstances before expelling or suspending students (Temple University, 2004). As of 2019, sixteen states and the District of Columbia have implemented policies that limit exclusionary discipline practice by grade level, usually in the earlier grades (Education Commission, 2019). At least thirty-seven states and the District of Columbia outline alternatives to suspension and expulsion. Corporal punishment is permitted in at least eighteen states. School discipline reform focused on providing services to at-risk students, such as counseling, dropout prevention, and guidance services (Education Commission). As of 2021, thirteen states still have not addressed any limits or policy regarding exclusionary discipline practices: Alabama, Alaska, Idaho, Iowa, Missouri, Montana, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Vermont, Virgin Islands, and Wyoming (National Association of State Boards of Education, 2022). Most recently, Representative Pressley introduced H.R. 2248 or “Ending PUSHOUT Act of 2021”, which was a bill designed to reduce exclusionary discipline practices in schools and for other purposes (Pressley, 2021). Exclusionary discipline is a type of school-based disciplinary action that excludes students from their educational setting. Examples include out-of-school suspensions, expulsions, and oftentimes undocumented class placements (Committee for Children, 2018).

Statement of the Problem

While there has been improvement in the general understanding of trauma, there is still a lack of accountability when it comes to ensuring trauma is defined and treated first, then the

behavior or infraction is supported with additional resources. School districts nationwide are not required to report the number of trauma responses observed in schools. Districts offer training regarding mental health, but there is limited research to determine the quality of professional development related to trauma and brain responses. Trauma can be influenced by many different factors and is most defined through an assessment of adverse childhood experiences. According to the Center for Disease Control (2023), adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood (i.e., 0-17 years). The group that is mostly impacted by traumatic experiences is minoritized individuals (The State of America's Children, 2020). COVID-19 impacted minoritized students at disproportionate rates, but schools lacked culturally responsive intervention strategies designed to support students post-pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic was a traumatic experience that perpetuated structural racism and negatively impacted minoritized students at a disproportionate level (Egede & Walker, 2020). School leaders and staff were not prepared to respond to the needs caused by the trauma of COVID-19.

The nation made efforts to focus on zero-tolerance, which refers to school discipline policies with predetermined consequences, mainly severe and punitive (Bell, 2015). Then there was a focus on widespread attempts at reducing the number of suspensions throughout the country. Therefore, this study seeks to understand the impact of COVID-19 on minoritized students to further support and respond to their social, emotional, physical, and mental health needs.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine COVID-19 as a traumatic experience impacting minoritized students to support schools in responding more effectively and efficiently to future

traumatic events. Behavior infractions have been at an all-time high since the global pandemic (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022). According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2020), emergency department visits for suspected suicide among youth increased 31% in 2020 compared with 2019. In October 2021, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, and the Children's Hospital Association declared that the pandemic-related decline in adolescent mental health had become a national emergency (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2021). Not only did minoritized youth experience trauma from social isolation but “more than 140,000 children in the United States lost a primary and/or secondary care giver, with youth of color disproportionately impacted” (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2021, p. 2).

This study utilized a qualitative approach and evaluated the impact of COVID-19 as it relates to overall student well-being. Qualitative measures focused on developing themes identified through interviewing six Title I elementary school principals in a large urban school district. COVID-19 meets the criteria for a traumatic event because of its emotional and physical impact on people (Campbell, 2020). This study investigated how some behavior documented infractions may result from structural racism, trauma responses, mental health crises, and increased trauma (e.g., emotional or physical abuse, decreased food, housing security), all caused by COVID-19.

Significance of the Study

Research supports the disproportionate impact trauma has on minoritized students (Children's Defense Fund, yyyy, p. 27). The Children's Defense Fund, a nonprofit organization, created a comprehensive overview of how America's children are doing to guide and inform

stakeholders (Dawson, 2020). The aforementioned study focused on summarizing the state of America's children in 12 areas: (a) child population, (b) child poverty, (c) income and wealth inequality, (d) housing and homelessness, (e) child hunger and nutrition, (f) child health, (g) early childhood, (h) education, (i) child welfare, (j) youth justice, (k) gun violence, and (l) immigrant children. The most recently available national and state-level data for each area were compiled and analyzed to determine trends and create a moments report to examine minoritized students' experiences. The moments report captures data within snapshots of time.

Trauma can be measured by the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) survey, which tracks ten key experiences and analyzes the risk factors of the negative outcomes. (Felitti et al., 1998). As of 2017-19, more than 40% of children suffered one ACE and nearly one in five suffered two or more ACEs. The survey instrument operationalizes the adverse childhood experience in its participants. Children of color disproportionately experience ACEs and more than 60% of Black children have suffered at least one ACE compared with less than 40% of White children (State of America's Children, 2020). COVID-19 can be considered a trauma due to the impact of traumatic stress following an experience that challenges a child's ability to cope. "Traumatic events are typically situations that are out of our control, beyond our usual experience, and cause us to feel as though our lives or the lives of others may be in danger" (Brown, 2021, p. 1).

Trauma can manifest in a multitude of ways in the classroom, through intense emotions, anxiety, behavioral changes, difficulties with self-regulation, difficulty sleeping and eating, and body aches and pains (What is Child Traumatic Stress, 2003). Other students may resort to drugs and alcohol or engage in other unhealthy risk-taking (Substance Abuse and Mental Health

Services Administration, 2022). A reminder of a traumatic event can trigger traumatic responses, interfering with their ability to function and interact with others (Trauma-Informed Care in Behavioral Health Services, 2014). Trauma requires treatment or informed care, and without it can affect the brain and nervous system and increase health-risk behaviors (Trauma-Informed Care in Behavioral Health Services, 2014).

Children of color, particularly Black children, continue to be over-criminalized and overrepresented in arrests. Nationwide, African American children represent 32% of children who are arrested, 42% of children who are detained, and 52% of children whose cases are judicially waived to criminal court yet African American children make up just 14% of the total population (NAACP Criminal Justice Fact Sheet, 2022). Due to the inequitable response to trauma amongst minoritized students, there is a need for research to analyze the impact of COVID-19 on society and marginalized communities.

The study focused on three significant topics:

- the impact of COVID-19 on the United States of America.
- the impact of COVID-19 on marginalized communities (e.g., Black, Latinx, Hispanic, Indigenous); and
- the examination of COVID-19 as a traumatic experience impacting minoritized students at a disproportionate level.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined for the study.

COVID-19: A mild to severe respiratory illness that is caused by a coronavirus (i.e., severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 of the genus Beta coronavirus), is transmitted chiefly by

contact with infectious material (such as respiratory droplets) or with objects or surfaces contaminated by the causative virus, and is characterized especially by fever, cough, and shortness of breath and may progress to pneumonia and respiratory failure (Webster, 2007).

2007

Discipline: School discipline refers to the rules and strategies applied in school to manage student behavior and practices used to encourage self-discipline (Safe Supportive Learning, 2023).

Exclusionary Practice: When students are removed from the classroom through suspension or expulsion for various infractions (Luster, 2018).

Expulsion: When a school board has decided a student cannot go to school, a school function, or be on school property for more than 10 school days (Kids Legal, 2022).

Implicit Bias: A prejudice that is present but not consciously held or recognized (Webster, 2023).

Minoritized: Usually a marginalized group of people distinctive by ethnicity, race, color, economic class, gender identity or expression, nationality, sex, ability, or religion. A minority, in strictly numerical terms, is any subgroup that constitutes less than half of the whole group. In practice, a minoritized group is any group disadvantaged directly or indirectly by existing policies and social practices or having little power or representation relative to other groups within a society (Institutional Research, 2021).

Pandemic: An outbreak of a disease that occurs over a wide geographic area (e.g., multiple countries, continents) and typically affects a significant proportion of the population: a pandemic outbreak of a disease (Webster, 2023).

Structural Racism: A system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in reinforcing ways to perpetuate racial group inequity (Aspen Institute, 2022).

Suspension: Students are temporarily prohibited from going to regular classes and/or school. (Kids Legal, 2022).

Trauma: occurs as a result of violence, abuse, neglect, loss, disaster, war, and other emotionally harmful experiences (SAMHSA, 2014).

Traumatic Event: a frightening, dangerous, or violent event that poses a threat to a child's life or bodily integrity (National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2022).

Trauma-Informed: a school-wide system that recognizes the prevalence of adverse and traumatic childhood experiences and equips teachers and staff with the knowledge to recognize trauma and strategies to support students who experience trauma (Colorado Department of Education, 2022).

Zero-tolerance: Policy of giving the most severe punishment possible to every person who commits a crime or breaks a rule (Webster, 2023).

Research Questions

1. How do Title I elementary school principals perceive the impact COVID-19 had on minoritized students in one urban school district?
2. How did the COVID-19 pandemic impact student behaviors of minoritized students at Title I elementary schools as perceived by principals?
3. How did Title I elementary school principals provide support and resources to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on minoritized students?

Population

This research utilized an exploratory qualitative study to investigate the impact of COVID-19 on minoritized elementary students in Title I elementary schools in one urban school district. The exploratory qualitative study included one-on-one semi-structured interviews that gathered information from six Title I elementary school principals. The population for the three research questions was composed of six Title I elementary school principals in one urban school district. Responses will be limited to the six principals who opted in to participate in the interview.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is Bronfenbrenner's human ecology theory. The rationale for using Bronfenbrenner's theory was to focus on the factors that impact minoritized students. Human development can be understood as the "processes of progressively more complex reciprocal interaction between an active, evolving biopsychological human organism and the persons, objects, and symbols in its immediate external environment" (Bronfenbrenner,

1996, p. 797). Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory focuses on understanding a child's development as a complex system of connections of environment, immediate settings of a family and school, cultural values, laws, and customs (McLeod, 2004). The current study was premised on Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, later named Bioecological Model (Simply Psychology, 2020). This theory guided the current study in the sense that if the relationships in the immediate microsystem disconnect, the child could be missing critical tools needed to navigate other parts of their environment. According to this theory, the layers of the ecological system or environment can negatively impact children in their development. Bronfenbrenner was critical of other theories on child development, claiming they were unidirectional, meaning there was limited data on looking at the possible influences versus the sole influence of A on B (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994). Bronfenbrenner premised the theory on the fact that multiple aspects of a child's life interact with the development of the child. This framework organizes the current study based on the premise that individuals develop through the ecosystem levels, and the proximal processes occur over extended periods of time and may contribute to dysfunction (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006, p. 996). His theory looked beyond individual development and began considering other factors that impacted child development. Bronfenbrenner's theory is focused on the five ecological systems, starting with the child's environment (Santa Clara University, 2022).

According to the framework, the microsystem represents what the individual interacts with daily (Berns, 2010). The microsystem and the individual influence each other through various interactions impacting the individual's holistic development. Bronfenbrenner's framework was used to guide research within the contextual model of human development

(Sameroff, 2010). Understanding the various systems and the interactions in which the population interacts with each system allowed for a better understanding of the impact of COVID-19 on elementary minoritized students.

Level 1: Microsystem

The first level is the microsystem, which focuses on family, health services, school, peers, neighborhood playground, daycare facility, and religious organizations. The family can be considered a microsystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). A student's environment includes family, classroom, or surroundings. The microsystem shows the relationships are bi-directional, showing that children can be influenced by other people (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). Examples of the microsystem include home, school, peers, neighborhood, after-school care, and teachers.

Level 2: Mesosystem

The second level is the mesosystem, which consists of the interactions between the child's microsystems, including interactions between the child's parents and teachers or between school peers and siblings. In the mesosystem, a person's microsystems do not function independently and are interconnected and assert influence on one another (Simply Psychology, 2020). For example, if a child's teacher has a positive relationship with a child's parents, there could be a positive impact on the child's development. Examples of the mesosystem would include family, the peer group, and any interactions with other systems.

Level 3: Exosystem

The third system is the exosystem, which incorporates formal and informal social structures which do not contain the child, but directly influence the individual child. An example would be a parent missing work and receiving a reprimand. The parent or caregiver may come home frustrated and inevitably be short-tempered with the child (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, year). Examples of the exosystem would include mass media, parents' friends, parents' jobs, teacher training institutes, and local governments.

Level 4: Macrosystem

The fourth level is the macrosystem, which focuses on how cultural elements affect a child's development, such as socioeconomic status, wealth, poverty, and ethnicity. Individuals' culture may influence their beliefs and perceptions about various events and circumstances (Bronfenbrenner & Morris). Examples of the macrosystem would include social norms, the legal systems, culture, political systems, welfare policies, and the economic system.

Level 5: Chronosystem

The fifth level of the system is the chronosystem, which consists of all of the environmental changes that occur over a lifetime, including major life changes and historical events. This theory became popular for psychologists, sociologists, and teachers to study child development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). Examples of the chronosystem would include the birth of a sibling, wars and calamities, and technology.

The inequities faced by minoritized children in each level of the ecological system show the relationship with the others. Bronfenbrenner's theory provides an understanding of the need for relationships between school and home. It proves an interconnectedness amongst the

different systems as it relates to the development of children. For example, children are directly impacted by the lack of health services or the quality of daycare services, which are influenced by parents' economic challenges. Bronfenbrenner's theory emphasizes that humans depend on their surroundings, which he calls ecological systems. Ecological systems are influenced by different types of environmental systems. The more encouraging these systems are, the more likely the child can develop. The weaker or more traumatizing these systems are, the more difficult it is for a child to grow. Minoritized individuals were already at a disadvantage due to structural racism. The trauma of COVID-19 exacerbated the inequities already existent for minority children. For this reason, examining the impact through the lens of the Ecological Systems theory is important. For example, for many individuals, schools provide an escape, yet because of COVID-19, students were confined, exposing them to possible maltreatment.

Limitations of the Research Study

The factors that could limit the validity of the study include:

1. The study was limited to data from six Title I elementary schools in one urban school district in Florida, making it challenging to generalize the results.
2. The study cannot verify any undocumented in-house infractions and/or responses as it relates to the behavior data.
3. While schools follow district-approved student code of conduct policies, there is a level of subjectivity with every policy.
4. Some administrators have left the profession since the start of the pandemic, limiting the validity of the interviews.

5. The population of the principals interviewed was majority Black, therefore there were not multiple demographics represented.
6. The differences in years of principalship between the six Title I principals interviewed may cause a difference in answers.
7. The majority of the principals interviewed became principals of their current school in 2022, making a pre-pandemic comparison difficult.
8. The majority of the principals interviewed have only Black students that make up their school population, making any “in comparison to non-minoritized students” questions challenging to answer.

Assumptions of the Research Study

This study will function under the following assumptions:

1. The data collected were accurate.
2. Schools accurately documented behavioral responses, as well as any historical events leading up to the events.
3. School leaders understood COVID-19 as a form of trauma.
4. The team at the school was engaged in data analysis as it relates to behavioral practices and responses of minoritized students.

Organization of the Study

This study consists of five chapters. Chapter One includes the study’s background, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, operational definitions, the conceptual framework, research questions, limitations of the study, and the study’s assumptions. Chapter

Two consists of a review of the literature, including an analysis of the fundamental and syndemic theory. Chapter Three consists of the methodology, additional details regarding the conceptual framework, the sample, data collection, and data analysis. Chapter Four describes the results of the research, while Chapter Five consists of a comprehensive discussion of the findings, including implications of application and practice.

Summary

There has been a significant increase in trauma awareness. However, there have been limited steps to address the challenges minoritized students encounter (Welch, 2018). COVID-19 is considered a type of trauma that disproportionately impacts minority students (World Health Organization, 2021).

Cultural mistrust played a part in the impact of COVID-19 on minoritized individuals. Terrell and Terrell (1981) stated that cultural mistrust refers to the sense of suspicion towards individuals from mainstream culture due to experiences of discrimination. Government officials reflected a misunderstanding of the pandemic by publicly disagreeing with World Health experts causing an even greater mistrust in the nation and those that were supposed to be trusted. The mistrust not only caused division and panic, but also caused a lack of belief in health and science (Parker & Stern, 2022). School openings were expedited as a result of government and state division. There was public discord amongst leaders and COVID-19 quickly became politicized. Amidst requests from educators begging schools to stay closed due to the potential spread of COVID-19, schools rapidly reopened, behaviors increased, and limited efforts were made to understand the difference between a behavioral infraction and a potential trauma response resulting from the impact of COVID-19 (Institute of Education Sciences, 2022). Behaviors can

be defined as student infractions of the code of conduct that cause a disruption to learning. There have been efforts made through legislation to end exclusionary practices as it relates to behavior consequences, yet the data still show the impact trauma had on minority students (Shonk & Cicchetti, 2001). COVID-19 impacted marginalized communities at alarming rates, impacting the well-being of minoritized children. This study investigated the impact COVID-19 had on minoritized students as it relates to behavior infractions. The findings can help school districts respond to future traumatic events more effectively.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic was a global health crisis. The healthcare world was not prepared to handle the repercussions of COVID-19. The pandemic caused economic challenges caused, higher unemployment rates, which impacted food security, and exacerbated inequities (Shim & Starks, 2021). Food insecurity affected the most marginalized communities (World Health Organization, 2021).

The response to the pandemic was highly politicized, increased skepticism, and caused vaccine hesitancy (Chinn et al., 2020). Positive cases and deaths due to COVID-19 could have been prevented if the pandemic was not politicized (Bolsen & Palm, 2022). Marginalized communities were impacted disproportionately by COVID-19 due to a pre-existing lack of access as it relates to health care which made individuals of color more vulnerable to the virus (Johnson, 2020). Vaccination efforts were not culturally proficient and did not take into consideration America's history with vaccinations on marginalized populations. A history of experimentation, disenfranchisement, and cultural mistrust hampered efforts to vaccinate underserved communities (Williams et al., 2003).

COVID-19 impacted public health, economics, mental health, and food security in the United States. However, people from marginalized communities were impacted by the risk of exposure, deaths, food, and housing insecurity (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2022). The pandemic caused physical and mental challenges for adults. Consequently, children encountered barriers that hampered their overall development. The federal response was voracious and failed to meet the needs of the most vulnerable populations.

For decades, minoritized students have been disproportionately expelled or suspended (U.S. Department of Education, 2022). There were examples of abuses of power in the early stages of school reopening. One example in Florida, particularly students of color, were suspended for not wearing a mask. In some Texas districts, coughing was considered an assault. In Tennessee, students with discipline problems were forced to learn online (Belsha & Beck, 2020).

The literature review is organized into four parts: (a) Impact on Society, (b) Impact on Marginalized Communities, (c) Impact on Minoritized Youth, and (d) Needs Set Forth by COVID-19 that Impacted Minoritized Students as it relates to inequitable suspension rates on minoritized populations during COVID-19 distance learning and the initial reopening.

COVID-19 Impact on Society

Initial and Detrimental Response

COVID-19 impacted every nation, but for the purpose of this literature review, the focus is on the United States. COVID-19 was considered a global health crisis which is defined as a “health emergency crisis such as an epidemic or a pandemic occurring across international borders, where transmission takes place simultaneously worldwide, affecting many people such as SARS virus, Ebola, and Coronavirus” (Mallah et al., 2021, p. 4). When COVID-19 surfaced in 2020, the response to the crisis was inconsistent and overly politicized. Guidance from the federal government is critical during a crisis. When COVID-19 arrived, President Donald Trump was still in office, and his response was considered a direct threat to the health and economic security of the nation (Rutledge, 2020). Historically, presidents recruit a group of trusted

unbiased advisors to consult with during times of tribulation to ensure quality decision-making can occur, but President Trump did not. For instance, the President took to Twitter to share conspiracy theories, skepticism, and false narratives (Dow et al., 2021). He politicized the virus by sharing opinions that conflicted with the World Health Organization. On March 13, 2020, he declared a nationwide emergency, and on March 15, 2020, states began to shut down due to the rapid spread of the virus and its impact on the United States (Centers for Disease Control [CDC], 2022). On March 28, 2020, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued a health alert warning against the use of chloroquine phosphate after Trump publicly stated the benefits of its treatment for COVID-19 (CDC, 2022). Social distancing measures were extended by the White House until the end of April 2020, and at the beginning of April, the White House announced a new guideline for people to wear a mask outside of the home. One Twitter post stated “The WHO really blew it. For some reason, funded largely by the United States, yet very China centric. We will be giving that a good look” (Twitter, 2020). President Trump continued to conflict with the WHO and withheld funding from the organization in April of that year. Trump encouraged states to reopen, against the advice of the WHO. At the end of April, three Republican states partially reopened against recommendations by world health experts: Alaska, Georgia, and Oklahoma. On April 30, 2020, Trump launched “Operation Warp Speed”, which was an initiative to produce a vaccine for COVID-19 as soon as possible. In May, WHO confirmed that the pandemic was indeed a global health crisis. In July 2020, school districts were given resources to reopen safely. In October 2020, food insecurity among Americans reached 52 million people, a 17 million increase from the pre-pandemic numbers (CDC, 2022). Trump’s use of social media and his aversion to receiving advice during the pandemic had significant

implications for Americans, including high mortality rates (CDC Press Release, 2020). Research highlighted the importance of coordinated efforts between the government, medicine, and media (Patterson et al., 2021). The response to COVID-19 caused a divide and highlighted two opposing forces: the health and well-being of Americans and the health of the economy (Moss et al., 2022).

Current studies that analyze the response of President Trump during the global pandemic of COVID-19 examine his response through the implicit leadership theory perspective. A meta-analysis using 17 national representative datasets with a total of 26,878 participants indicated that people who approved of Trump, tended to approve of his leadership regarding COVID-19 and were less likely to follow safety protocols to eliminate the spread, including handwashing, mask-wearing, social distancing (Moss et al., 2022). The implicit leadership theory suggests that followers have preconceived notions about the leaders they deem good or bad. They respond to the leader's behaviors following their core beliefs (e.g., religious values) versus the leader's actual behavior (Allen et al., 2008). Understanding the impact of Trump's response is critical to understanding the pandemic and its impact. A lack of trust in government officials caused by publicized misinformation and division amongst federal and local governments caused negative outcomes for the American people.

Economic Hardship

The COVID-19 pandemic caused economic hardship for people. For this reason, on March 26, 2020, the U.S. Senate passed the Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES), which provided \$2 trillion in aid to hospitals, small businesses, and state and local

governments (CDC, 2022). The Census Bureau began the Household Pulse Survey in April 2020 to collect data regarding the well-being of families during the COVID-19 pandemic (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 2022). The survey went to families bi-weekly and was used to analyze the effects of the pandemic-relief measures and also looked at the impact of government policies as it relates to hardship and poverty (Shrider et al., 2021). The results showed that tens of millions of people lost their jobs in the early months of the pandemic. On May 9, 2020, the U.S. unemployment rate measured at 14.7%, the worst rate since the Great Depression, showing 20.5 million people out of work (United States Census Bureau, 2020). The three industries hit hardest were hospitality, leisure, and healthcare, affecting low-income and minority workers the most (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 2022). According to the survey data, government response during the summer of 2020 reduced high levels of hardship, yet near the end of 2021, 20 million households reported having too little to eat, and 10 million households reported they were behind on rent. In early 2022, at least 3 million fewer people were employed than prior to the start of the pandemic (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 2022).

In June 2020, The World Bank went on record to state that COVID-19 would plunge the Global Economy into the worst recession since World War II. To aid in the relief, the U.S. Department of the Treasury, the Office of Fiscal Service, and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) distributed three rounds of direct relief payments during the COVID-19 crisis, with the third round of payments being distributed in 2022. The American Rescue Plan provided nearly \$10 billion for states, territories, and tribes to provide relief for vulnerable homeowners. The American Rescue Plan also provided \$350 billion in emergency funding for eligible state, local, territorial, and tribal governments to respond to the COVID-19 emergency and bring back jobs

due to loss of employment during the pandemic. The American Rescue Plan was enacted in March 2021, which provided \$1,400 for most Americans. In July of 2021, the government issued monthly payments through the Child Tax Credit (CDC, 2020). Even with enacting both of these supports for families, in October 2021, nearly 20 million adults still lived in households that did not get enough food, and 12 million adult renters were behind on rent (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 2022). The federal response aimed to support Americans during the pandemic yet did not account for expiring unemployment benefits and the supply chain issues causing the rising prices for goods and services.

Trump encouraged states to reopen to support the economy and the results varied. Some states quickly reopened, and others were more cautious, which was driven by politics (Wallach & Myers, 2020). A study conducted by Oxfam (2021) ranked states through an index based on three areas: worker protections (45%), healthcare (20%), and unemployment support (35%). Under worker protections, the focus was on proactive measures to protect workers and communities amidst a pandemic. Within the healthcare measure, the focus was on the protection of the residents through support to cover treatment. The focus of the unemployment index was to analyze the support needed for workers who were unemployed due to COVID-19, including housing and food assistance. States had the ability to earn a 0-100 for each component on the index, and then the scores were added together. The top five states in ranked order were Washington (76.41), New Jersey (72.17), California (72.03), Massachusetts (71.66), and Connecticut (64.04). The bottom five states ranked were Mississippi (25.48) Wyoming (24.18) Georgia (23.08), Missouri (22.08), and Alabama (17.76). Comparing the ranked states, it is to be acknowledged that the top five states that protected workers were Democratic (blue) states, while

the bottom five states ranked for worker protection were Republican (red) states (Oxfam). It is evident that the political affiliation of a state impacted the protection afforded to workers during the pandemic.

Impact on Marginalized Communities

Failure to Report Leading to Further Mistrust

Nationwide, there were notable disparities regarding Hispanic and Black people in the over-representation of COVID-19 cases compared to Whites. In the early stages of the pandemic, hundreds of doctors and civil rights groups urged the CDC and the U.S. Government to release race and ethnicity data on COVID-19 cases in order to ensure the proper response in Black communities, but it took two months to be released (CDC, 2020). In April, a report from the Chicago Tribune publicly exposed the fact that 68% of the COVID-19 deaths in Chicago were among the city's African American community highlighting the inequities. A social determinant that has driven inequality is access to acceptable public health information (World Health Organization, 2021). Finally, two months later in June 2020, U.S. Health and Human Services announced new laboratory data reporting guidance for COVID-19 testing to include demographic data on race, ethnicity, age, and sex, and called it the COVID-19 Racial Data Tracker. There have been countless research studies that showcased not only the disparities in numbers but the disparities in culturally responsive systems as it relates to the response of COVID-19 (Sinkam et al., 2021). The pandemic created a demand for evidence, and yet the pandemic highlighted the consequences through the propagation of falsehoods through a lack of transparent scientific data (Brownson et al., 2020).

Lack of Cultural Awareness in COVID-19 Response

There are many reasons why minoritized populations were disproportionately impacted at alarming rates. Through a review of the literature and findings, the detrimental themes noted are federal and state COVID-19 responses had limited strategic plans for intentionally supporting minority populations, failure to report accurate numbers, vaccine rollout efforts, and school closures. A survey from the Kaiser Family Foundation (2021) determined that 48% of Black adults said that the development of a COVID-19 vaccine did not consider the needs of Black Americans. This survey generated results regarding the perception of the vaccine and highlighted that vaccines were rolled out rapidly; however, distrust in the Latinx community caused a need for reform in the rollout methods. This survey showed that there were 20,792 COVID-19 vaccinations administered during the 16-week evaluation period. Of the 20,792 vaccinated individuals, 70.5% were Latinx, 14.1% were White, 7.7% were Asian, 2.4% were Black, and 5.3% were listed as other. Latinx individuals were outliers for having household incomes of less than \$50,000 a year, being first-generation immigrants, not having health insurance, and not having access to primary care providers. Latinx clients chose a specific COVID-19 vaccination site due to its location and the ease of scheduling, or it was recommended by someone they trusted. Through the use of a multi-tiered vaccination rollout, it is possible to address the mistrust among various populations. The rollout efforts were fast but did not address vaccine hesitancy. Understanding vaccine hesitancy is critical to addressing health inequities. Another study in Arkansas examined the relationships among sociodemographic groups, COVID-19 health literacy, fear of COVID-19 infection, general trust in vaccines, and COVID-19 vaccine hesitant using bivariate analysis and a logistic regression model. This study showed that there was a

relationship between minoritized individuals (e.g., Latinx) and factors such as location, trust, and comfort regarding vaccinations for COVID-19 (Demeke et al., 2022). One in five people reported hesitancy, reporting highest among Black/African Americans (Willis et al., 2021). Studies have demonstrated that trust is needed when efforts are made to share medical information with the community (Verma et al., 2022).

Risk Factors

Through a careful review of data, it is evident that the higher rates of infection in minority households can be categorized into two different understandings: external factors based on socio-economic status (e.g., the reliance on public transportation, living in bigger households, working jobs that are more at-risk) and systemic factors based on pre-existing conditions (e.g., lack of pre-existing medical services and healthcare, deep-rooted mistrust). Further data collected through a cross-study of 5,700 COVID-19 patients from 12 hospitals in New York City revealed that preexisting conditions such as hypertension, obesity, and diabetes were leading comorbidities for COVID-19 (Brownson et al., 2020). Poverty remained a risk factor for poor outcomes from infectious disease (Patterson et al., 2021). In the literature, social determinants surfaced a lot regarding understanding risk factors for minority populations (Walker et al., 2016). Social determinants of health remain relevant when discussing the outcome of COVID-19, including income inequality, poor housing, unsafe working conditions, lack of access to health care, and disparities in the criminal justice system. The term “essential workers” became widely-used to describe workers that were deemed essential and had to continue to work while the rest of the economy was shut down (Kane & Tomer, 2020). Essential frontline workers were more

likely to have lower educational attainment, identify as a minority, and be socioeconomically disadvantaged. Essential workers, who were often hourly workers, were granted limited protection (Gaitens et al., 2021).

Cultural Mistrust

There is a long history in the United States of trauma from experimentation, neglect, and abuse. These factors contribute to vaccine hesitancy in the Black community. The most atrocious and documented examples of experimentation are the crimes committed by J. Marion Sims and the Tuskegee experiment. Sims used enslaved women's bodies to operate on, causing excruciating pain and reprehensible damage to their bodies. J. Marion Sims is still called “the father of gynecology” to date. A century later, another series of experiments were conducted in Tuskegee, Alabama, where African American men with syphilis were untreated. The African American men in the experiment were lied to because they were told they were being treated for the disease. These two examples remind people of the unjust medical treatment of minority populations which contributes to a lack of trust (Scharff et al., 2010). Overall, the pandemic impacted minoritized populations at a rapid rate. However, a survey conducted by National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in January 2021, found only 14% of Black people trusted the vaccines and 18% said they would get vaccinated. A survey from the Kaiser Family Foundation determined that 35% of Black adults said they definitely or probably would not get vaccinated, citing major reasons as fear of contracting COVID-19 from the vaccine itself or mistrust of vaccines in general (2022). Collectively, 48% of Black adults said that the COVID-19 vaccine did not consider the needs of Black Americans.

Research showed that nationwide, Black Americans were receiving vaccinations at half the rates of White Americans (Rusoja & Thomas, 2021). It is imperative to focus on removing barriers while developing transparent and honest partnerships. There are equitable ways to address vaccine hesitancy in the communities most at risk yet research findings indicate that culturally responsive efforts have not been consistent (Dada et al., 2022).

Pandemic of Racial Injustice

"In the middle of the pandemic, another pandemic of racial injustice was simultaneously occurring. The COVID-19 public health crisis brought to light the complex interactions between the pandemic, structural racism, and mental health inequities. Inequities already existed prior to the pandemic, but the pandemic highlighted the need for numerous policy changes (Shim & Starks, 2021).

Poverty and unequal living conditions are a result of poor social policies and programs, limited economic opportunities, and bad politics. According to the World Health Organization (2020), "While maldistribution of health care is one of the social determinants of health, the incidence of illness and loss of life arises in large part because of the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age" (p. 3). According to Leitner et al. (2016), Black Americans had limited access to healthcare and increased rates of death due to circulatory disease in comparison with Whites in counties with higher levels of explicit racial bias against Blacks, but found no associations for implicit bias. Yet, other studies found that disproportionate use of lethal force by police on Black Americans was associated with implicit bias but not with explicit bias. Understanding biases is critical in understanding the root of injustice (Hehman et al., 2017).

Through the acknowledgment of social determinants of health, schools and organizations could proactively support the development of minoritized individuals.

Fundamental cause theory states that societal factors such as socioeconomic status, stigma, and racism produce health disparities by restricting equitable access to resources (Clouston et al., 2016). This theory was developed in 1995 to explain why the association between socioeconomic status (SES) and mortality has persisted despite reform and policy changes (Chang & Lauderdale, 2009). Cultural trauma may generate social disadvantage, stress, and mental and physical health problems in minority populations, which may be the underlying reason for health disparities. Cultural trauma is defined as colonization, genocide, and hate crimes (Alexander, 2016). The groups that are mainly affected are socially disadvantaged and exposed to pervasive stress, stigma, and diminished resources, perpetuating health disparities across generations (Subica & Link, 2022).

Structural racism is a foundational component to the disparities of the COVID-19 pandemic. Structural racism has prevented oppressed communities from gaining power or agency, which can lead to higher rates of violence and trauma, causing an increased risk of health and mental health inequities (Rusojic & Thomas, 2021). Structural racism continues to drive policies and create disparities between minoritized and non-minoritized individuals. Structural racism is founded on policies that result in segregation, lack of access to adequate healthcare, and lack of employment opportunities (Holden et al., 2022). A study in Chicago, in partnership with the Illinois Department of Health, was designed to quantify how disparities in COVID-19 outcomes evolved through the epidemic. SARS-CoV-2 diagnostic tests, COVID-19 tests, and COVID-19 deaths were obtained from the Illinois National Electronic Disease

Surveillance System from March 1, 2020, to December 31, 2020. Risks, cases, and deaths were calculated for Black and Hispanic/Latinx versus White residents. The results of this study indicated that while disparities in case and death rates became less drastic after May 2020, during the study's timeframe, the risk of a COVID-19 case for Black and Hispanic/Latinx populations was more than twice of Whites across all age groups. This study exposed that “the disparities in the COVID-19 pandemic are products of society, and not merely biology” (Holden et al., 2022, p.1)

Using the fundamental cause theory, different factors keep minority cultures in a position not to have access basic resources (Subica & Link, 2022). Through the lens of fundamental cause theory, social resources and deprivations create predictable patterns of harm from health crises. For example, during COVID-19, the lack of culturally responsive resources to educate minoritized individuals on the risks caused minoritized populations to be impacted by COVID-19. According to Krieger (2021), when cultural trauma meets all fundamental cause criteria, intergenerational social and health outcomes of affected populations are negatively impacted by different factors. COVID-19 has affected underserved communities of color, magnifying the historical health disparities that already existed (Krieger, 2021). The 2019 coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, racial injustice, and health inequities have recently been posited as a new syndemic. Syndemic can be described as a phenomenon when two or more diseases or health conditions exacerbate one another (National Association of Health Officials, 2023). In June 2020, there were Black Lives Matter protests due to the deaths of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, who were brutally murdered by police officers in previous months. These killings differed from others because they happened when the United States was at a standstill due to

COVID-19 and citizens could pay close attention. COVID-19 has also exposed inequities in mental and substance use disorders for oppressed and marginalized populations; this, with the publicized killings of Black people, has led to alarming consequences (Dave et al., 2020). Experts worried that the cases would spike due to the protests, but reports indicated they did not because the protests caused more people to stay home (Wilson, 2020). This started the conversation within the CDC to develop a health and equity framework in response to a pandemic.

Impact on Minoritized Youth

Secondary Impact of Caregivers

A caregiver can be defined as an adult who provides care to a child. Caregivers during COVID-19 were under extreme duress. As stated previously, precursors for the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 include poverty or an individual from a marginalized community. Children are impacted by the mental health of their caregivers. During the pandemic, the mental health of caregivers declined due to higher levels of parenting stress, depression, and anxiety which inevitably led to harsher parenting practices. Caregivers of children with special needs were even more impacted by stress, adding increased feelings of anxiety, depression, and defeat due to disrupted access to support. Children of parents who were experiencing higher stress during COVID-19 were less likely to receive the mental health services needed (Panchal et al., 2021). Pandemic-related stress decreased the closeness between child and caregiver, which shows an impact on a child's mental health (Davidson et al., 2020).

School Closures

It is important to recognize that schools play a role for students, especially students of color (Hoffman & Miller, 2020). Schools closed around the country in March 2020 and did not reopen fully until August 2020, with safeguards in place. Schools closed to reduce the rapid and deadly spread of COVID-19. The COVID-19 pandemic created the largest disruption of education systems in human history, impacting around 94% of the world's population (Pokhrel & Chhetri, 2021). Minoritized students were impacted severely by school closures in access to mental health services, barriers preventing access to education in the interim, access to food, and unreported maltreatment. School closures impact the mental health of students, but there is little data on the actual long-term effects of school closures (Goldberg, 2021). School closures reduced the spread of the virus but added an increase in mental health issues, including anxiety (Bahn, 2020). Schools are so much more than buildings to minority students; they are a place that provides a variety of services to level the playing field. Schools provide students access to health care with screening and services for asthma, vision, dental, and hearing, untreated mental health, and behavioral problems. Schools also handle the role of reporting child abuse and neglect. The non-academic barriers to learning mostly impacted Blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans, and economically disadvantaged groups (Hoffman & Miller, 2020).

Not only do schools provide access to services for students regarding health and well-being, but they also provide a consistent food source. In 2017, 12.5 million children lived in food-insecure households (Children's Defense Fund, 2020). In 2016, Hispanic and Black students (45% and 44% , respectively) were much more likely than Asian and White students (14% and 8%, respectively) to attend schools in which more than 75% of students were eligible

for free or reduced-price lunch under the National School Lunch Program (Children's Defense Fund, 2020). Large proportions of Black and Hispanic students rely on free or reduced-price meals provided by schools (Children's Defense Fund).

Many schools pivoted to digital learning platforms yet there were resource limitations (e.g., internet, computer access) that hindered access for minority students to a quality education. Data from the National Center for Education Statistics (2020) revealed that 14% of K-12 students did not have access to the internet while learning from home and 17% of K-12 students did not have access to computers in their homes. As a result, students struggled to complete their distance learning coursework. Students who were children of non-English speakers or children whose parents were essential workers and not at home to support digital learning were disadvantaged.

Children from households of caregivers who had issues with financial stability or job loss were most likely to encounter obstacles during the pandemic (Lawson et al., 2020). A small relationship between school closures and declining child mental health outcomes was observed in a study of 3,234 adults with at least one school-aged child (Hawrilenko et al., 2021). Children from families with lower income and those belonging to a racial/ethnic group were most likely to experience disproportionate mental health difficulties during school closures (Hawrilenko et al., 2021). Maltreatment of children was also an issue impacting disadvantaged communities the most. Economic adversity has been observed as a precursor to harsher parenting and a risk factor for psychological maltreatment and physical abuse (Elder et al., 1998). The family stress model emphasizes that economic instability places additional strain on family relationships, raising a significant risk for child abuse (Lawson et al., 2020). School staff are the primary reporters for

suspected abuse and neglect. During school closures, the numbers of suspected abuse or neglect significantly dropped, but it is unclear if that is accurate since educators are the primary reporters (Baron et al., 2020).

Toxic Stress/Trauma

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) defined trauma as events or circumstances that are experienced by individuals as physically or emotionally harmful with lasting effects on health and well-being (SAMHSA's Trauma and Justice Strategic Initiative, 2014). A questionnaire about adverse childhood experiences was mailed to 13,494 adults who had already completed a medical evaluation. In this questionnaire, seven layers of adverse childhood experiences were studied: psychological, physical, or sexual abuse, violence against the mother, or living with household members who were substance abusers, mentally ill, suicidal, or even imprisoned. The categories were then compared to adult risk behavior, health status, and disease. This landmark study came to be known as the Adverse Childhood Experience Survey (ACE). The study focused on analyzing the answers of the sample and observed the monitoring, tracking, and responses of the relationship between childhood trauma and health outcomes experienced later in life. The overall results showed a significant relationship between childhood exposure to trauma and each of the adult health risk behaviors (Felitti et al., 1998).

Trauma and adverse childhood experiences can lead to negative outcomes for adults (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2022). There is limited research on the impact of a crisis on marginalized communities. One piece of research discussed the impact of Hurricane

Katrina (Hart & Lee 2022). This disaster highlighted systemic inequities. Blacks and Native Americans were contracting and dying of COVID-19 at disproportionately higher rates than other Americans (Johnson & Buford, 2020), in part due to higher prevalence of pre-existing health conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, and asthma. Students experiencing a disaster, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, can experience added stressors similar to the response to other adverse childhood experiences (Bahn, 2020). The impact of school closures caused widespread panic and stress. Prior to COVID-19, schools serving large numbers of children from economically disadvantaged neighborhoods already had fewer resources to meet the needs of children, but the school closure exacerbated the stress for children, especially minority children (Owens, Reardon, & Jencks, 2016). It is imperative to consider the secondary stress experienced by minoritized children due to the number of deaths associated with COVID-19 in the Black, Latinx, and Indigenous communities.

As stated, during the pandemic, marginalized communities were impacted most with an increase in families facing food insecurity. Food insecurity is an adverse childhood experience and a basic need. Access to food is a basic and foundational need, and without it, people cannot function (Parekh et al., 2021). School closures added significant stress to students relying on the meals provided by schools. The pandemic caused chronic stress to oppressed people already facing higher adverse childhood experiences, which may lead to significant future concerns amongst minoritized communities (Chokshi et al., 2021). Overall, school closures supported reducing the spread of COVID-19, yet added a further spread of inequity for marginalized communities.

Needs Set Forth by COVID-19 that Impacted Minoritized Students

Background

Even with efforts to dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline, Black students in the United States are still subject to disciplinary action at higher rates than White students. Black students are seen as problematic due to implicit or unconscious racial bias. Research suggests that Black students' behaviors are perceived as more problematic, leading to harsher punishments (Riddle & Sinclair, 2019). There have been studies that show racial biases and racial disparities in education are directly correlated (Riddle & Sinclair, 2019). Consistent research shows that Black students were likely to be referred to the office for discipline based on defiant behavior, which is a form of exclusionary discipline and often results in further punitive action.

The relationship between disparities for Black students compared to White students results in poorer educational outcomes across a range of metrics. There are correlations between office referrals, employment, and involvement in the criminal justice system (Riddle & Sinclair, 2019). Most research focuses on out-of-school suspensions because it is found to be associated with negative outcomes. However, it is imperative to acknowledge other disciplinary responses that are also damaging to students: school arrests and in-school suspension, which is a form of exclusionary discipline.

A pandemic was a traumatic event and requires more analysis to understand how some groups experienced secondary stress. Six months after the United States publicly called COVID-19 a national emergency, the impact on school children, specifically minority children, was already gaining public attention.

Impact of Online Learning

A few literature studies discussed the punitive punishment of Black students during online learning (Helton, 2022). Distance learning proved challenging, especially for marginalized youth (Walravens, 2020). The term “digital divide” refers to the impact of the access and utilization of technology on low-income families and marginalized communities (Moya, 2020). For example, a fifteen year-old student was incarcerated for violating her probation since she did not keep up with her online coursework (Cohen, 2020). Another example is that of a nine-year-old, who faced expulsion because the teacher saw an unloaded BB gun behind him as he was participating in his online class. A Black 7th grader was also referred to the police when he brought a nerf gun into the virtual classroom (Cattafi, 2020). These are simply a few examples to show that even during virtual learning, minoritized students were facing exclusionary tactics. Policies that were designed to keep students safe actually created exclusionary practices that harmed minoritized students (Helton, 2022). In Utah, Governor Herbert made it possible for K-12 students and teachers to be charged with a misdemeanor for failure to wear a mask on school property (Tanner & Alberty, 2020). As a result of COVID-19 policies, minoritized students were facing exclusion from the classroom by discipline or opportunity. The global pandemic masked the inequitable practices already happening at school and criminalized even the smallest offenses.

The literature accentuates the inequities that already existed prior to COVID-19 and shows that the stunning impact of COVID-19 exacerbated the marginalized populations even further through the initial response. The initial response to COVID-19 caused an increase in cultural mistrust, leading to a detrimental impact. With a history of exclusionary and structural

racism in schools prior to COVID-19 and at the start of the pandemic; additional research is needed to understand the impact COVID-19 had on minority populations. Table 1 shows a summary of the literature review as it relates to the impact of COVID-19 on minoritized individuals.

Table 1
Summary of the Literature Review

<u>Focus</u>	<u>Sections</u>	<u>Topics</u>	<u>Authors</u>
Impact on Society	Initial & Detrimental Response	Presidential Leadership Economic Hardship	Mallah et al. (2021) Rutledge (2020) Dow et al. (2021) Moss et al.(2022) Eady et al. (2018) Allen et al.(2008) Oxfam (2021)

<u>Focus</u>	<u>Sections</u>	<u>Topics</u>	<u>Authors</u>
Impact on Marginalized Communities	Failure to Report		Brownson et al. (2020) Willis et al. (2021)
	Risk Factors		Brownson et al.(2020) Patterson et al. (2021) Tomer & Kane (2020) Gaitens et al.(2021)
	Cultural Mistrust		Scharff et al. (2010) Rusoja, E.A. & Thomas (2021)
	Pandemic of Racial Injustice		Shim & Sharks (2021) Leitner et al. (2016) Chang & Lauderdale (2009) Subica & Link (2022)

<u>Focus</u>	<u>Sections</u>	<u>Topics</u>	<u>Authors</u>
			Krieger (2021)
Impact on Minoritized Youth	Secondary Impact of Caregivers		Panchal et al. (2021) Davidson et al. (2020) Hoffman & Miller (2020)
	School Closures		Hoffman & Miller (2020) Pokhrel & Chhetri (2021) Bahn (2020) Hawrilenko et al. (2021)

<u>Focus</u>	<u>Sections</u>	<u>Topics</u>	<u>Authors</u>
			Elder et al. (1998) Lawson et al. (2020) Baron et al. (2020)
	Toxic Stress/Trauma		Felitti et al. (1998) Johnson & Buford (2020) Bahn (2020) Owens et al. (2016) Parekh et al. (2021)
Needs Set Forth by COVID-19 that Impacted Minoritized Students	Background of Inequitable Discipline		Riddle & Sinclair (2019)
	Impact of Online Learning		Helton (2022) Walravens (2020) Cohen (2020)

<u>Focus</u>	<u>Sections</u>	<u>Topics</u>	<u>Authors</u>
			Cattafi (2020) Tanner & Alberty (2020)

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This exploratory qualitative study was designed to examine the impact of COVID-19 on minoritized elementary students from the perspectives of Title I principals in a large urban school district located in the southern United States. Historically, inequities exist as it relates to disciplinary outcomes for minoritized students due to implicit bias and structural racism (Riddle & Sinclair, 2019). COVID-19 had a detrimental effect on a global scale but data indicated that it impacted marginalized communities at a disproportionate rate (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2022). The impact of COVID-19 on already oppressed communities stemmed from structural racism. When communities lack the same access as non-oppressed communities to adequate health care, equitable workforce protections, and treatment for pre-existing conditions, systemic racism is perpetuated (Tai et al., 2021). This study investigated the impact COVID-19 had on behavior infractions coded as suspension or expulsion through a two-part focus. The study examined how six Title I elementary school principals in one urban school district perceived the impact of COVID-19 on students. The data were collected through semi-structured interviews with the six principals. Ten schools were invited to participate, but only six agreed to be interviewed. Schools were selected based on meeting three requirements: (a) Title I, (b) geographic location, and (c) Level 2 Corrective Program (CP) support. Corrective Program support is a district level of support provided to schools that have had inconsistencies in their academic performance and need additional academic support.

Method

This study was an exploratory qualitative study, which was designed to identify themes, ideas, perspectives and beliefs (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The study examined the impact of COVID-19 on minoritized students in six different Title I elementary schools in one urban school district, as perceived by the current school principal. In an exploratory design, the focus is to explore a phenomenon or to identify important themes (Fraenkel et al., 2018). This exploratory qualitative study included one-on-one, semi-structured interviews which gathered information from six different Title I elementary school principals. The three research questions focused this study:

1. How do Title I elementary school principals perceive the impact COVID-19 had on minoritized students in one urban school district?
2. How did the COVID-19 pandemic impact student behaviors of minoritized students at Title I elementary schools as perceived by principals?
3. How did Title I elementary school principals provide support and resources to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on minoritized students?

The current chapter describes the study design and the various procedures and methods followed.

Rationale for Qualitative Design

Qualitative research is focused on understanding situations and events from the viewpoint of the participants (Fraenkel et al., 2021). Qualitative researchers concentrate on capturing a clear picture of reality, inclusive of interview transcripts, without a need to reduce research to

merely numbers (Franekel et al.). Another critical aspect of qualitative research is to understand the meaning of a phenomenon. Qualitative research seeks to gain preliminary insights into the why behind decision-making and opportunities (Shukla, 2008). There are limited studies regarding the impact of COVID-19 on minoritized students as perceived by school principals. This in-depth approach to understanding the impacts as it relates to COVID-19, student behaviors, and resources provided to minoritized students that addressed the needs caused by COVID-19 could be of great insight to future planning. Understanding the impact of COVID-19 is critical to the overall well-being of minoritized students. This qualitative study will contribute to the research focused on the impact policies had on the needs of minoritized elementary students during the pandemic.

Research Design

The purpose of any research design is to gather evidence that addresses the research questions, and there are multiple ways this can be achieved (Shukla, 2008). An exploratory qualitative study design was selected because the researcher desired a deeper understanding of the impact of COVID-19 from the perspective of other Title I elementary school principals. The goal of qualitative research is to understand the “why” rather than the “what” of a social phenomena founded on the direct experiences of participants in their everyday lives (Bhandri, 2023). Social research projects can be categorized as exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory. The focus of exploratory research is to formulate problems, seek clarification, and form hypotheses (Sue & Ritter, 2015). Exploratory research centers on gathering either secondary or primary data using a less structured format or informal procedures to interpret them (Kumar et

al., 2018). This study explored how six school principals understand and make sense of the overall impact of COVID-19 on minoritized elementary students. According to Swedberg (2020), exploratory studies typically fall into two categories: those that make a tentative first analysis of a new topic and those that propose new ideas or generate new hypotheses on an old topic. The amount of information already established about a topic is a critical component when determining whether to conduct exploratory or descriptive studies. In reviewing the literature, there were limited studies regarding the perspective of principals as it relates to the impact of COVID-19, making an exploratory format an ideal approach for this research.

Research Site and Population

The present exploratory qualitative study took place within a large urban school district located in the southern United States. The school district is divided into geographical regions for organizational purposes and serves over 209,000 students. The school district is composed of 210 schools; within those schools are elementary, middle, high, K-8, exceptional, alternative, and charter school options. Within the schools in this urban school district, 43.9% are Hispanic, 24.3% are White, 23.9% are Black, 4.7% are Asian, 2.7% are Multiracial, 0.3% are Native Hawaiian and 0.2% are American Indian/Native Alaskan. There are 76% of students enrolled in this district who qualify for free or reduced-price meals. In terms of staff, this district employs a total of 25,000 employees, with 3% (n=765) being administrators. There are 99 Title I schools, which includes charter schools. Title I status indicates the school met eligibility for Title I funds due to the fact that less than 40% of the students are from low-income families (Office of Progress Policy Analysis and Governmental Accountability, 2023). Out of the 99 Title I schools,

65 are elementary schools. Within the elementary schools, each school has a school principal. The school principal is responsible for overseeing the teaching, learning, school discipline, safety, and operations in their respective buildings.

Participants and Sampling Methodology

After receiving approval from the University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board (IRB), the study used criterion-specific, purposive sampling based on group characteristics to select schools to participate. Purposeful sampling, also known as judgment, selective, or subjective sampling, is a technique where the researcher relies on his or her own judgment when selecting participants of the study (Dudosvskiy, 222). Qualitative research relies heavily on non-random sampling techniques to ensure in-depth information is obtained on the subject to be researched (Purposeful Sampling in Qualitative Research, 2020). Participants for this study were selected based on specific attributes that allowed for commonality within the study.

School principals (i.e., current principals in an elementary school) who lead a Title I elementary school in one urban school district were eligible to participate. The district list of school types with the Title I status supported the purposive sampling. To further define the population, the researcher used criterion-specific purposive sampling with an established quota for each geographic areas.. Quota sampling is a non-probability sampling method where participants are chosen based on certain mutual-exclusive criteria. The type of quota sampling used was uncontrolled sampling, meaning there were no restrictions on sample choices and the researcher is free to choose participants at will (What is Quota Sampling and How Can You Take

Advantage Of It, 2018). To determine proportions needed for the quota sampling, there are geographic areas in the school district, and two to three schools were asked to participate per geographic area to allow for the researchers capacity to interview each principal, making it a total of 10 schools asked to participate in the study. The criterion to define the population was the geographic location, Title I status, and Corrective Program support. It was important to ensure representation from each geographic location in the district due to the size of the school district. This study set out to determine if there were any themes or commonalities among various principals in the school district. The initial quota of participants is a starting point to guide the research, but it can shift throughout the research (Palinkas et al., 2016).

Table 2

Sampling Level Quota (n) Title I Principal, CP Level II Support

Geographic Location	# of Principals Participating	% of Total Eligible Schools	# of Total Eligible Schools
East	1	100%	1
North	3	43%	7
West	1	50%	2
Southwest	1	20%	5

Data Collection Sources

All one-on-one interviews took place virtually via Microsoft Teams with the assurance of privacy in an office during the interview. Data were collected using a one-on-one, semi-structured interview protocol (see Appendix E). The protocol included ensuring the participant

understood the process through an introductory comment and a reminder of the IRB-approved consent form if they had any questions. After the introductory statement, the participants were each asked twelve questions. All six principals were asked the same twelve questions.

In addition to one-on-one interviews, field notes were captured during the interview. Field notes guided the researcher on patterns and potential biases. Field notes are data from observations captured by the researcher as documentation of the event, conversation, and full observation (University of Nottingham, n.d.). The researcher utilized a data file with discipline infractions from 2018 through 2021 from the six schools. Since the study examines the impact of COVID-19 on minoritized students, not only are the types of infractions examined, but there are demographic identifiers as well, such as ethnicity and school of enrollment. The data files were encrypted to ensure it was secure.

Table 3
Semi-structured Interview Questions by Research Questions

Interview Questions*	RQ1: How do Title I elementary school principals perceive the impact COVID-19 had on minoritized students in one urban school district?	RQ2: How did the COVID-19 pandemic impact student behaviors of minoritized students at Title I elementary schools as perceived by principals?	RQ3: How did Title I elementary school principals provide support and resources to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on minoritized students?
1. As a principal, what do you believe has been the most detrimental aspect of COVID-19 as it		X	

Interview Questions*	RQ1: How do Title I elementary school principals perceive the impact COVID-19 had on minoritized students in one urban school district?	RQ2: How did the COVID-19 pandemic impact student behaviors of minoritized students at Title I elementary schools as perceived by principals?	RQ3: How did Title I elementary school principals provide support and resources to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on minoritized students?
relates to student behavior?			
2. Since COVID-19, what shifts in student behaviors have you observed?		X	
3. During virtual learning- what impact did you see that COVID-19 had on minoritized (non-White) students?	X		
4. How has COVID-19 impacted students' ability to problem-solve? Have you noticed a difference in minoritized (non-White) students?		X	

Interview Questions*	RQ1: How do Title I elementary school principals perceive the impact COVID-19 had on minoritized students in one urban school district?	RQ2: How did the COVID-19 pandemic impact student behaviors of minoritized students at Title I elementary schools as perceived by principals?	RQ3: How did Title I elementary school principals provide support and resources to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on minoritized students?
5. Is there any grade where you have observed more student behaviors than others?		X	
6. What trainings have been given to provide teachers with tools needed to support student behaviors, since COVID?			X
7. Do you have the resources needed to successfully support student behavior post COVID-19?			X
8. Have you observed any student behaviors post COVID-19 that were not common prior to COVID-19?		X	
9. What observations do you have about	X		

Interview Questions*	RQ1: How do Title I elementary school principals perceive the impact COVID-19 had on minoritized students in one urban school district?	RQ2: How did the COVID-19 pandemic impact student behaviors of minoritized students at Title I elementary schools as perceived by principals?	RQ3: How did Title I elementary school principals provide support and resources to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on minoritized students?
the impact of COVID-19 as it relates to minoritized (non-White) students in comparison to White students?			
10. Explain your process for obtaining support for the mental health needs of students on campus?			X
11. How has the additional grant funded behavior specialist position supported student behaviors during the school year 2022-2023?			X
12. Explain the professional development provided to			X

Interview Questions*	RQ1: How do Title I elementary school principals perceive the impact COVID-19 had on minoritized students in one urban school district?	RQ2: How did the COVID-19 pandemic impact student behaviors of minoritized students at Title I elementary schools as perceived by principals?	RQ3: How did Title I elementary school principals provide support and resources to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on minoritized students?
teachers at the school-level, or district level that provided intervention strategies for students post COVID-19 as it relates to minoritized students?			

Analysis of Data

Data analysis has been referred to as “the most complex and mysterious of all the phases of a qualitative project, and the one that receives the least thoughtful discussion in the literature” (Kiger & Varpio, 2020, p.1). The video recordings for each one-on-one, semi-structured interview were transcribed verbatim using a digital transcription service. Once transcriptions were completed, all identifying information was removed prior to analysis. Names of individuals, departments, schools, and any information that could link the participant to their data were removed. During the field notes process, any identifiable information was kept confidential

in a locked drawer in a private office. Through the use of field notes, verbatim transcripts, as well as the data file to support demographic information, the researcher had a more holistic understanding of the principal's perspective of the pandemic's impact on minoritized students. During the interviews, the researcher took notes and highlighted words that the participant emphasized. The researcher also rewatched the interviews to add any other observations during the interview.

After the interviews, thematic analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data of the semi-structured interviews. Thematic analysis is a method of qualitative research which entails reviewing data to identify, analyze, and report on a set of repeated patterns (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). Thematic analysis also involves interpreting the data to construct themes based on the data set. An inductive analysis process was utilized to look for patterns and themes without using predetermined categories. Inductive analysis is an emergent strategy, where the researcher reviews the data as it is obtained (Bingham & Witkowsky, 2022). Through the inductive process, memos were created as a coding type to note representative evidence to keep track of reflections and data. In order to protect the confidentiality of participants and schools, schools were labeled A-E (e.g., School A), and principals were labeled A-E (e.g., Principal A).

The data analysis was organized using the Microsoft Excel computer program. Interviews were manually tagged on Microsoft Word by the researcher, utilizing past experience with coding.

Validity in qualitative research refers to the correct tools, processes, and data for the specific study ((Leung, 2015)). Trustworthiness is achieved by credibility, authenticity, transferability, dependability, and confirmability in qualitative research (Creswell & Poth, 2013).

Qualitative research is unique in that it tells a story that others can learn from, but the degree of trust attributed to the researcher telling the story is pivotal in understanding the research (Stahl & King, 2020). Guba and Lincoln (1985) discussed four general criteria in the approach of trustworthiness in qualitative research: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Stahl & King, 2020). This study was an exploratory study which means that the transferability aspect of increasing trustworthiness was not relevant. The purpose of this study was not aligned with providing findings within other contexts, but to examine the impact of COVID-19 on minoritized students through the perceptions of school principals.

Credibility

Credibility focuses on a driving question, “how congruent are the findings with reality?” This question can be quite subjective and is reliant on individual core values and judgments. To build credibility, field notes were used to capture phrases and specific emphasis that the participant shared in their answers. Field notes were utilized for reflection as well as an opportunity for the researcher to bring awareness to bias. Peer debriefing was utilized as a way to gain credibility throughout the process. During the peer debriefing experience, a professional colleague reviewed the transcripts, the coding process, and the thematic analysis protocol. During the peer debriefing process, all identifiable information was removed to ensure the confidentiality of the interview. Finally, the researcher gained credibility among the respondents since the researcher is also a Title I Elementary School principal supporting in the level of comfort for the participants and a collegial understanding of the answers of which the participants shared.

Dependability

A third perspective on trustworthiness is dependability. The most critical approach to dependability is peer debriefing, sometimes referred to as peer scrutiny. Peer debriefing is when another researcher is able to read and react to interpretations, supporting the researcher's process (Williams & Kimmons, 2018). The researcher used peer debriefing throughout the process of interviews, transcript review, and field note review. The peer reviewer also supported the researcher in guiding and supporting the interpretation of the findings related to the interviews and dataset.

Confirmability

Confirmability is the fourth part of trustworthiness, which supports objectivity in the research process (Stahl & King, 2020). As stated previously, a colleague worked collaboratively with the researcher to provide objectivity in the research process. Through the use of a peer reviewer, the researcher was able to gather critical feedback and gain perspective in the process.

Chapter Summary

This chapter described the methodology for the current research study. The study, purpose, justification for the study design, sampling technique, and data analysis were included. In addition, tables highlighting the number of administrators by geographic area, as well as the interview items by research questions were provided. Finally, this chapter detailed how the researcher increased trustworthiness through this exploratory qualitative study.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this exploratory qualitative study was to understand the impact of COVID-19 on minoritized students as perceived by elementary school principals within a large urban school district in the southern United States. One-on-one, semi-structured interviews were completed with six elementary school principals. Data collection took place from January through March of 2023. The following research questions guided this exploratory study:

1. How do Title I elementary school principals perceive the impact COVID-19 had on minoritized students in one urban school district?
2. How did the COVID-19 pandemic impact student behaviors of minoritized students at Title I elementary schools as perceived by principals?
3. How did Title I elementary school principals provide support and resources to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on minoritized students?

This chapter provides an overview of the study and provides an overview of the study participants' schools and findings. The findings are presented by school for each research question (i.e., School A, School B, School C, School D, School E, and School F) for each research question. In addition, findings are further described across groups to explore the overall understanding of the impact of COVID-19 on elementary minoritized students as perceived by principals in this specific school system for this subset of school principals.

Participants

Participants in this study included six elementary school principals (i.e., Principal A-Principal F) who completed one-on-one, semi-structured interviews with the researcher.

Interviews were between 18 and 30 minutes in length. Initially, data on the years of administrator experience was not collected from the participants. The review of the transcripts indicated a need for more information on the years the participants had as administrators and when they first took over the principalship role. After the interviews were completed, a follow-up demographic short answer request was asked from participants. Demographic data was provided by six participants (100%). Of these participants, 83% (n=5) indicated that they had five years or less of experience as an assistant principal prior to becoming a principal. In contrast, one participant had over 20 years of experience as an assistant principal prior to becoming a principal. Half (n=3) of the participants interviewed indicated they had only been a principal for one year. Data collected indicated 33% (n=2) of the participants had between five and ten years of principalship experience. One participant had almost 20 years of experience in the role of principal. Half (n=3) of the participants became principals in 2022. Additionally, 33% (n=2) became principals between five and ten years ago. Lastly, 16% (n=1) of the participants became a principal 19 years ago. Regarding the participants becoming the principals of their current schools, 66% (n=4) became principals of their schools in the year 2022, and 33% (n=2) became principals of their current schools in 2019. Table 4 through Table 7 provide more detail regarding participant experience in education. Tables 8 and 9 provide demographic comparisons for each school. The schools will be labeled respectively (e.g., Principal A is the Principal of School A).

Table 4*Participant Years of Assistant Principal (AP) Experience (n=6)*

Years of AP Experience	Count	Percent
> 5 Years of Experience	5	83%
< 20 Years of Experience	1	16%

Table 5*Participant Years of Principal Experience (n=6)*

Years of Principal Experience	Count	Percent
>1 Years of Experience	3	50%
5-10 Years of Experience	2	33%
19 Years of Experience	1	16%

Table 6*Participant First Year of Principal Experience (n=6)*

First Year of Principalship	Count	Percent
2004	1	16%
2014	1	16%
2017	1	16%
2022	3	50%

Table 7*Participant First Year of Principalship at Current School*

First Year at Current School	Count	Percent
2019	2	33%
2022	4	66%

Table 8*Demographic Information of Schools as of April 2023*

Federal Race	School A	School B	School C	School D	School E	School F
White	29%	5%	12%	27%	87%	10%
Black	67%	92%	83%	70%	10%	84%
Asian	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Native	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%
Pacific	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	2%
Multiple	32%	3%	3%	2%	1%	3%

Table 9*Federal Ethnicity of Schools as of April 2023*

Federal Race	School A	School B	School C	School D	School E	School F
Hispanic	28%	7%	14%	29%	81%	14%
Non-Hispanic	72%	93%	86%	71%	19%	86%

For this exploratory qualitative study, participants were selected based on three factors: (a) Title I elementary school principal, (b) corrective program support, and (c) geographic location. This urban school district in Florida is a large district requiring the district to organize the schools in different geographic areas (e.g., North, East, South, West). For this study, principals were asked to participate when they met the criteria. Ten principals were asked to participate, and six agreed to be interviewed. Sixty percent (n=6) of the schools asked to participate agreed to be included in this exploratory qualitative study.

Overview of Initial Coding and Analysis

Coding is a fundamental aspect of qualitative research. It describes a process of analyzing qualitative data by “taking it apart and putting it together in a meaningful way” (Creswell, 2003, p.156). Coding and data analysis are critical components of determining themes and patterns within a dataset. Utilizing systems thinking, a theoretical framework considers implementing a holistic approach to the comprehension of complex systems. Through the systems thinking framework with coding, connections and relationships may be gathered, which help to identify underlying structures and patterns in the system to understand the data as a whole (Elliot, 2018).

All interviews were conducted via Microsoft Teams and were audio recorded. Interviews were conducted in a one-on-one setting where confidentiality was guaranteed. Interviews were transcribed verbatim for all interviews. Transcripts were cleaned of grammatical errors for reporting purposes of the researcher. The cleaning of the transcripts is also supported in the member-checking process.

Peer Debriefing

Peer debriefing is a process that promotes constructive dialogue with peers. In this study, peer debriefing was utilized to increase the trustworthiness of the findings. Peer debriefing allows the researcher to work alongside a trusted colleague with an impartial perspective on the study (Spall, 1998). According to Spall, “peer debriefing contributes to confirming that the findings and the interpretations are worthy, honest, and believable” (p. 280). The peer debriefer chosen for this study has a doctorate in educational leadership and a high-ranking job title in research and accountability. The debriefer's experience is of the utmost caliber and created a foundation for optimal trustworthiness in the findings. The shared experiences between the researcher and the debriefer created an accountable yet authentic relationship where findings, interpretation, and implicit biases could be discussed organically.

Peer debriefing sessions took place in formal and informal methods. In the formal process, the debriefer had the chance to read through the de-identified transcripts to support thematic analysis. The researcher and the debriefer had multiple conversations regarding the initial thoughts, the coded themes, and the items that needed clarification. The informal debriefing sessions were conducted utilizing Zoom. During the meetings, the screen could be shared and initial themes and sub-themes were identified for each research question. These informal meetings provided clarity and time for honest reflection.

Analysis

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). Thematic analysis is utilized when the researcher wants to identify patterns or themes throughout the

dataset. Through thematic analysis, the researcher can have more flexibility in determining the codes, which is a considerable advantage given the diversity of work in learning and teaching. As an exploratory qualitative study, the flexibility of thematic analysis is not tied to a specific framework. Instead, it is an influential approach that makes the researcher more involved in examining the data. The example of thematic analysis which this research followed was Braun and Clarke's (2006) 6-step framework. The analysis process occurred through a process of which included six phases: (a) familiarity with the data, (b) generating initial codes, (c) searching for themes, (d) reviewing themes, (e) defining and naming themes, and (f) producing the report. Table 10 includes a description of the analytic phase and highlights the process related to this specific study.

Table 10
Phases of Thematic Analysis

Phase	Description of the Process
Phase 1: Familiarity with the Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In total, the researcher conducted six one-on-one interviews. • Of those, six interviews were transcribed verbatim. • Transcripts were read while listening to the recording of the interviews to review for accuracy. • The interview notes were read and re-read for accuracy and understanding. • Notes were taken during and after the interview to reflect and record initial thoughts.
Phase 2: Generating Initial Codes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed a peer debriefing with a respected colleague and expert in the field, where two sanitized interview transcripts were reviewed independently and discussed. • After the peer debriefing discussion, the

Phase	Description of the Process
	<p>researcher used background knowledge of coding and support from an expert to generate initial codes at the latent level.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The process resulted in a long list of codes, as any data that could be identified as a code was part of the initial list.
Phase 3: Searching for Themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Codes were reviewed and refined to determine possible categories and themes. • This phase resulted in a list of categories and themes.
Phase 4: Reviewing Themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewed themes and made modifications as needed (e.g., identified sub-themes, combined similar themes, discarded codes)
Phase 5: Defining and Naming Themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generated clear definitions and names for each category and theme. • Considered multiple factors through the writing of Chapter 4 (e.g., which categories should or should not be part of the findings based on prevalence).
Phase 6: Producing the Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalized decision regarding how categories and themes would be reported. A description of overall themes would be provided, while categories would be reported for the six principals. Categories were reported based on prevalence within the dataset (e.g., discussed by at least 50% of the participants within the group of principals).

Data were organized using Microsoft Excel and were reported in aggregate for the group of six principals. The research questions guided the analysis of the data from the interviews and for reporting findings. First, the three research questions were organized by focus. Research Question 1 (RQ1) focused on the overall impact of COVID-19 on minoritized students. Research Question 2 (RQ2) focused on the principal's perception of student behaviors impacted by

COVID-19. Research Question 3 (RQ3) focused on the resources and support utilized to address the impact of COVID-19. Once research questions were organized by focus, the interview questions were categorized to align with one or more of the three research questions. The steps in organizing the coding were found in Saldana's *Coding Manual for Qualitative Research* (2013). Coding solo is considered a cyclical process consisting of "a little bit of data and a lot of right brain" (Agar, 1996, p. 46). Similar codes were grouped to create categories, then patterns were observed. The difference between a code and a theme is the understanding that "a theme is an outcome of coding, categorization, or analytic reflection, not something that is, in itself, coded" (Saldana, 2013, p.14).

Research Question Findings

Principal Perception of Impact of COVID-19 on Minoritized Students (RQ1)

The first research question sought to gather information on school principals' perceptions of the impact of COVID-19 on minoritized students. For this specific research question, two interview questions were directly related:

Question 3: "During virtual learning, what impact did you see that COVID-19 had on minoritized (non-White) students?"

Question 9: "What observations do you have about the impact of COVID-19 as it relates to minoritized (non-White) students in comparison to White students?"

Overall, the data analysis identified two themes for which codes were categorized. These themes are described in alphabetical order below.

Impact on Minoritized Youth as it Relates to Access. Impact on minoritized youth, as it relates to access, was defined by components of the pandemic, of which access was a defining factor for minoritized students and communities (e.g., internet access, internet connectivity, teacher digital learning capacity). Overall, three categories were included in this theme.

Impact on Minoritized Youth as it Relates to Support. Impact on minoritized youth, as it relates to support, was defined by components of the pandemic, of which support was a defining factor for minoritized students and communities. Support is a term used to describe students having an adult or caregiver there to support or guide them through virtual learning or packet learning. Packet learning happened when specific schools were not digital prior to the pandemic, requiring caregivers to go to the school and pick up packets to teach their child the grade-level standard material. For example, focus during virtual learning, unsupervised at home, lacking an adult with an education in the home, physical set up in the home, and a caregiver's health. Overall, five categories were included in this theme.

Table 11
RQ1 Emergent Themes and Categories Discussed by Principals

Theme	Category	Sample Quotes
Impact on Minoritized Youth (Sub Theme: Access)	Internet Access	“I saw that our students didn't learn as much as they should have learned. And it's because, number one, let's just go with technology or with the internet...where the hotspots we're giving out to our students, it's not the same, I guess gigabytes or whatever it is. So it's not going to move as fast.

Theme	Category	Sample Quotes
		<p>And then, also, you have several students connected to that. So if you have four children in school, your children are, for the most part, using the same one.”</p> <p>“...the main thing that stands out to me, just the access to the internet.”</p>
Impact on Minoritized Youth (Sub Theme: Access)	Internet Connectivity	<p>“I think it also shined a light on the lack of resources that our impoverished communities share, because we took for granted things like Wi-Fi and networks that were viable networks. So even providing hotspots, you found students still were in areas where they weren't getting good reception or the servers weren't working.”</p>
Impact on Minoritized Youth (Sub Theme: Access)	Teacher Learning Capacity	<p>“My doors closed, my teachers didn't know how to use the digital apps. My children didn't have it. We didn't have devices. We didn't have the training. And so, there was a huge chunk of time and academics that just did not happen for our kids. Forget about it with packets. Teachers didn't know how to have that sense of continuity with teaching and instruction.”</p>
Impact on Minoritized Youth (Sub Theme: Support)	Student Focus	<p>“Because some of them for some students who weren't logging in, they were just free to play, play on the game all day, play with siblings at home, just stay home and do nothing.”</p>
Impact on Minoritized Youth (Sub Theme: Support)	Supervision	<p>“Also, if your parents has to go to work, you don't have anyone there who's sitting there telling you you need to do this. And what happens? You're not going to do it. And it was</p>

Theme	Category	Sample Quotes
		hard. A lot of the things that our students should have learned here with us they didn't learn them. And so now we're playing catch up.”
Impact on Minoritized Youth (Sub Theme: Support)	Adult Caregiver Capacity	“A lot of those babies were home with older siblings versus educated adults that could assist with either the technology or the curriculum or both.”
Impact on Minoritized Youth (Sub Theme: Support)	Home Structure	“They struggled with having a study area that would help support the learning that was happening. So, many times, they would tune in and be there, but they maybe didn't have materials, maybe were not even sitting in the chair or sitting down, just very, very loose. It was almost like it was okay, as long as, just, the device was on, and they were listening.”
Impact on Minoritized Youth (Sub Theme: Support)	Health of Caregiver	“In terms of healthcare, there were deaths, and there were sicknesses, and a lot of people were out, and it was just constantly mom sick, dad sick, brother sick, everybody's sick. And so, you have people who are being constantly quarantined for ten days of time. And when they're quarantined, the same work ethic, not because they knew better, they do better, just a different level of understanding and cultural competency, right?”

Throughout the pandemic, minoritized students were impacted at disproportionate rates. When given the opportunity to share their perspectives, more than 50% (n=4) of principals interviewed determined that access to learning and support for learning were two critical impacts

on minoritized youth. Access to learning was categorized through internet access, internet connectivity, and teacher learning capacity. Four of the principals interviewed perceived that internet access had a negative impact on minoritized students. Barriers existed as a factor of structural racism, and the pandemic exacerbated them (Kijakazi, 2020). The principal of School E concluded that internet access was not equitable during the pandemic.

I saw that our students didn't learn as much as they should have learned. And it's because, number one, let's just go with technology or with the internet. So even when the hot spots we're giving out to our students, it's not the same, I guess gigabytes or whatever it is. So it's not going to move as fast. And then, also, you have several students connected to that. So if you have four children in school, your children were, for the most part, using the same one.

Not only was internet access an issue, but the connection to the internet also caused implications for learning. The Principal of School B described it as,

I think it also shined a light on the lack of resources that our impoverished communities share, because we took for granted things like Wi-Fi and networks that were viable networks. So even providing hotspots, you found students still were in areas that they weren't getting good reception or the servers weren't working.

Teachers were at the forefront of the pandemic, on the front lines, expected to lead the rapid transition from face-to-face learning, to virtual learning, and back to face-to-face, with no formal training. Teachers were expected to respond to behavior, academic, and social-emotional needs during this uncharted time in education. People may have failed to consider that this caused a major issue for teachers and interrupted student learning. Many schools had previously

been established digital schools before the pandemic, so the transition during the pandemic may not have been as detrimental as it was at lower socioeconomic status schools of which were not digital prior to the pandemic. Principal of School D concluded the following:

I live in [TOWN], and [SCHOOL NAME] has been a digital community for a very long time. The doors closed, and learning kept happening. My doors closed, my teachers didn't know how to use the digital apps. My children didn't have it. We didn't have devices. We didn't have the training. And so, there was a huge chunk of time and academics that just did not happen for our kids. Forget about it with packets. Teachers didn't know how to have that sense of continuity with teaching and instruction. There were so many unknowns when it came to the pandemic at that time. We know how to navigate through things now. People didn't know how to navigate. And so, our children lost a lot of academic ground. And so, some kids didn't go to school for almost a year and a half. And so, now we're trying to play catch up with those skill sets. It's extremely difficult. So when you're talking about 33% of your kids back into a brick-and-mortar, that's going to affect everything. That's going to affect test scores. That's going to affect foundational skills. It's going to affect trailing standards. It's going to affect me a lot. And our kids are going to, unfortunately, become victims of that.

Five categories emerged as the theme of impact on minoritized students as it relates to support. Of the five, each category shined a light to the barriers that minoritized students faced regarding support during the pandemic. Of the principals interviewed, 83% (n=5) perceived that minoritized students were negatively impacted by a lack of support during COVID-19. There were multiple reasons why parents and caregivers of minoritized students were not at an

advantage during the pandemic compared to non-minoritized students. Many minoritized parents were working multiple frontline jobs as a result of systemic racism barriers creating an unfair advantage for non-minoritized counterparts. Student focus was a key category of a lack of support that impacted minoritized students due to the lack of consistent adult presence to ensure student focus as teachers do during the school day. The principal of School A concluded their perception of the impact of student focus, “because some of them for some students who weren't logging in, they were just free to play, play on the game all day, play with siblings at home, just stay home and do nothing.” Similar to focus, supervision caused an issue for minoritized students during virtual learning. Principal of School E stated,

Also, if your parents have to go to work, you don't have anyone there who's sitting there telling you you need to do this. And what happens? You're not going to do it. And it was hard. A lot of the things that our students should have learned here with us they didn't learn them. And so now we're playing catch up.

Principals mentioned that there is no replacement for a teacher, and parents and caregivers at home did not have the education or experience to navigate learning through the pandemic.

Principal of School B stated, “A lot of those babies were home with older siblings versus educated adults that could assist with either the technology or the curriculum or both”. Principal of School D shared their perceptions of the challenges of the barriers of which the families of the students had to face,

I think there's a lot of things. There's a language barrier. So we have a lot of children whose parents don't speak English. So they can't help with the homework. They can't help with the research. They can't help with the projects. And when it comes to resources,

when it comes to materials, when it comes to those things, they're coming from another country. They don't understand the cultural expectations, particularly with just leaving and not being gone for weeks at a time. And when COVID happened, we had a lot of our minority families, some of them came from other countries, where there is Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Brazil, Haiti. We just have a lot of Caribbean population that would go home if they couldn't find work. We didn't know where they were.

As one may imagine, if the adult caregiver is working or has other children to support, the home structure may not be a primal focus. Principal of School C stated,

They struggled with having a study area that would help support the learning that was happening. So, many times, they would tune in and be there, but they maybe didn't have materials, maybe we're not even sitting in the chair or sitting down, just very, very loose. It was almost like it was okay, as long as, just, the device was on, and they were listening. But there just seemed to be a gap as far as actually using technology to do the lifting of the learning.

As stated previously, minoritized communities were disproportionately impacted by the pandemic through a variety of factors, but the health of caregivers had a detrimental impact on minoritized youth. The principal of School D indicated that the overall well-being of the adults impacted the students' well-being.

In terms of healthcare, there was deaths, and there were sicknesses, and a lot of people were out, and it was just constantly mom sick, dad sick, brother sick, everybody's sick. And so, you have people who are being constantly quarantined from 10 days of time.

And when they're quarantined, the same work ethic, not because they knew better, they do better, just a different level of understanding and cultural competency, right?

Overall, Research Question 1 (RQ1) focused on identifying the principal's understanding of the overall perception of the impact of COVID-19 on minoritized students. Through the interviews and data analysis, principals' perceptions of the impact of the pandemic determined that the access to learning and the lack of support created negative and lasting effects on minoritized students.

Principal Perception of Impact of COVID-19 on Minoritized Student Behavior (RQ2)

The second research question sought to gather information on the school principal's perception of the impact of COVID-19 on minoritized students as it relates to student behavior. It is important to recognize that in the realm of this study, behavior is defined in two parts: student social skills and any disruptive student behaviors that are infractions as per the student code of conduct. For this specific research question, five interview questions supported this topic, yet four were directly aligned.

Question 1: As a principal, what do you believe has been the most detrimental aspect of COVID-19 as it relates to student behavior?

Question 2: Since COVID-19, what shifts in student behaviors have you observed?

Question 4: How has COVID-19 impacted students' ability to problem-solve? Have you noticed a difference in minoritized (non-White) students?

Question 5: Is there any grade you have observed more student behaviors than others?

Overall, the data analysis identified four themes for which codes were categorized. These themes are described in alphabetical order below.

Impact on Minoritized Youth as it Relates to Aggression. Impact on minoritized youth, as it relates to aggression, was defined by components or events that principals perceived as aggressive or intense behaviors. Some principals described these behaviors as irrational or ones that are difficult to make sense of. For example, aggression could be defined as hitting or self-control. Overall, two categories were included within this theme.

Impact on Minoritized Youth as it Relates to Communication. Impact on minoritized youth, as it relates to communication, was defined as students' ability to appropriately and safely communicate with words or emotions. An example of communication is thinking before acting and conflict resolution. Overall, two categories were included within this theme.

Social Interaction. Social interaction was defined by the interaction of minoritized students amongst peers. Social interaction could also be defined as the ability to resolve conflict through socializing with peers. Two examples of social interaction are developmental and peer-to-peer conversations. Overall, two categories were included within this theme.

School Structures. School structures were defined by the physical structure of a school, the routines, procedures, and expectations that exist within a school building. Examples of school

structures in this study are routines and procedures, consistent expectations, and a schedule.

Overall, three categories were included within this theme.

Table 12

RQ2 Emergent Themes and Categories Discussed by Principals

Theme	Category	Sample Quotes
Impact on Minoritized Youth (Sub Theme: Aggression)	Hitting	“So we saw a lot of things like the hitting back and forth, or just students being rude, or just a lot of your common behaviors, but simply because they'd been home. When they returned, we had to do a lot of just reiterating of the student code of conduct and just our daily [PROGRAM NAME] expectations, and then just how to treat one another.”
Impact on Minoritized Youth (Sub Theme: Aggression)	Self-Control	“Self-control, self-control and an ability to navigate conversations with peers to mediate their differences.”
Impact on Minoritized Youth (Sub Theme: Communication)	Thinking Before Acting	“Like I was mentioning earlier, just the fact that students are unable to think through situations before they act.”
Impact on Minoritized Youth (Sub Theme: Communication)	Conflict Resolution	“So I'm not sure. I'll say this. The other day, a young man hit a young girl. And I asked them, I was like, ‘Well, why would you hit her?’ Well, she did something to him. I said, ‘But haven't you ever heard that young men are not supposed to hit girls?’ I said, ‘Yes, she was wrong for what she did, but have you ever heard that young men are not supposed to hit girls?’ ‘Yes.’ I said, ‘Well, have you ever seen a man hit a

Theme	Category	Sample Quotes
		<p>woman?’ His response was yes. So I'm not quite sure what kids were seeing and if that had something to do with why we're seeing the escalation in the drop in the ability to do conflict resolution.”</p> <p>“So first part about problem-solving that still goes back to being out and around other people. So those experiences that you should have had, you didn't get them. So now, you don't know what to do in the case of conflict. So what do you know how to do? You either know how to yell You know how to scream. You know how to fight. And that's something that if that is your environment that you're in all day, you think that that's normal. And it's not. So when you come to school, and that's not what you can do, there's a problem. So just that whole experience of let's talk through this, let's think through this, that was lost.“</p>
Social Interaction	Developmental	<p>“Similar to what I just said, a lot of the students, social interactions were off. So personal space, and just how to properly just interact with one another.”</p> <p>“I would say it's the gap that they now have with their social skills, particularly our youngest children who did not get those routines and those experiences when they were very, very young, as well as, at every level, they progress with their social skills.”</p>

Theme	Category	Sample Quotes
Social Interaction	Peer-to-Peer Conversations	“...so they really missed out on developing those skills that they need to be successful when they collaborate, when they work in groups, learn different ways. It was hugely impacted, I think.”
School Structures	Routines and Procedures	<p>“So the idea of school wasn't important. The idea of structures and routines weren't important. And so, really getting those children back into routines and structures and expectations and work ethic was difficult.”</p> <p>“I would say it's the gap that they now have with their social skills, particularly our youngest children who did not get those routines and those experiences when they were very, very young, as well as, at every level, they progress with their social skills, so they really missed out on developing those skills that they need to be successful when they collaborate, when they work in groups, learn different ways. It was hugely impacted, I think.”</p>
School Structures	Consistent Expectations	“... kids who were here losing the structure and the expectation. So they're going to school at home. Sometimes structures and routines were not set up at home. So in my home, right, we had structures. We had routines. We had expectations. So even though I was here and my kids might have been at home, my husband was home. He was working from home. And so, he was checking on

Theme	Category	Sample Quotes
		them, making sure that they were doing what they were supposed to do.”
School Structures	Schedule	“So now, you are not only leaving home for maybe the first time. Now you are in this environment where you have all of these rules, and there's a schedule. So learning about all of that, that's kind of new for them and shocking for some. But a little hard for others but shocking.”

Minoritized youth were greatly impacted throughout the pandemic because of the aforementioned reasons. Through the analysis of the principal perception of the impact of COVID-19 as it relates to student behaviors, four themes remained consistent: (a) aggression, (b) communication, (c) social interaction, and (d) school structures. Aggression is a behavior described by multiple principals; whether it was due to the possibility that students were exposed to violence during the school closures or students missed developmental years where they might learn to resolve conflict and use words instead of fists, it was a noteworthy observation nonetheless. The principal of School A stated,

So we saw a lot of things like the hitting back and forth, or just students being rude, or just a lot of your common behaviors, but simply because they'd been home. When they returned, we had to do a lot of just reiterating of the student code of conduct and just our daily [PROGRAM NAME] expectations, and then just how to treat one another.”

Principal of School F said,

So I'm not sure. I'll say this. The other day, a young man hit a young girl. And I asked them, I was like, "Well, why would you hit her?" Well, she did something to him. I said, "But haven't you ever heard that young men are not supposed to hit girls?" I said, "Yes, she was wrong for what she did, but have you ever heard that young men are not supposed to hit girls?" "Yes." I said, "Well, have you ever seen a man hit a woman?" His response was yes. So I'm not quite sure what kids were seeing and if that had something to do with why we're seeing the escalation in the drop in the ability to do conflict resolution.

Another detrimental impact of the pandemic had to do with effective communication by minoritized youth, as described by principals. Students struggled with effective communication post-pandemic, as observed by principals. Appropriate communication can resolve conflicts and decrease behavioral infractions by students. The two categories of this theme were thinking before acting and conflict resolution. Principal of School A stated,

Definitely. Because for some of our students, they didn't have to. That was like a year and a half where they did not have to. They were able to just kind of, again, just stay home if they had siblings, interact with their siblings, sometimes in a much different way than you would interact with your peers in your classroom. So just bring them back to the classroom setting. Rather than using your words to kind of work through situations or work through problems, or to be able to just express yourself in an appropriate manner, we did see a lot of, "I'm mad. I want to hit." Or, "I'm mad, I want to walk away. I don't have to deal with this." Or, "The teacher isn't listening to me, so I'm not going to listen to her."

Principal of School E stated,

You either know how to yell or you know how to scream. You know how to fight. And that's something that if that is your environment that you're in all day, you think that that's normal. And it's not. So when you come to school, and that's not what you can do, there's a problem.

Social interaction played a part in the impact of COVID as perceived by principals. Two examples of social interaction are developmental and peer interaction. Social interaction is a key component in the development of children. Developmentally, students missed significant developmental time in pivotal years, making the return to school quite challenging, as perceived by principals. To this point, the principal of School A concluded, "Similar to what I just said, a lot of the students' social interactions were off. So personal space, and just how to properly just interact with one another." Similarly, the principal of School C said,

I would say it's the gap that they now have with their social skills, particularly our youngest children who did not get those routines and those experiences when they were very, very young, as well as, at every level, they progress with their social skills, so they really missed out on developing those skills that they need to be successful when they collaborate, when they work in groups, learn different ways. It was hugely impacted, I think.

Lastly, school structures emerged as a theme from the perspectives of the principals interviewed. The expectation of routines and procedures, consistent expectations within a school building, and a schedule are critical components of a successful learning experience, and this was impacted in a negative way throughout the pandemic. Principal of School C concluded,

It was the primary. Last year, it was the primary, right? How do you do school? When there was no structure, there was no routine. You're watching television. You ate when you felt like it. You went to the restroom when you felt like it. So it was challenging for kindergarten teachers because routines are everything.

Routines and structures were critical for a successful experience; without them, students suffered in the transition back to school. The Principal of School E said that getting students back into routines and procedures was a learning curve.

And when I was an assistant principal, so I would say that it was just the whole thing of getting back into routines. So when they were at home, there wasn't that-- it wasn't a very-- oh, I don't want to say strict, but the environment just wasn't consistent. So it was like certain things you can do at home that you can't do at school. And I think that that was something that we had to go back and re-teach students how to behave at school because they kind of forgot about all the rules that we had in place.

Overall, routines, consistent expectations, and a schedule are cardinal components for successful behavior in a student, as these foundational pieces set the tone for a student to be able to flourish. Students may show behaviors in the classrooms without the opportunity to have predictable structures.

Support Provided to Address the Impact of COVID-19 on Minoritized Students (RQ3)

The third research question sought to gather information on the support provided to teachers and staff with the strategies needed to address the needs brought forth by COVID-19 on minoritized students. Five interview questions aligned with the focus of this research question.

Question 6: What trainings have been given to provide teachers with tools needed to support student behaviors since COVID?

Question 7: Do you have the resources needed to successfully support student behavior post COVID-19?

Question 10: Explain your process for obtaining support for the mental health needs of students on campus.

Question 11: How has the additional grant-funded behavior specialist position supported student behaviors during the school year 2022-2023?

Question 12: Explain the professional development provided to teachers at the school-level or district level that provided intervention strategies for students post COVID-19 as it relates to minoritized students.

Overall, through the data analysis, one theme emerged in which codes were categorized. This theme is described below.

Impact on Minoritized Youth as it Relates to Support. Impact on minoritized youth, as it relates to support, was defined by components of support and professional resources provided to teachers and staff organized by the principal to address the needs caused by COVID-19 for minoritized students. Two examples of the type of support that impacted minoritized students

were the identification of needs and providing social skills. Overall, two categories were included in this theme.

Table 13

RQ3 Emergent Themes and Categories Discussed by Principals

Theme	Category	Sample Quotes
Impact on Minoritized Youth (Sub Theme: Support)	Identification	<p>“Well, she's been a huge support. We've had a lot of students, especially kindergarten and first grade, so these students weren't even in school fully during COVID. But I do think that they've been impacted by, I guess, just being home, and maybe the parents not receiving the support that they needed during that time. But we've had a lot of kindergartners come in, especially this year, who are nonverbal, who just have needs that had not been pre-identified.”</p>
Impact on Minoritized Youth (Sub Theme: Support)	Social Skills	<p>“And so she has been amazing with providing support, and helping us get those students staffed, and get the support that they need so that we can get them, hopefully, the support that they need. So she has been a great asset in working with our primary students. She works with everyone. She provides social skills to all students, all of our ESE students, K-5, but she spends a lot of time with those students in kindergarten and first grade who just-- they came to us. They'd never been to school before. And they've never been diagnosed, but it's clear that, yeah, nonverbal, not potty trained, things like that.”</p> <p>“Well, that's not really a dean problem</p>

Theme	Category	Sample Quotes
		because there's another underlying reason why this child is acting out. So this is not for the dean. And so, that's great that she's able to go and get that-- go and meet the children. We do have codes at our school. And so, one of the codes you can call is a code for her. She can provide social skills. So it's like, yes, this child is acting out, but it's because of mental health. Or it's because this child receives ESE services. So therefore, this is a problem that we already know that he or she has. And so she can go and deal with that.”

The pandemic further exasperated the disparaging differences between minoritized and non-minoritized students. Research Question 3 (RQ3) focused on the supports the principal put in place to address the needs caused by the pandemic. Each Title I school in this urban school district received a Behavioral Specialist position to support the needs set forth by the pandemic. While there were requirements for the behavioral specialist, each school had discretion regarding how to best utilize this position. Through the answers of this question to determine the theme, each principal best utilized this position to support the behavioral needs of minoritized students. Principal of School A stated,

And so she has been amazing with providing support, and helping us get those students staffed, and get the support that they need so that we can get them, hopefully, the support that they need. So she has been a great asset in working with our primary students. She works with everyone. She provides social skills to all students, all of our ESE students,

K-5, but she spends a lot of time with those students in kindergarten and first grade who just-- they came to us. They'd never been to school before. And they've never been diagnosed, but it's clear that, yeah, nonverbal, not potty trained, things like that.

The Principal of School C discussed that the utilization of a behavioral specialist has been game-changing.

It has been a game changer. This is the first time we've had a behavior specialist. And we just happened to get somebody that's amazingly skilled. She just has helped us to mediate, follow plans, write really good behavior contracts, behavior plans, following them, being systemic, helping to diffuse. I mean, she's really been a game changer for us.

Additional information gathered from RQ3 will be reported in Tables 14 through 17.

Table 14

Trainings Provided to Staff to Support Post COVID-19 Student Behaviors

School	Trainings
School A	Verbal De-escalation, Social Emotional PD, Relationship Building
School B	Small Group Interventions, Kagan, Reading Plus
School C	Caring School Communities, CHAMPS, In-House Methods
School D	PBIS (Positive Behavior Implementation System), Model of High Expectations
School E	Required District Mental Health Training
School F	Trauma-Informed, CHAMPS, In-House Refreshers

Table 15*Do You Have the Resources Needed to Support Student Behavior?*

School	Resources Needed to Support Student Behavior
School A	Yes
School B	Yes
School C	No
School D	No
School E	Yes
School F	No

Table 16*School Process for Obtaining Mental Health Support*

School	Process for Obtaining Mental Health Support
School A	Monitor health blocks in master schedule, guidance counselor pulls targeted groups to provide social skills, greeting students as they enter the building
School B	Social worker and counselor, trained staff on social-emotional learning, guidance counselor meetings with students, regulation for students
School C	Use of a team (e.g., guidance counselor, dean, social worker) working together to help make decisions for children
School D	No current counselor, so used mental health designee, work with community partners
School E	Guidance counselor provides support, Guidance counselor ensures SEDNET papers are distributed to the correct parties, counselor provides social skills
School F	Trained trauma-informed teachers, partnership with district vendor

Table 17*School Professional Development (PD) to Support Minoritized Students*

School	PD to Support Minoritized Students
School A	Nothing specifically
School B	Nothing specifically
School C	Caring School Communities
School D	Nothing specifically
School E	Nothing specifically
School F	Trauma-Informed, In-House Classroom Management

Overall, through the careful analysis of the data for RQ3, it was evident that there was discretion at how the support was provided to principals so that they could in turn support the unique and diverse needs of minoritized students. Table 11 shows the information provided by principals in providing teachers with training to target and support behavioral needs and also shows much variety, some with an academic focus and some with a behavioral focus. In reviewing Table 12, 50% (n=3) reported that they had the resources needed, yet 50% (n=3) reported that they did not have the resources needed to support student behavior post COVID-19. Noted in Table 12, each school had a very different approach to supporting students' mental health needs. Almost zero commonalities existed between each school and their priorities for training staff. As reported in Table 13, 66% (n=4) reported that there was no specific training or professional development provided to address the needs of which minoritized students faced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Chapter Summary

The impact of COVID-19 was viewed universally by all principals interviewed as a turning point for minoritized students. The overarching themes include limited school structures due to school closures. School structures can be understood as the organization of the school day as it relates to predictability with schedules, access to food and resources, access to services, teacher support, and peer interaction. COVID-19 impacted minoritized communities at a disproportionate rate. Minoritized students not being in the safe and predictable structure of a school building had a significant impact socially, behaviorally, and academically. All the principals interviewed (n=6) agreed that when the buildings closed, the learning stopped. The schools chosen for the sample all received Level II Corrective Program support due to being historically low performing, yet 50% (n=6) of these schools say they still do not have the resources to support student behavior post COVID-19. All principals interviewed agreed that the transition from face-to-face to virtual learning presented significant challenges regarding inequities of technology, structure of the home environment, support of the caregiver, and possible exposure to violence, causing an increase in aggressive behaviors in school. When students are not with their peers or in an environment with predictable expectations, social interaction development and social skills will suffer. Students not attending school for a period of time had a significant impact on their developmental skills, as perceived by principals. Schools utilized resources such as a behavior specialist to try to address the needs caused by the pandemic yet each school had a very different idea of what the “needs” were.

In terms of the overall support and professional development provided for teachers to address the needs caused by COVID-19, there was a notable variance between the schools,

which can be seen in Table 10. As it relates to training provided to staff targeting the needs of minoritized students whose data indicates were impacted at a significant rate, 66% (n=4) of principals interviewed did not provide anything exclusively to help staff understand the unique challenges faced by minoritized students. Similarly, for the steps to ensure students have the resources needed for mental health, each school that shared a similar demographic makeup had a very different understanding of mental health and interventions aligned with mental health (Walker et al., 2022).

The findings were similar in most cases with an exception for three principals whose experience levels were incomparable (i.e., Principal B, Principal C, Principal D). The study findings were based on the perspective of the principals. As the researcher progressed through the data analysis portion of this study, it became evident that there were some patterns and the years of experience needed to be included in the findings; however these findings were not reported as it was a very small sample (n=6).

This chapter described the study participants and sampling framework. In addition, an overview of initial coding and analysis was provided, along with information regarding the peer debriefing process. Finally, findings were explored by research questions and through categories. By examining the different categories and themes, the researcher was able to synthesize the overall impact of COVID-19 on minoritized students. The final synthesis will be described in Chapter 5 rather than by research question or school.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND LIMITATIONS OF FINDINGS

Introduction

While there has been a slight improvement in the understanding of trauma, there is still a limited common understanding of trauma. Qualitative research is a process that seeks a deep understanding of a phenomenon within its most natural setting, focusing on the why instead of the what. Qualitative research focuses on authentic inquiry and discourse (Wilson et al., 2020). In this study, the analysis sought to look at the common themes by research questions and categories. COVID-19 was a traumatic event yet there was a limited response to the trauma, nor a clear definition of trauma understood by school leaders. The focus of this synthesis exploration is to determine what these data tell us about principal perceptions of the impact of COVID-19 on minoritized students, what can be learned, and why this is important. The concept of a systems theory is that the data work together to tell a story and that the individual pieces are not as relevant as they are all together. Systems theory recognizes that systems work together to relate to one another within a larger, more complex system (Bertalanffy, 1969). This study was examined through Bronfenbrenner's Human Development theoretical framework, which looks at how the various ecosystems work together. The present study included six elementary school principals of Title I schools in a large urban school district. As a district (i.e., a system), there are protocols for decision-making regarding directives, teaching and learning, and emergency management. There is a chain of command, especially in a large school district. District decision-makers taking the time to have a common understanding of the trauma (i.e., secondary and primary) that the pandemic caused minoritized students could positively impact the recovery of student success and impact policy to respond to any future crisis more efficiently.

Explanation and Comparison of Findings

The present study revealed multi-layered information regarding participants' perceptions of the impact that COVID-19 had on minoritized students. All principals interviewed understood the critical needs set forth by the pandemic on minoritized students. Overwhelmingly, principals had a common understanding of the impact of COVID-19 on student behaviors yet most did not share a common understanding as to the why behind the behavior.

Research Question 1 (RQ1) focused on the principal's perception of the overall impact of COVID-19 on minoritized students from a holistic sense. There was a consensus that emerged during the data analysis. The common themes were the impact on minoritized youth as it relates to access, support, social interaction, and social structures. After reviewing the data, one principal indicated trauma as the primary factor that impacted minoritized students during COVID. The data proves that COVID-19 was indeed a traumatic event, and traumatic events are coupled with significant responses that can manifest in the classroom, impacting behaviors, social interactions, and overall well-being. Trauma can be understood as the “why” stated above and defined as “resulting from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life-threatening and has lasting adverse effects on the individuals functioning and mental, physical or spiritual well-being” (SAMHSA, 2014, p.7). This definition also includes institutional bias or structural bias. According to the Colorado Department of Education (2019), “the COVID-19 pandemic has increased the complexity of related traumas of loss and illness, as well as exacerbating the impact of prior traumas” (p. 1). COVID-19 exacerbated prior traumas and caused additional

trauma, yet in the data analysis, 16% (n=1) of schools provided trauma-informed training to the staff.

Research Question 2 (RQ2) focused on the principals' perceptions of the impact that COVID-19 had on the behaviors of minoritized students. The majority of principals agreed that social interaction was impacted and that school structures and communication amongst minoritized youth were also notable factors. Trauma responses in the classroom can look very similar to defiance or aggression, but one might wonder if the common experience of COVID-19 caused an increase in trauma. Unfortunately, adjustments to the curriculum to address the needs of minoritized students were non-existent.

Research Question 3 (RQ3) focused on the resources provided to teachers and staff to address the needs of students. This research question had the most variance. While principals understood that the pandemic had an outcome that affects the success of minoritized students in schools now, there was not a common understanding of the “why.” There is a consideration of trauma impacting the brain as a response of COVID-19, especially considering students were at home without the safe and consistent structure of the school during virtual learning or mandated quarantines.

As described by participants, there was a significant gap in the structure for students when schools were closed. Participants described the need for structure during learning, but a massive increase in the need for practice with rules, routines, and structures when students returned, and even currently in the schools. There were 83% (n=5) of participants who perceived the most intense behaviors in 4th grade, and after analyzing, the current 4th graders went home in March 2020 as 1st graders, a key developmental year. They learned basic social skills on the

computer if they had supervision and support, and from the interviews conducted, the majority of students did not. Shifts in behavior primarily were observed as social interactions, again being out of the building and learning how to problem-solve trivial things (e.g., someone stepping on your shoes should be a conversation and not a fist fight). All principals stated that there was an increase in aggressive behavior post COVID-19, which could be a result of the trauma caused by COVID-19, as well as an exacerbation of prior trauma.

According to the trauma-informed pedagogist Cole (2023), a lecturer at Harvard Law School,

Understanding trauma and engaging in a collaborative process of change that brings this understanding into everything we do creates a powerful pathway to helping all students learn both in school and remotely. Trauma informed recognizes that the brain responds to trauma differently, and that with a focus on relationships, connection, belongingness, safety, family engagement, and student agency schools can be strongly empowered with the skills needed to overcome any situation with positive results (p. 2).

According to the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (2022), trauma-informed approaches within any system aim to adhere to the “4 Rs”: (a) Realizing the widespread impact of trauma and pathways to recovery, (b) recognizing traumas signs and symptoms, (c) Responding by integrating knowledge about trauma into all facts of the system, and (d) resisting re-traumatization of trauma-impacted individuals by decreasing the occurrence of unnecessary triggers (i.e., trauma and loss reminders) and by implementing trauma-informed policies, procedures, and practices.

However, the absence of a common definition of trauma and a unified training framework were considered barriers to understanding this phenomenon. This large urban school district did not provide any trauma-informed training or expectations regarding how to support minoritized students upon their return, even though 100% (n=6) of principals agree that there needs to be additional resources to respond to students.

The trauma caused by COVID-19 had detrimental effects in two areas: academically and socially. Academically, principals agreed that student learning loss is substantial and that students are still trying to play catch up. As stated previously, there are barriers as to why so many minoritized students were left alone or without supervision, but nonetheless, the gap that already existed is now even more significant. Principal of School A stated, “I think a lot of times, especially in this area, a lot of my parents work two and three jobs. So a lot of times the students are left to just kind of figure things out on their own or with an older sibling.” Learning persevered in affluent schools but was majorly disruptive in lower socio-economic status schools. Principal of School B said, “So primarily trying to make certain that those kids with all those learning gaps can get some more targeted instruction and focus direction on how to study and catch up, for a lack of better words.” Districts must be willing to acknowledge that the why behind the learning loss is founded on trauma, and without intentional acceptance and plans, the learning loss will always be just that, lost. “To establish a strong foundation for learning, we need to acknowledge and work through trauma” (Kennedy, 2020, p. x). To address the loss of learning that COVID-19 exasperated, people must recognize that trauma impacts one's ability to learn. According to Polyvagal Theory, the vagus nerve touches every major system in the human body and its health is necessary for caring for the nervous system (Porges, 2009). This theory

focuses on the “window of tolerance” which means that when a human is triggered, they are outside of the window of tolerance. When one is outside of their window of tolerance, no new learning can take place. Hence, in order to address the focus on the loss of learning, decision-makers could consider addressing trauma as a response to the loss of learning. As stated previously, COVID-19 had lasting effects academically and socially.

Social interactions were impacted by the school buildings shutting down and students being exposed to unpredictable environments. Regrettably, most responses were aggressive or inappropriate social interactions. The President of the Trauma Research Foundation, Dr. Van der Kolk stated “when children are oppositional, defensive, numbed out or enraged it is also important to recognize that such ‘bad behavior’ may be repeat action patterns that were established to survive serious threats, even if they are intensely upsetting or off-putting” (2015, p. 72). Adolescents may display aggressive behavior, become withdrawn, or exhibit difficulty concentrating at school. Some of the common behaviors that are observed in the post COVID-19 era have to do with aggression and isolation, yet there is no set response or understanding of how to best support students experiencing these feelings. During the data analysis phase, it was evident that most schools did not offer any training targeted focused on the experiences of minoritized students. According to the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (2017), cultural responsiveness must be intentional and courageous. The school must work to actively counteract the effects of historical trauma and societal oppression, including implicit and explicit bias and punitive consequences (i.e., out-of-school suspension). Punitive consequences can be understood as taking something away with an emphasis on punishment. This framework also encourages skills to use evidence-based practices and ensure they are adapted to the students and families in

an attempt to reduce stigma and increase effective responses (National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2017). The framework also discusses three steps needed for a successful response: (a) a comprehensive emergency operation plan, (b) threat assessment protocol, and (c) recovery services. In the comprehensive emergency operations section of the framework, the guidelines indicated a need for mental health practitioners to be a part of the response team yet none of the principals indicated support from any mental health representatives when schools reopened. The second step of the framework discusses threat assessment protocols. Threat assessment has to do with knowing the students and being aware of any possible threats on campus. However, the last aspect of the framework is recovery services which suggests that in the aftermath of a crisis, a team of trained professionals provides evidence-based and trauma-informed screenings and interventions following the crisis. The data indicated that minoritized students were disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. However, throughout post-pandemic the principals indicated that there had been no district response or guidelines to supporting students.

Limitations

The present study illustrates the knowledge and policy implications among six elementary school principals at a large urban school district in the southern United States in 2023; however, there are several limitations of the study that should be noted. Data collected through interviews relied solely on the perceptions and understanding of the interviewee (Creswell, 2003). Since member checking did not occur, the participants' perceptions may have not been adequately described. While the interviewer worked with a peer debriefer and utilized reflective notes and feedback from a trusted colleague, there is still possible bias, as the researcher is a principal as well.

Other limitations specific to education include a sample population that was inclusive of only six elementary principals, three of which were not principals prior to COVID-19, which created a difficult experience answering any of the questions comparing pre- and post-COVID behaviors. In addition, this study focused on six schools and only one school district in one state. Although generalizability is never the focus of qualitative research, replicating this study might be challenging for a rural district.

This study focused on minoritized students, and the researcher does not identify as a minoritized individual; therefore, this could have been a sensitive topic that the participants did not feel comfortable answering. However, existing relationships and length of time within the organization could have served as a buffer despite inconsistent engagement. The researcher also consistently added various steps to increase trustworthiness such as peer debriefing, field notes, and collaborating with a trusted expert in the field.

Lastly, the study incorporated the exploratory design and focused directly on the principal's perspective and was solely qualitative. Moving forward, future research could add a quantitative aspect for further validity and generalization of the study.

Implications of Future Research

Implications for Practice

Overwhelmingly, principals understood the critical needs created by the pandemic. The trauma endured as a result of COVID-19 was viewed from different angles both directly and indirectly. This suggests a potential change in district leaders' focus and the challenges that minoritized students encountered. For example, one participant shared, "I think the kids are

almost desensitized to tragedy because so much has occurred in their lives and in their families and in their communities. I think the shock value of tragedy has kind of been [inaudible] as a result of all that we've experienced as a country, even.” The implications for practice based on principal perception of the impact of COVID-19 on minoritized youth are represented in the conceptual framework in Appendix G.

A consistent definition of trauma that incorporates the minoritized students' experience as it relates to COVID-19 could aid in supporting the needs of students. To determine this shared and consistent definition, input from stakeholders such as principals, students, staff, families, and community members could be obtained to ensure representation. After a common definition is composed, the next step should include implementing a trauma-informed framework. The district decision-makers can utilize the research and input from stakeholders.

In addition, intentional resources could be designed as it relates to traumatic events to create more efficient responses. Resources should be organized by personnel, curriculum, and professional development. Reviewing the research, 100% of the principals indicated that the behavior specialist position that was created post COVID-19 response was incredibly beneficial for supporting students. Providing personnel to schools with an intentional focus on supporting trauma, including small group check-ins and mentorship, is critical. A curriculum could be developed to supplement the trauma-informed framework. The curriculum would support social-emotional learning. Lastly, professional development is a pivotal component of student success, Each principal indicated that they did not provide targeted professional development to address the needs of minoritized students. Creating professional development that is tiered and consistent will allow staff to buy in and serve minoritized students.

Recommendations for Future Research

An exploratory study can be the first step in understanding a phenomenon. Future studies that are related to this research should include an analysis of the principal experience in correlation to behavioral outcomes. There is minimal research on years of principal experience and responding to student behaviors post COVID-19.

For a deeper understanding, researching the years of experience an administrator has as it relates to student behavior may provide perspective. The success and attrition of principals who have only been a principal during COVID-19 could provide an understanding of the secondary impact of trauma on school-based leaders. Half of the participants (n=3) in the study have only been principals since the year of COVID-19. It would be interesting to examine the retention of principals who have only had experience with the legalities and behaviors that COVID-19 amplified. Finally, future research could explore the relationship between student academic and behavioral outcomes since COVID-19.

Conclusions

The present study illustrated the impact of COVID-19 based on perceptions by six elementary school principals in a large urban school district in the southern United States. The results of this study call attention to the importance of a shared understanding of trauma. A shared understanding of the traumatic impact of COVID-19 at the district and state levels could lead to a change in policy. Providing teachers with a common understanding and a framework for examining COVID-19 may increase teacher retention. COVID-19 caused trauma for minoritized students and the gap between minoritized and non-minoritized students has only

widened since the pandemic. In order to implement systemic change, the different departments must have a common understanding of trauma and the impact of COVID-19. Adelman and Taylor (2007, p. 60) stated “Of particular importance in identifying resources for systemic change is a big picture awareness of prevailing and pending policies, institutional priorities, and allocation of resources. Pursuing major systemic changes in an era of sparse resources generally means deploying and weaving together some of the system's available resources to underwrite the change processes.”

APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL LETTER



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

Institutional Review Board

FWA00000351
IRB00001138, IRB00012110
Office of Research
12201 Research Parkway
Orlando, FL 32826-3246

EXEMPTION DETERMINATION

December 16, 2022

Dear Ashlynn Ramirez:

On 12/16/2022, the IRB determined the following submission to be human subjects research that is exempt from regulation:

Type of Review:	Initial Study, Exempt categories 2ii and 4
Title:	EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 on ELEMENTARY-AGED MINORITIZED STUDENTS
Investigator:	Ashlynn Ramirez
IRB ID:	STUDY00004738
Funding:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 254, Category: Consent Form;• 255, Category: IRB Protocol;• Data Points/Interview, Category: Interview / Focus Questions;

This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made, and there are questions about whether these changes affect the exempt status of the human research, please submit a modification request to the IRB. Guidance on submitting Modifications and Administrative Check-in are detailed in the Investigator Manual (HRP-103), which can be found by navigating to the IRB Library within the IRB system. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request so that IRB records will be accurate.

If you have any questions, please contact the UCF IRB at 407-823-2901 or irb@ucf.edu. Please include your project title and IRB number in all correspondence with this office.

APPENDIX B: RESEARCH NOTICE OF APPROVAL



OCPS Application to Conduct Research Research Notice of Approval

Approval Date: 2/13/2023

Study ID Number: **406**

Expiration Date: 2/12/2024

Project Title: EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 on ELEMENTARY- AGED MINORITIZED STUDENTS

Requester: Ashlynn M. Ramirez

Sponsoring Agency/Organization/Institutional Affiliation: University of Central Florida

Thank you for your request to conduct research in Orange County Public Schools. We have reviewed and approved your application. This *Research Notice of Approval (R-NOA)* expires one year after issue date, 2/12/2024.

Additionally, we have received principal approval from the following schools to participate in your study:

Schools:

Danielle	Spooney	Engelwood Elementary	danielle.spooney@ocps.net
Alfaye	Floyd	West Oaks Elementary	alfaye.floyd@ocps.net
Lisa	Adams	Eagles Nest Elementary	lisa.adams@ocps.net
Tabitha	Brown	Phillis Wheatley Elementary	Tabitha.Brown@ocps.net
Kimberly	Hankerson	Rolling Hills Elementary	kimberly.hankerson@ocps.net
Amanda	Ellis	Rosemont Elementary	amanda.ellis@ocps.net

If you are interacting with OCPS staff, students or families, you may email the school-based or district-based administrators who have indicated interest in participating, including this notice as an attachment. After initial contact with applicable administrators, you may email any necessary staff included in your application. This approval notice does not obligate administrators, teachers, students, or families of students to participate in your research; participation is entirely voluntary.

OCPS badges, indicating security clearance, are required to collect data, whether in-person or virtually (including virtual interviews/focus groups and virtual classroom observations), at any OCPS campus or building.

Page 1 of 2

2022.08.02

- **All external researchers** (non-OCPS employees) intending to collect data in-person or virtually must undergo a FDLE/FBI Level 2 background screening in order to gain access to our facilities, staff and students. The screening will be similar to the one utilized by our district for our instructional vendors. Pending review of the screening, the school board will determine if you are eligible to collect data in-person or virtually at our facilities and interact with administrators, faculty and students by issuing an OCPS Approved Researcher badge.

More information on the security clearance process will be emailed to you in a separate communication.

Our department is in the process of pulling records for your data request. Time needed will vary according to the complexity of the data request. We will contact you should further clarification be needed.

Depending on the availability, extent of data or years identified in the data requested, this process takes a minimum of 2 business weeks. Data requested within the current fiscal year may require more time for processing due to static release dates by the State.

You are required to bring the following items with you every time you visit an OCPS facility:

1. **Copy of your R-NOA (research notice of approval)**
2. **Copy of your OCPS Security Clearance Form**
3. **OCPS badge**

You are responsible for submitting a Change/Renewal Request Form to this department prior to implementing any changes to the currently approved protocol. If any problems or unexpected adverse reactions occur as a result of this study, you must notify this department immediately. Allow 45 days prior to the expiration date, if you intend to submit a Change/Renewal Request Form to extend your R-NOA date. Otherwise, submit the Executive Summary (along with the provided Cover Page) to conclude your research with OCPS within 45 calendar days of the R-NOA expiration. Email the form/summary to research@ocps.net. All forms may be found at this [link](#).

Should you have questions, need assistance or wish to report an adverse event, please contact us at research@ocps.net or by phone at 407.317.3200, extension 200-2737.

Sincerely,

Xiaogeng Sun, Ph. D.
 Director, Research and Evaluation
 Orange County Public Schools
research@ocps.net
 407.317.3200, Ext. 200-4730

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW INVITATION EMAIL - SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

School Principal's Perception of COVID-19 and Impact on Minoritized Students

Subject of Email: Request for Research

Body of Email: My name is Ashlynn Ramirez and I am the researcher in the study

"EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 on ELEMENTARY- AGED MINORITIZED STUDENTS."

The purpose of this research study is to help provide recommendations to support school leaders understand the impact of COVID-19 and student behaviors as it relates to minoritized students. The objective of this study is to determine the impact of COVID-19 on minoritized students in 6 Title I elementary schools in Orange County Public Schools. As stated above, COVID-19 impacted minorities at disproportionate rates. This study will examine the impact of COVID-19 to determine how minority students were impacted in comparison to White students. The goal of this study is to examine the impact and utilize the findings to help school leaders learn about the impact of COVID-19 and its effects on student behaviors, especially among minoritized students.

You will be asked to participate in one interview that will last between 20-25 minutes. Interviews will take place in a location of your choice, by phone, or via Zoom. You will have the option to participate from anywhere you so choose. Interviews will be audio-recorded. *If you do not want to be recorded, you will not be able to be in the study.* All audio-recordings will be removed from the study data after interviews are transcribed and will then be stored in a secure location , which is UCF One Drive, for at least 5 years after study closure, per UCF policy, at which time they will be destroyed. All interviews will be confidential. You will be assigned an alphanumeric code to ensure the confidentiality of your identity. All data will be securely stored on a computer in a locked office and will be destroyed 5 years after study closure, per UCF policy.

The topics of the interviews are student behaviors post-COVID-19 and the impact on minoritized students based on observations and infractions, compared to White students. Another topic has to do with training and professional development offered to schools to support students post COVID-19. Another aspect of the interviews is to discuss the process for obtaining support for

students as it relates to mental health. Lastly, the interview focuses on examining the utilization of the grant-funded behavior specialist position.

Participation is completely voluntary and you may decide to stop the interview at any time. Your decision to participate or not participate in this study will in no way affect your employment or relationship with the individuals who may have an interest in this study. Possible risks of this study include possible loss of privacy and confidentiality.

You must be 18 years of age or older and a principal in an Orange County public school to participate in this research study.

My time frame to complete research is expedited. I appreciate your understanding. Please respond back and let me know if this date/time works for you, and whether or not you want face to face or zoom. I am happy to come to your school if you prefer face to face.

Monday 2/27 at 7:00 AM or 4:30 PM (Please select one)
Face to Face or Virtual (Please select one)

Study contact for questions about the study or to report a problem: If you have any questions about this study, please contact me at ashlynnramirez@knights.ucf.edu. My faculty advisor, Dr. Larry Walker, may be contacted by phone at (---) ----- or by email at —.

IRB contact about your rights in this study or to report a complaint: If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, or have concerns about the conduct of this study, please contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB), University of Central Florida, Office of Research, 12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501, Orlando, FL 32826-3246 or by telephone at (407) 823-2901, or email irb@ucf.edu.

Thank You,

Ashlynn Ramirez

APPENDIX D: INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT - SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

School Principal's Perception of COVID-19 and Impact on Minoritized Students

Title of Project: EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 on ELEMENTARY- AGED
MINORITIZED STUDENTS

Principal Investigator: *Ashlynn Ramirez*

Other Investigators: *NA*

Faculty Supervisor: *Dr. Larry Walker*

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Whether you take part is up to you.

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are the principal of an elementary school in an urban school district. Whether you take part is up to you. The purpose of this research study is to help provide recommendations to support school leaders to understand the impact of COVID-19 and student behaviors as it relates to minoritized students. The objective of this study is to determine the impact of COVID-19 on minoritized students in 10 Title I elementary schools in Orange County Public Schools. As stated above, COVID-19 impacted minorities at disproportionate rates. This study will examine the impact of COVID-19 to determine how minority students were impacted in comparison to White students. The goal of

this study is to examine the impact and utilize the findings to help school leaders learn about the impact of COVID-19 and its effects on student behaviors, especially among minoritized students.

You will be asked to participate in one interview that will last between 20-25 minutes. Interviews will take place in a location of your choice, by phone, or via Zoom. You will have the option to participate from anywhere you so choose. Interviews will be audio-recorded. *If you do not want to be recorded, you will not be able to be in the study.* All audio-recordings will be removed from the study data after interviews are transcribed and will then be stored in a secure location , which is UCF One Drive, for at least 5 years after study closure, per UCF policy, at which time they will be destroyed. All interviews will be confidential. You will be assigned an alphanumeric code to ensure the confidentiality of your identity. All data will be securely stored on a computer in a locked office and will be destroyed 5 years after study closure, per UCF policy.

The topics of the interviews are student behaviors post COVID-19 and the impact on minoritized students based on observations and infractions, compared to White students. Another topic has to do with training and professional development offered to schools to support students post COVID-19. Another aspect of the interviews is to discuss the process for obtaining support for students as it relates to mental health. Lastly, the interview focuses on examining the utilization of the grant-funded behavior specialist position.

Participation is completely voluntary and you may decide to stop the interview at any time. Your decision to participate or not participate in this study will in no way affect your employment or relationship with the individuals who may have an interest in this study. Possible risks of this study include possible loss of privacy and confidentiality.

You must be 18 years of age or older and a principal in an Orange County public school to participate in this research study.

Study contact for questions about the study or to report a problem: If you have any questions about this study, please contact me at ashlynnramirez@knights.ucf.edu. My faculty advisor, Dr. Larry Walker, may be contacted by phone at ---- or by email at ---.

IRB contact about your rights in this study or to report a complaint: If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, or have concerns about the conduct of this study, please contact Institutional Review Board (IRB), University of Central Florida, Office of Research, 12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501, Orlando, FL 32826-3246 or by telephone at (407) 823-2901, or email irb@ucf.edu.

APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

School Principal's Perception of COVID-19 and Impact on Minoritized Students

School Name: _____ Interviewer: _____ Date: _____

Good Morning/Afternoon/Evening, My name is Ashlynn Ramirez and I am the researcher for this study, titled "Examining the Impact of COVID-19 on Minoritized Elementary Students". I want to begin by thanking you for participating in this interview. The answers you provide are important to the study of COVID-19 and its impact on elementary-aged students. The interview should not take any longer than 20 to 25 minutes. If you have any questions during the interview, please do not hesitate to ask.

Please review the 254 Consent Form and ensure you have no questions.

Do I have your permission to video record the interview? Yes _____ No _____

Great, let's begin.

1. As a principal, what do you believe has been the most detrimental aspect of COVID-19 as it relates to student behavior?
2. Since COVID-19, what shifts in student behaviors have you observed?
3. During virtual learning- what impact did you see that COVID-19 had on minoritized (non-White) students?
4. How has COVID-19 impacted student's ability to problem-solve? Have you noticed a difference in minoritized (non-White) students?
5. Is there any grade where you have observed more student behaviors than others?
6. What training has been given to provide teachers with tools needed to support student behaviors, since COVID?
7. Do you have the resources needed to successfully support student behavior post COVID-19?
8. Have you observed any student behaviors post COVID-19 that were not common prior to COVID-19?
9. What observations do you have about the impact of COVID-19 as it relates to minoritized (non-White) students in comparison to White students?
10. Explain your process for obtaining support for the mental health needs of students on campus.
11. How has the additional grant funded behavior specialist position supported student behaviors during the school year 2022-2023?

12. Explain the professional development provided to teachers at the school-level, or district level that provided intervention strategies for students post COVID-19 as it relates to minoritized students.

APPENDIX F: PARTICIPANT SUMMARY FORM

School Principal's Perception of COVID-19 and Impact on Minoritized Students

Participant Summary Form

(Adapted from Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016.)

Today's Date: _____

Participant: _____

Analyst: _____

Summary of Information for Each Research Question:

RQ1: How do Title I elementary school principals perceive the impact COVID-19 had on minoritized students in one urban school district? (IQ 3, IQ 9)

RQ2: How did the COVID-19 pandemic impact student behaviors of minoritized students at Title I elementary schools as perceived by principals? (IQ 1, IQ 2, IQ 4, IQ5, IQ 8)

RQ3:How did Title I elementary school principals provide support and resources to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on minoritized students? (IQ 6, IQ 7, IQ 10, IQ 11, IQ 12.

Additional information

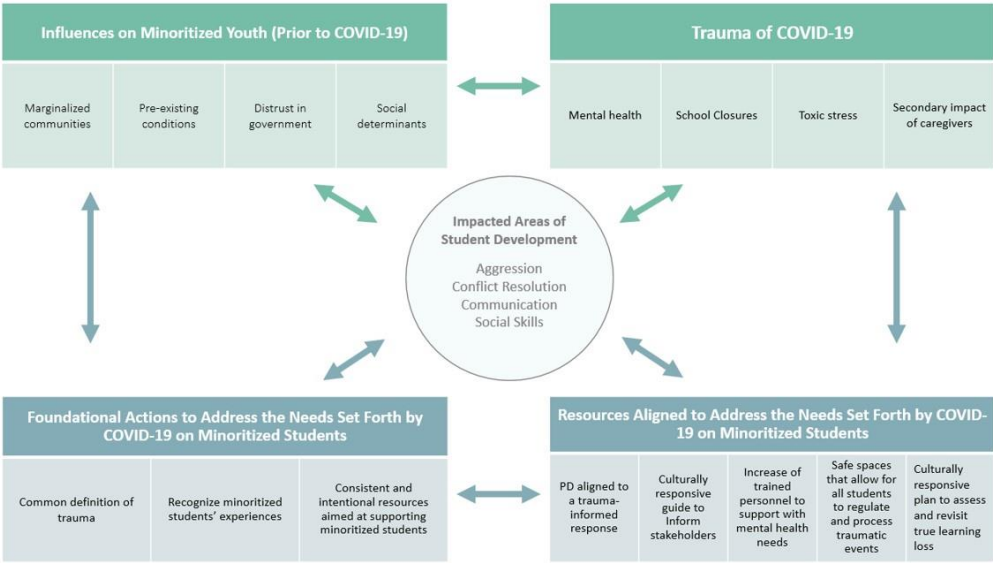
needed: _____

Overall impressions, questions, concerns, issues still to be

addressed: _____

APPENDIX G: CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF THE IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Conceptual Model for the Influences of COVID-19 on Minoritized Youth and the Implications for Practice



REFERENCES

- Adelman, H., & Taylor, L. (2007). Systemic Change for School Improvement. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation*, 55-77.
DOI:10.1207/s1532768Xjepc1701_3
- Agar, M. (1986). *Speaking of Ethnography*. SAGE.
- Alexander, J. C. (2016, January). Culture trauma, morality and solidarity: The social construction of 'Holocaust' and other mass murders. *Yale University*, 132(1).
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0725513615625239>
- Allen, P., Kaut, K., & Lord, R. (2008). Emotion and episodic memory. 112-132.
[https://doi.org/10.1016/S1569-7339\(08\)00208-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1569-7339(08)00208-7)
- Alvarez, A. (2020, June). Seeing Race in the Research on Youth Trauma and Education: A Critical Review. *90*(5). <https://doi.org/10.3102/003465432093813>
- American Academy of Pediatrics. (2021, October 19). *AAP-AACAP-CHA Declaration of a National Emergency in Child and Adolescent Mental Health*. American Academy of Pediatrics. Retrieved April 28, 2023, from <https://www.aap.org/en/advocacy/child-and-adolescent-healthy-mental-development/aap-aacap-cha-declaration-of-a-national-emergency-in-child-and-adolescent-mental-health/>
- Aspen Institute. (2022). *Structural Racism - The Aspen Institute*. Aspen Institute. Retrieved April 28, 2023, from <https://www.aspeninstitute.org/tag/structural-racism/>
- Assefa, Y., Gilks, C., Reid, S., Van de Pas, R., Gete, D., & Van Damme, W. (2022, February). Analysis of the COVID-19 pandemic: lessons towards a more effective response to

- public health emergencies. *Globalization and Health*.
<https://globalizationandhealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12992-022-00805-9>
- Bahn, G. H. (2020, April). Coronavirus Disease 2019, School Closures, and Children's Mental Health. *National Library of Medicine*. 10.5765/jkacap.200010
- Baron, J. E., Goldstein, E. G., & Wallace, C. T. (2020, August 21). Suffering in silence: How COVID-19 school closures inhibit the reporting of child maltreatment. *National Library of Medicine*. 10.1016/j.jpubeco.2020.104258
- Bell, C. (n.d.). The Hidden Side of Zero Tolerance Policies: The African American Perspective. *Social Compass*, 14-22. National Library of Medicine. 10.1111/soc4.12230
- Belsha, K., & Beck, R. (2020, August 21). Virtual suspensions. Mask rules. More trauma. Why some worry a student discipline crisis is on the horizon. *Chalkbeat*.
<https://www.chalkbeat.org/2020/8/21/21396481/virtual-suspensions-masks-school-discipline-crisis-coronavirus>
- Berns, R. (2010). *Child, Family, School, Community: Socialization and Support* (8th ed.). Cengage Learning.
- Bertalanffy, L. v. (1969). *General system theory: foundations, development, applications*. G. Braziller.
- Bhandari, P. (2020, June 19). *What Is Qualitative Research? / Methods & Examples*. Scribbr. Retrieved April 27, 2023, from <https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/qualitative-research/>
- Bingham, A. (2020, October 16). Qualitative analysis: Deductive and inductive approaches — Andrea J. Bingham, Ph.D. *Andrea J. Bingham, Ph.D.*

- <https://www.andreaajbingham.com/resources-tips-and-tricks/deductive-and-inductive-approaches-to-qualitative-analysis>
- Bolsen, T., & Palm, R. (2021, November). Politicization and COVID-19 vaccine resistance in the U.S. *Elsevier Public Health Emergency Collection*, (Progressive Science), 81-100. National Library of Medicine. 10.1016/bs.pmbts.2021.10.002
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2008, July 21). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 77-101. Taylor & Francis Online. 10.1191/1478088706qp063oa
- Braveman, P., Arkin, E., Proctor, D., Kauh, T., & Holm, N. (2022, February). Systemic And Structural Racism: Definitions, Examples, Health Damages, And Approaches To Dismantling. *Health Equity*, 41(2). Health Affairs. <https://doi.org/10.1377/hlthaff.2021.01394>
- Bronfenbrenner, U., & Ceci, S. J. (1994, October). Nature-nurture reconceptualized in developmental perspective: a bioecological model. *Psychology Review*. National Library of Medicine. 10.1037/0033-295x.101.4.568
- Bronfenbrenner, U., & Morris, P. A. (2006). The Bioecological Model of Human Development. *APA PsychInfo*. <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2006-08774-014>
- Brown, A. (2021). Trauma in Children During the COVID-19 Pandemic. *NYU Langone Health*. <https://nyulangone.org/news/trauma-children-during-covid-19-pandemic>
- Brownson, R. C., Burke, T. A., Colditz, G. A., & Samet, J. M. (2020, November). Reimagining Public Health in the Aftermath of a Pandemic. *American Public Health*. National Library of Medicine. 10.2105/AJPH.2020.305861

- Campbell, A. M. (2020, December). An increasing risk of family violence during the Covid-19 pandemic: Strengthening community collaborations to save lives. *Forensic Science International: Reports*, 2. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.fsir.2020.100089>
- Cattafi, K. (2020, September 11). Edgewater school called police after sixth-grader had Nerf gun during Zoom class. *North Jersey News*.
<https://www.northjersey.com/story/news/bergen/edgewater/2020/09/11/edgewater-nj-police-called-after-student-had-nerf-gun-during-zoom-class/3468499001/>
- Center for Substance Abuse Treatment. (2014). Chapter 3, Understanding the Impact of Trauma. In *Trauma-Informed Care in Behavioral Health Services*. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.
- Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. (2022, February 10). *Tracking the COVID-19 Economy's Effects on Food, Housing, and Employment Hardships*. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Retrieved April 24, 2023, from <https://www.cbpp.org/research/poverty-and-inequality/tracking-the-covid-19-economys-effects-on-food-housing-and>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020, March 11). *Confronting the Coronavirus: The Federal Response*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved April 24, 2023, from <https://www.cdc.gov/washington/testimony/2020/t20200311-1.htm>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2021, September 28). *Violence Prevention*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved April 24, 2023, from <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/index.html>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022). *Fast Facts: Preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences /Violence Prevention/Injury Center/CDC*. Centers for Disease Control and

- Prevention. Retrieved April 28, 2023, from
<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces/fastfact.html>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2023). *Fast Facts: Preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences /Violence Prevention/Injury Center/CDC*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved April 28, 2023, from
<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces/fastfact.html>
- Chang, V. W., & Lauderdale, D. S. (2009, September 01). Fundamental Cause Theory, Technological Innovation, and Health Disparities: The Case of Cholesterol in the Era of Statins. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 50(3). American Sociological Association. doi.org/10.1177/002214650905000301
- Children's Defense Fund. (2021, May 3). *The State of America's Children 2020 - Child Hunger and Nutrition*. Children's Defense Fund. Retrieved April 24, 2023, from
<https://www.childrensdefense.org/policy/resources/soac-2020-child-hunger/>
- Chinn, J. J., Eisenberg, E., Dickerson, S. A., King, R. B., Chakhtoura, N., Grantz, K., Lim, I. A., Lamar, C., & Bianchi, D. W. (2020, October). Maternal mortality in the United States: research gaps, opportunities, and priorities. *American Obstetrics*. National Library of Medicine. oi: 10.1016/j.ajog.2020.07.021
- Chokshi, D. (2022, March 9). *Op-Ed: NYC Health Commissioner Chokshi says Covid pandemic has left U.S. with new epidemic of loneliness*. CNBC. Retrieved April 25, 2023, from
<https://www.cnbc.com/2022/03/09/op-ed-nyc-health-commissioner-chokshi-says-covid-pandemic-has-left-us-with-new-epidemic-of-loneliness.html>

- Civil Rights Project. (2020). *2020 Press Releases — The Civil Rights Project at UCLA*. UCLA Civil Rights Project. Retrieved April 28, 2023, from <https://civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/news/press-releases/press-releases-2020>
- Clouston, S., Rubin, M., Phelan, J., & Link, B. (2016, October). A Social History of Disease: Contextualizing the Rise and Fall of Social Inequalities in Cause-Specific Mortality. DOI: 10.1007/s13524-016-0495-5
- Cohen, A. (2020, June). Living in a Covid-19 World. *The Milbank Quarterly*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-0009.12466>
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2000). *Research Methods in Education*. Taylor & Francis.
- Cole, S. (2023). Harvard Law School [Lecturer]. In *Research on Trauma-Sensitive Schools*. HLS Clinical and Pro Bono Programs. <https://clinics.law.harvard.edu/blog/2020/08/research-on-trauma-sensitive-schools-offers-timely-insights/>
- Colorado Department of Education. (2022). *Unified Improvement Planning | CDE*. Colorado Department of Education. Retrieved April 28, 2023, from <https://www.cde.state.co.us/uip>
- Committee for Children. (2018, June). *Recent Trends in State Legislative Exclusionary Discipline Reform*. Committee for Children. Retrieved April 28, 2023, from <https://www.cfchildren.org/wp-content/uploads/policy-advocacy/exclusionary-policy-brief.pdf>
- Creswell, J. (2003). Effect of Service Quality and Marketing Stimuli on Customer Satisfaction: The Mediating Role of Purchasing Decisions. *Journal of Business and Management Sciences*. DOI: 10.12691/jbms-4-4-1

- Creswell, J., & Poth, C. (2013). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches*. *SAGE*.
- Crutchfield, J., Phillip, K., & Frey, A. (2020). Structural Racism in Schools: A View through the Lens of the National School Social Work Practice Model. *Oxford Academic*, 42(3), 187-193. <https://doi.org/10.1093/cs/cdaa015>
- Dada, D., Dijometio, J., McFadden, S., Demeke, J., Vlahov, D., Wilton, L., Wang, M., & Nelson, L. (2022, February). Strategies That Promote Equity in COVID-19 Vaccine Uptake for Black Communities: a Review. *Urban Health*. doi: 10.1007/s11524-021-00594-3
- Data Collection. (2020, December 3). *Purposeful Sampling in Qualitative Research - Helping Research writing for student & professional researchers*. Helping Research writing for student & professional researchers Research Writing. Retrieved April 27, 2023, from <http://researcharticles.com/index.php/purposeful-sampling-qualitative-research/>
- Davidson, B., Schmidt, E., Mallar, C., Mahmoud, F., Rothenberg, W., Hernandez, J., Berkovits, M., Jent, J., Delamater, A., & Nate, R. (2020, November). Risk and resilience of well-being in caregivers of young children in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. *Behav Med*. National Library of Medicine. 10.1093/tbm/ibaa124
- Dawson, B. (2021, May 3). *The State of America's Children 2020 — Children's Defense Fund*. Children's Defense Fund. Retrieved April 27, 2023, from <https://www.childrensdefense.org/the-state-of-americas-children-2020/>

- Del Toro, J., & Wang, M. (2022). The roles of suspensions for minor infractions and school climate in predicting academic performance among adolescents. *APA PsycArticles*, 173-185. <https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000854>
- Demeke, C., Kifle, Z., Atsbeha, B., Wondmsigegn, D., Yimenu, D., Woldeyohanins, A., & Kasahun, A. (2022, February). COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy among health professionals in a tertiary care center at the University of Gondar Specialized Hospital, Ethiopia: A cross-sectional study. *SAGE Open Medicine*. doi: 10.1177/20503121221076991
- Department of Education. (2014, January 8). *Joint - Dear Colleague Letter*. Department of Education. Retrieved April 28, 2023, from <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201401-title-vi.html>
- Dow, B., Johnson, A., Wang, C., Whitson, J., & Menon, T. (2021, September). The COVID-19 pandemic and the search for structure: Social media and conspiracy theories. *Social Personal Psychological Compass*. doi: 10.1111/spc3.12636
- Dudovskiy, J. (2022). *The Ultimate Guide to Writing a Dissertation in Business Studies: A Step-by-Step Assistance* (6th ed.). SAGE.
- Education Commision. (n.d.). *POLICY ANALYSIS*. Education Commission of the States. Retrieved April 28, 2023, from <https://www.ecs.org/wp-content/uploads/The-Status-of-School-Discipline-in-State-Policy.pdf>
- Egede, L. E., & Walker, R. J. (2020, September). Structural Racism, Social Risk Factors, and Covid-19 - A Dangerous Convergence for Black Americans. *New England Medicine*. doi: 10.1056/NEJMp2023616

- Elder, G. H. (1998). *The Life Course as Developmental Theory*. Wiley, 69(1).
<https://doi.org/10.2307/1132065>
- Elliot, V. (2018). Thinking about the Coding Process in Qualitative Data Analysis. *Where the World Comes to Learn Qualitative Research*, 23(11). <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2018.3560>
- Evans, G. (2020). *Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory*. Simply Psychology. Retrieved April 27, 2023, from <https://www.simplypsychology.org/bronfenbrenner.html>
- Felitti, V. J., Anda, R. F., Nordenberg, D., Williamson, D. F., Edwards, V., Ross, M. P., & Marks, J. S. (1998, May). Relationship of childhood abuse and household dysfunction to many of the leading causes of death in adults. The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study. *American Medicine*. doi: 10.1016/s0749-3797(98)00017-8.
- Frankel, J. R., Wallen, N., & Hyun, H. H. (2018). *How to Design and Evaluate Research in Education*. McGraw-Hill Education.
- Gaitens, J., Condon, M., Fernandes, E., & McDiarmid, M. (2021, February). COVID-19 and Essential Workers: A Narrative Review of Health Outcomes and Moral Injury. *Public Health*. DOI: 10.3390/ijerph18041446
- Goldberg, M. (2021, December 17). Opinion | Can Randi Weingarten Save Public Schools? *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/17/opinion/randi-weingarten-schools.html>
- Gordon, N. (2018, January 18). *Disproportionality in student discipline: Connecting policy to research*. Brookings Institution. Retrieved April 27, 2023, from

<https://www.brookings.edu/research/disproportionality-in-student-discipline-connecting-policy-to-research/>

Guba, E., & Lincoln, Y. (1982). Epistemological and methodological bases of naturalistic inquiry. *Educational Technology Research Development*.

Hart, R., & Lee, T. (2022, November). Weathering Storms as Pandemic Prep: How Katrina Aided Ochsner's Response to Covid-19. *New England Journal*.

Hawrilenko, M., Kroshus, E., & Christakis, D. (2021, September). The Association Between School Closures and Child Mental Health During COVID-19. doi: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2021.24092.

Hehman, E., Flake, J., & Calanchini, J. (2017, July). Disproportionate Use of Lethal Force in Policing Is Associated With Regional Racial Biases of Residents. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 9(4). <https://doi.org/10.1177/194855061771122>

Heitzeg, N. A. (2016). *The School-to-prison Pipeline: Education, Discipline, and Racialized Double Standards*. Praeger.

Helton, M. (2020, December 14). A Tale of Two Crises: Assessing the Impact of Exclusionary School Policies on Students During a State of Emergency. *University of South Carolina*. https://www.sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/law/student_life/journals/jled/editions/_documents/2021_50_1/helton_a_tale_of_two_crises.pdf

Hoffman, J., & Miller, E. (2020, August). Addressing the Consequences of School Closure Due to COVID-19 on Children's Physical and Mental Well-Being. *World Medical & Health Policy*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/wmh3.365>

Holden, T., Simon, M., Arnold, D., Halloway, V., & Gerardin, J. (2022, February). Structural racism and COVID-19 response: higher risk of exposure drives disparate COVID-19 deaths among Black and Hispanic/Latinx residents of Illinois, USA. *BMC Public Health*. <https://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-022-12698-9>

Institute of Education Sciences. (2022). *School Pulse Panel*. Institute of Education Sciences. Retrieved April 27, 2023, from <https://ies.ed.gov/schoolsurvey/spp/>

Institutional Research | Institutional Research | TTU. (2021). Texas Tech University Departments. Retrieved April 27, 2023, from <https://www.depts.ttu.edu/irim/>

International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies. (2016). *Trauma and Public Health: Innovative Technology and Knowledge Dissemination*.

Johnson, A., & Buford, T. (2020, April 3). *Early Data Shows African Americans Have Contracted and Died of Coronavirus at an Alarming Rate*. Courageous Conversation. Retrieved April 27, 2023, from <https://courageousconversation.com/early-data-shows-african-americans-have-contracted-and-died-of-coronavirus-at-an-alarming-rate/>

Kaiser Family Foundation. (2021, December 18). *KFF Health Tracking Poll – December 2020: COVID-19 and Biden's Health Care Agenda | KFF*. Kaiser Family Foundation. Retrieved April 27, 2023, from <https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/report/kff-health-tracking-poll-december-2020/>

Kane, J., & Tomer, A. (2020, November). Valuing Human Infrastructure: Protecting and Investing in Essential Workers during the COVID-19 Era. *Public Works Management & Policy*, 26(1). <https://doi.org/10.1177/1087724X20969181>

- Kennedy, K. (2020, October 14). *Learning Loss, Trauma, and Our Window of Tolerance*. Tech & Learning. Retrieved April 27, 2023, from <https://www.techlearning.com/how-to/learning-loss-trauma-and-our-window-of-tolerance>
- Kids Legal. (2022). *Suspension and Expulsion*. Kids Legal. Retrieved April 27, 2023, from <https://kidslegal.org/suspension-and-expulsion>
- Kiger, M., & Varpio, L. (2020, March). Thematic analysis of qualitative data: AMEE Guide No. 131. *Med Teach*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0142159x.2020.1755030>
- Kiger, M. E., & Varpio, L. (2020). Thematic analysis of qualitative data: *Medical Teacher*, 131. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0142159X.2020.1755030>
- Kijakazi, K. (2020, April 10). *COVID-19 Racial Health Disparities Highlight Why We Need to Address Structural Racism*. Urban Institute. Retrieved April 27, 2023, from <https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/covid-19-racial-health-disparities-highlight-why-we-need-address-structural-racism>
- Kinsella, M., Fowler, G., Boland, J., & Weiner, D. (2020, August 6). *Trump Administration Abuses Thwart US Pandemic Response*. Brennan Center for Justice. Retrieved April 24, 2023, from <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/trump-administration-abuses-thwart-us-pandemic-response>
- Krieger, N. (2021, April). Structural Racism, Health Inequities, and the Two-Edged Sword of Data: Structural Problems Require Structural Solutions. *Front Public Health*. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2021.655447>

- Lawson, M., Piel, M., & Simon, M. (2020, September). Child Maltreatment during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Consequences of Parental Job Loss on Psychological and Physical Abuse Towards Children. *Child Abuse Neglect*. doi: 10.1016/j.chiabu.2020.104709
- Leung, L. (2015, August). Validity, reliability, and generalizability in qualitative research: Department of Family Medicine and Centre of Studies in Primary Care. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4535087/>
- Lopez-Ibor, J. J. (2006). Disasters and mental health: new challenges for the psychiatric profession. *Biological Psychiatry*. doi: 10.1080/15622970500428735.
- Luster, S. (2018, July 19). *How Exclusionary Discipline Creates Disconnected Students* / NEA. National Education Association. Retrieved April 27, 2023, from <https://www.nea.org/advocating-for-change/new-from-nea/how-exclusionary-discipline-creates-disconnected-students>
- Maden, J. (2018). *What is Quota Sampling and How Can You Take Advantage of It?* - CheckMarket. Checkmarket.com. Retrieved April 27, 2023, from <https://www.checkmarket.com/blog/what-is-quota-sampling-and-how-can-you-take-advantage-of-it/>
- Maguire, M., & Deleahunt, B. (2017, October). Doing a Thematic Analysis: A Practical, Step-by-Step Guide. *Methodology*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/349506918_Ddoing_a_Thematic_Analysis_A_Practical_Step-by-Step_Guide

Mallah, S., Ghorab, O., Salmi, S., Abdellatif, O., Tharmaratnam, T., Iskandar, M., Sefen, J., Sidhu, P., Atallah, B., El-Lababidi, R., & Al-Qahtani, M. (2021, May). COVID-19: breaking down a global health crisis. *Microbiology*. doi: 10.1186/s12941-021-00438-7

McLeod, S. (2004). *Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory Summary* | *ipl.org*. IPL.org. Retrieved April 27, 2023, from <https://www.ipl.org/essay/Bronfenbrenners-Ecological-Systems-Theory-FC9NPQENAG>

Mental Health America. (2023). *Racism and Mental Health*. Mental Health America. Retrieved April 27, 2023, from <https://mhanational.org/racism-and-mental-health>

Mojica, B., & Plata, G. (2018, January 17). *DK Foundation*. DK Foundation. Retrieved April 27, 2023, from <http://dkfoundation.org/working-on/dk-team/mojica-and-plata-in-hisd-and-all-schools-exclusionary-discipline-should-be-last-resort>

Morrison, D. (n.d.). *Dear Colleague Letter*. Library of Congress. Retrieved April 28, 2023, from <https://www.loc.gov/item/cosmos000071/>

Moss, S., Kessler, S., Martinko, M., & Mackey, J. (2022, May). The Relationship Between Follower Affect for President Trump and the Adoption of COVID-19 Personal Protective Behaviors. *Leadership Organizational Studies*, 233-244. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F15480518211010765>

Moya, G. (2020, June 18). *Let's Bridge the Digital Divide*. The Greenlining Institute. Retrieved April 27, 2023, from <https://greenlining.org/2020/lets-bridge-the-digital-divide/>

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People [NAACP]. (2022). *Criminal Justice Fact Sheet*. NAACP. Retrieved April 27, 2023, from <https://naacp.org/resources/criminal-justice-fact-sheet>

- National Association of Health Officials. (2023, April). *The Syndemic Approach to HIV, STI, Hepatitis, and Harm Reduction*. National Association of Health Officials. Retrieved April 27, 2023, from <https://www.naccho.org/blog/articles/the-syndemic-approach-to-hiv-sti-hepatitis-and-harm-reduction>
- National Association of Social Workers. (2007). *INSTITUTIONAL RACISM & THE SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION: A CALL TO ACTION*. NASW. Retrieved April 28, 2023, from https://ncwwi.org/files/Cultural_Responsiveness__Disproportionality/Institutional_Racism_and_the_Social_Work_Profession.pdf
- National Association of State Boards of Education. (2022). *Student Discipline – NASBE – National Association of State Boards of Education*. NASBE. Retrieved April 27, 2023, from <https://www.nasbe.org/policy-area/student-discipline/>
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2020). *Coronavirus pandemic Information and Resources*. NCES. Retrieved April 27, 2023, from <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coronavirus/>
- National Center on Safe and Supportive Learning Environments. (2023). *Safe Supportive Learning Environments (NCSSLE)*. National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments. Retrieved April 27, 2023, from <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/topic-research/environment/discipline>
- National Child Traumatic Stress Network. (2022). *About Child Trauma / The National Child Traumatic Stress Network*. The National Child Traumatic Stress Network |. Retrieved April 27, 2023, from <https://www.nctsn.org/what-is-child-trauma/about-child-trauma>

National Institutes of Health. (2022, March 13). *Implicit Bias Training Course / SWD at NIH*.

Scientific Workforce Diversity at NIH. Retrieved April 27, 2023, from

<https://diversity.nih.gov/sociocultural-factors/implicit-bias-training-course>

Office of Progress Policy Analysis and Governmental Accountability. (2023). *Federal Title I Programs*. oppaga. Retrieved April 28, 2023, from

<https://oppaga.fl.gov/ProgramSummary/ProgramDetail?programNumber=2021>

Ohio Leadership. (n.d). *history of Trauma-informed Care and Education*. History of Trauma.

Retrieved April 27, 2023, from <https://ohioleadership.org/storage/ocali-ims-sites/ocali-ims-olac/documents/History-of-Trauma-informed-Care-and-Education.docx>

Owens, A., Reardon, S., & Jencks, C. (2016, July). Income Segregation Between Schools and School Districts. *American Educational Research Journal*, 53(4).

<https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831216652>

Oxfam. (2021, December 21). *Annual Report 2021 / Oxfam*. Oxfam America. Retrieved April 27, 2023, from <https://www.oxfamamerica.org/explore/research-publications/annual-report-2021/>

Palinkas, L., Horwitz, S., Green, C., Wisdom, J., Duan, N., & Hoagwood, K. (2016, September).

Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis in mixed method implementation research. *Policy Mental Health*. doi: 10.1007/s10488-013-0528-y

Panchal, N., Saunders, H., Rudowitz, R., & Cox, C. (2023, March 20). *The Implications of*

COVID-19 for Mental Health and Substance Use. Kaiser Family Foundation. Retrieved

April 27, 2023, from [https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/issue-brief/the-](https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/issue-brief/the-implications-of-covid-19-for-mental-health-and-substance-use/)

[implications-of-covid-19-for-mental-health-and-substance-use/](https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/issue-brief/the-implications-of-covid-19-for-mental-health-and-substance-use/)

- Parekh, N., Ali, S., O'Connor, J., Tozan, Y., Jones, A., Capasso, A., Foreman, J., & DiClemente, R. (2021, August). Food insecurity among households with children during the COVID-19 pandemic: results from a study among social media users across the United States. *Nutrition Journal*, 20. <https://nutritionj.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12937-021-00732-2>
- Parker, C., & Stern, E. (2022, March). The Trump Administration and the COVID-19 crisis: Exploring the warning-response problems and missed opportunities of a public health emergency. *Public Administration*. <https://doi.org/10.1111%2Fpadm.12843>
- Patterson, Z., Gabrys, R., & McQuaid, R. (2021, May). The Influence of COVID-19 on Stress, Substance Use, and Mental Health Among Postsecondary Students. *Emerging Adulthood*, 9(5). SAGE Journals. <https://doi.org/10.1177/21676968211014080>
- Pokhrel, S., & Chhetri, R. (n.d.). A Literature Review on Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Teaching and Learning. *Higher Education for the Future*, 8(). <https://doi.org/10.1177/234763112098>
- Porges, S. (2009). The polyvagal theory: New insights into adaptive reactions of the autonomic nervous system. *Cleve Clinical Medicine*. doi: 10.3949/ccjm.76.s2.17
- Pressley, T. (2021, March). Factors Contributing to Teacher Burnout During COVID-19. *American Educational Research Association*, 50(5). SAGE. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X21100413>
- Pumariega, A., Jo, Y., Beck, B., & Rahmani, M. (n.d.). Trauma and US Minority Children and Youth. *Child and Family Disaster*, 285-295. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11920-022-01336-1>

- Riddle, T., & Sinclair, S. (2019). Racial disparities in school-based disciplinary actions are associated with county-level rates of racial bias. *APA Psych.*
<https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1808307116>
- Rodgers, C., Flores, M., Bassey, O., Augenblick, J., & Cook, B. (2021, October). Racial/Ethnic Disparity Trends in Children's Mental Health Care Access and Expenditures From 2010-2017: Disparities Remain Despite Sweeping Policy Reform. *Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, 61(7), 915-925. DOI:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaac.2021.09.420>
- Rush, F. (2004, May). Conceptual foundations of early Critical Theory. *Cambridge University Press*. <https://doi.org/10.1017/ccol0521816602.002>
- Rusoja, E. A., & Thomas, B. A. (2021, May). The COVID-19 pandemic, Black mistrust, and a path forward. *Clinical Medicine*. 10.1016/j.eclinm.2021.100868
- Rutledge, P. (2020, July). Trump, COVID-19, and the War on Expertise. *American Review of Public Administration*, 50(6). doi.org/10.1177/0275074020941683
- Saldana, J. (2013). *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* (2nd ed.). Sage.
<https://uk.sagepub.com/en-gb/eur/the-coding-manual-for-qualitative-researchers/book273583>
- Sameroff, A. (2010, February). A Unified Theory of Development: A Dialectic Integration of Nature and Nurture. *Child Development*, 81, 6-22.
<http://sites.nd.edu/edu60455/files/2012/06/Sameroff-A-unified-theory-of-development-nature-nature.pdf>

Santa Clara University. (2022). *Theoretical Framework - Office for Multicultural Learning*.

Office for Multicultural Learning. Retrieved April 27, 2023, from

<https://www.scu.edu/oml/about-us/theoretical-framework/>

Scharff, D., Mathews, K., Jackson, P., Hoffsuemmer, J., Martin, E., & Edwards, D. (2010). More than Tuskegee: understanding mistrust about research participation. *Health Care Underserved*, 879-897. 10.1353/hpu.0.0323

Schumacher, S., & McMillan, J. H. (2010). *Research in Education: Evidence-based Inquiry*.

Pearson.

Shim, R., & Starks, S. (2021, October). COVID-19, Structural Racism, and Mental Health Inequities: Policy Implications for an Emerging Syndemic. *Psychiatric Services*.

10.1176/appi.ps.202000725

Shim, R. S., & Starks, S. M. (2021, February). COVID-19, Structural Racism, and Mental Health Inequities: Policy Implications for an Emerging Syndemic. *Psychiatric Services*.

10.1176/appi.ps.202000725

Shonk, M., & Cicchetti, D. (2001). Maltreatment, competency deficits, and risk for academic and behavioral maladjustment. *Developmental Psychology*, 3-17. APA PsycArticles.

<https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/0012-1649.37.1.3>

Shrider, E. A., Kollar, M., Chen, F., & Semega, J. (2021, September 14). *Income and Poverty in the United States: 2020*. Census Bureau. Retrieved April 27, 2023, from

<https://www.census.gov/library/publications/2021/demo/p60-273.html>

Shukla, M. (2008). Strategic Management. *Sultan Chand*.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0973247008004002>

Simply Psychology. (2020). *Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory*. Simply Psychology. Retrieved April 27, 2023, from <https://www.simplypsychology.org/bronfenbrenner.html>

Sinkam, P., Kraschnewski, J., Sacco, R., Chavez, J., Fouad, M., Gal, T., Auyong, M., Namooos, A., Winn, R., Sheppard, V., Smith, G. C., & Zusman, V. B. (2021, March). Health disparities and equity in the era of COVID-19. *Clinical Science*. 10.1017/cts.2021.23

Spall, S. (1998, June). Peer Debriefing in Qualitative Research: Emerging Operational Models. 4(2). <https://doi.org/10.1177/107780049800400208>

Stahl, N. A., & King, J. R. (2020). Expanding Approaches for Research: Understanding and Using Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research. *Journal of Development Education*, 44, 26-28. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1320570>

Subica, A., & Link, B. (2021). Cultural trauma as a fundamental cause of health disparities. *Social Sciences Medicine*. 10.1016/j.socscimed.2021.114574

Subica, A., & Link, B. (2022, January). Cultural trauma as a fundamental cause of health disparities. *Social Science Medication*. 10.1016/j.socscimed.2021.114574

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2014). *SAMHSA's Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach*. SAMHSA Publications. Retrieved April 27, 2023, from <https://store.samhsa.gov/product/SAMHSA-s-Concept-of-Trauma-and-Guidance-for-a-Trauma-Informed-Approach/SMA14-4884>

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2014). *Trauma-Informed Care in Behavioral Health Services* (257th ed.). U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK207201/>

- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2022, September 27). *Trauma and Violence - What is Trauma and the Effects?* SAMHSA. Retrieved April 27, 2023, from <https://www.samhsa.gov/trauma-violence>
- Sue, V., & Ritter, L. (2015). *Conducting Online Surveys* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781506335186>
- Supportive School Discipline Initiative. (2011). *Overview of the Supportive School Discipline Initiative*. School Justice Partnership. Retrieved April 27, 2023, from <https://www.schooljusticepartnership.org/component/mtree/resource-library/role-of-schools/157-overview-of-the-supportive-school-discipline-initiative.html?Itemid=>
- Swedberg, R. (2020). Exploratory Research. *Discovery*. <http://people.soc.cornell.edu/swedberg/Exploratory%20Research.pdf>
- Tai, D. G., Shah, A., Doubeni, C., Sia, I., & Wieland, M. (2021, February). The Disproportionate Impact of COVID-19 on Racial and Ethnic Minorities in the United States. *Clinical Journal*. 10.1093/cid/ciaa815
- Tanner, C., & Alberty, E. (2020, August 19). Utah students and staff who don't wear masks in schools can be charged with a misdemeanor. *The Salt Lake Tribune*. <https://www.sltrib.com/news/education/2020/08/19/utah-students-staff-who/>
- Temple University. (2004, January 1). *Policies and Procedures Manual*. Temple University. Retrieved April 27, 2023, from <https://secretary.temple.edu/sites/secretary/files/policies/03.70.12.pdf>
- Terrell, F., & Terrell, S., (1981) An inventory to measure cultural mistrust among Blacks. *The Western Journal of Black Studies*,

Thomas, M., Crosby, S., & Vanderhaar, J. (2019, May). Trauma-Informed Practices in Schools Across Two Decades: An Interdisciplinary Review of Research. *American Educational Research Association*, 43(1). <https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732X18821123>

Trauma-Informed Care in Behavioral Health Services. (2014). SAMHSA Publications. Retrieved April 25, 2023, from <https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/d7/priv/sma15-4912.pdf>

Twitter. (2020). Twitter. It's what's happening / Twitter. Retrieved April 27, 2023, from <http://twitter.com>

University of Nottingham. (n.d.). *Understanding Qualitative Field Work*. Understanding Qualitative Field Work. Retrieved April 27, 2023, from <https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/helmopen/rlos/research-evidence-based-practice/designing-research/types-of-study/understanding-qualitative-field-work/section04.html>

USAFacts. (2021, September 17). *Black students are more likely to be punished than white students*. USAFacts. Retrieved April 27, 2023, from <https://usafacts.org/articles/black-students-more-likely-to-be-punished-than-white-students/>

U.S. Department of Education. (2011). *Dear Colleague Letter*. U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved April 28, 2023, from <https://www2.ed.gov/print/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201104.html>

U.S. Department of Education. (2022). *Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) for the 2013-14 school year*. Department of Education. Retrieved April 28, 2023, from <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/crdc-2015-16.html>

- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2012). *Results from the 2012 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Mental Health Findings*. SAMHSA. Retrieved April 27, 2023, from <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/NSDUHmhfr2012/NSDUHmhfr2012.pdf>
- Van der Kolk, B. A. (2015). *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma*. Penguin Publishing Group.
- Verma, G., Bhardwaj, A., Aledavood, T., Choudhury, M., & Kumar, S. (2022, May). Examining the impact of sharing COVID-19 misinformation online on mental health. *Scientific Reports*. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-022-11488-y>
- Walker, L., Sullivan M., Stewart-Walker N. (2022, March). Leadership Matters: Supporting the Mental Health Needs of Black and Latina/o Students in a Post COVID-19 World. *Journal of Educational Leadership in Action*. https://digitalcommons.lindenwood.edu/ela/vol8/iss1/3?utm_source=digitalcommons.lindenwood.edu%2Fela%2Fvol8%2Fiss1%2F3&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=PDFCoverPages
- Walker, R. J., Williams, J. S., & Egede, L. E. (2016). Impact of Race/Ethnicity and Social Determinants of Health on Diabetes Outcomes. *American Medical Science*, 366-373. 10.1016/j.amjms.2016.01.008
- Wallach, P., & Myers, J. (2020, March 31). *The federal government's coronavirus actions and failures*. Brookings Institution. Retrieved April 27, 2023, from <https://www.brookings.edu/research/the-federal-governments-coronavirus-actions-and-failures-timeline-and-themes/>

Walravens, S. (2020, June 8). *Why Online Learning Is Failing Our Nation's Most Vulnerable Students*. Forbes. Retrieved April 27, 2023, from

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/geekgirlrising/2020/06/08/new-report-shows-impact-of-digital-divide-on-low-income-students/?sh=aa907bd17012>

Wamser-Nanney, R., Cherry, K., & Trombetta, E. (2018, March). Racial Differences in Children's Trauma Symptoms Following Complex Trauma Exposure. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 36(5-6). <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260518760019>

Webster. (2022). webster.com

Welch, K. (2018, December). The effect of minority threat on risk management and the “new disciplinology” in schools. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 59, 12-17.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2017.05.006>

What is Health Equity? | Health Equity | CDC. (2022). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved April 24, 2023, from

<https://www.cdc.gov/healthequity/whatis/index.html>

Wide-Ranging Education Data Collected from our Nation's Public Schools. (2018). Civil Rights Data Collection. Retrieved April 28, 2023, from <https://ocrdata.ed.gov/>

Williams, D., & Kimmons, R. (n.d.). *Qualitative Rigor*. EdTech Books. Retrieved April 27, 2023, from https://edtechbooks.org/education_research/qualitative_rigor

Williams, D. R., & Sternthal, M. (2003, October 8). Understanding Racial-ethnic Disparities in Health: Sociological Contributions. *American Psychological Association*, 51(1).

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0022146510383>

- Willis, D. E., Andersen, J. A., Hall, S., Hallgren, E., Williams, M., Moore, K. B., & McElfish, P. (2022, January 15). Hesitant but vaccinated: assessing COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy among the recently vaccinated. *Journal of Behavioral Medicine*, 46, 15-24.
<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10865-021-00270-6>
- Wilson, B., Casucci, T., & Austria, M. (2020, July 2). *Understanding Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*. Accelerate. Retrieved April 27, 2023, from <https://accelerate.uofuhealth.utah.edu/improvement/understanding-qualitative-and-quantitative-approac>
- Wilson, V. (2020, June). *Inequities exposed: How COVID-19 widened racial inequities in education, health, and the workforce: Testimony before the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Education and Labor*. Economic Policy Institute. Retrieved April 28, 2023, from <https://www.epi.org/publication/covid-19-inequities-wilson-testimony/>
- World Health Organization. (2016, August 16). *WHO - Closing the gap in a generation: Health equity through action on the social determinants of health (2008)*. End FGM. Retrieved April 27, 2023, from <https://www.endfgm.eu/resources/health/who-closing-the-gap-in-a-generation-health-equity-through-action-on-the-social-determinants-of-health-2008/>
- World Health Organization. (2021, December 6). *COVID-19 and the social determinants of health and health equity: evidence brief*. World Health Organization (WHO). Retrieved April 28, 2023, from <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240038387>