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McGuffey Hall, Miami University
Oxford, Ohio

Inside this Issue:
Fall Conference Preview
Spotlight on Graduate Research



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On the Cover

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Call for Manuscripts

The Mid-Western Educational Researcher is a scholarly journal that publishes research-based articles addressing a full range of educational issues. The journal also publishes literature reviews, theoretical and methodological discussions that make an original contribution to the research literature, and feature columns. There are four issues of the journal published annually.

The journal is accepting manuscripts for review and possible publication. Manuscripts are submitted to blind reviews by three researchers with knowledge of the literature in the appropriate area. The editors will review the manuscript and make the final decision. The review process requires approximately four months.

Manuscripts are accepted from faculty, students, and professionals working in educational or non-educational settings. Membership in the MWERA is not required in order to submit a manuscript for review. The editors encourage the submission of revised papers that have been presented at the annual meetings of the MWERA, AERA, and other professional organizations.

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Bouncing Back after Bullying: The Resiliency of Female Victims of Relational Aggression

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Abstract

Although strides recently have been made to facilitate the understanding of relational aggression and its consequences, one significant limitation has been the lack of research on long-term impact. Through a grounded theory approach, this study examines how resiliency behaviors exhibited by victims of relational aggression during their adolescent years aid in the development of trusting adult friendships.

Bullying and harassment are pervasive problems in schools. It is estimated that 1.6 million school-aged individuals in the United States are bullied at least once a week (Olweus & Limber, 1999). Bullying leads to poor academic performance, low-self esteem, early dropout, child suicide, and violent acts of victim retaliation such as those that unfolded in Colorado, California, and Wisconsin in which 71 percent of the attackers reported feeling bullied by others prior to the incidents (Lodge & Frydenberg, 2005; Pace, Lowery & Lamme, 2004).

A purposeful and frequent activity, bullying incorporates power and intent to harm and causes physical, psychological and emotional pain (Rigby, 1997). While these results are common among victims, bullying techniques typically differ between age groups and genders. For instance, relational aggression, identified as a technique used primarily by girls (Coyne & Archer, 2005), is not overt or easily identified compared with the physically aggressive acts most often associated with bullying. Relational aggression is defined by Coloroso (2004) as:

The systematic diminishment of an individual's sense of self through ignoring, isolating, excluding, or shunning. Like all bullying, relational bullying springs from powerful feelings of dislike or contempt toward somebody considered to be worthless, inferior or undeserving of respect. This contempt often arises from deeply rooted attitudes that mirror social and cultural prejudices related to race, gender, religion, physical attributes or mental abilities. (p. 23)

Relational aggression is characterized by interpersonal and psychological abuses such as verbal harassment, exclusion from activities, name-calling, and initiation of rumors (Camodeca & Goossens, 2005). Not only does relational aggression appear in classrooms and on playgrounds, but also it is prevalent in the popular media. In fact, research shows that it is present in 92% of programs popular among British adolescents (Coyne & Archer, 2005).

Furthermore, relational aggression is considered by some theorists as the most dangerous bullying behavior to self-esteem as adolescents' social self-perceptions are derived largely from their subjective interpretation of how they are treated within the peer group (e.g., Goodwin, 2002; Lunde, Frisen, & Hwang, 2006; Simmons, 2002; Vaillancourt, Hymel, & McDougall, 2003). One theory ascertains that high-status female students engage in and pull off relationally aggressive behavior successfully in school settings, in part, because their status and other personal traits recognized as positive may partially account for the difficulty in identification (Vaillancourt et al.). If high-status bullies display a number of positive characteristics, it is easy for teachers, administrators, parents and peers to give them the "benefit of the doubt" regarding their negative social behaviors. And because all bullies do not have low esteem, identification is further complicated.

Rivers and Smith (1994) posit that the use of relationally aggressive behavior depends upon maturation and manipulation of a fully developed social infrastructure—appearing in girls as young as eight and peaking when they reach 11 years. Also there are indications that girls possess both socially advanced skills and verbal prowess that allow them to choose their words and amuse others by verbally attacking their victims—either directly or indirectly. The social sophistication displayed at a younger age by more and more females enables them to go beyond physical aggressiveness (e.g., Salmivalli, Lagerspetz, Bjorkqvist, Osterman, & Kaukiainen, 1996; Vaillancourt et al., 2003).

Highly powerful bullies—as opposed to low or moderately powerful bullies—are more popular and more liked. In fact, gangs of girl bullies rate high in terms of the current youth culture by knowing the newest fashion trends and the latest idols. It is possible that they are, even if frightening, admired. Regardless of power status, but in line with gender-role stereotypes, female bullies are perceived by their peers as being more relationally aggressive than physically aggressive, more attractive but less athletic, and as having greater peer intimacy than their male counterparts (Vaillancourt et al., 2003).

Underwood (2003) suggests using the “two cultures theory” as a framework for understanding why relational aggression, rather than physical aggression, may be more common in girls. She theorizes that boys’ and girls’ peer groups are so different that they essentially are separate cultures that invariably lead to different developmental trajectories. In essence, the forms and functions of girls’ peer groups—which are typically smaller, more intimate, and more relationship focused—provide a unique environment in which social aggression is likely to be effective and to flourish. Peer groups are microcosms of the larger society and, as such, mirror social mores that perpetuate environments. The innate side of gender may be universal and not culturally specific, but how it gets manifested in any given society depends on the norms, traditions and conventions of that culture. Ultimately, culture, as well as gender, should be considered when identifying or examining bullying behavior—as the aggressive actions could be different.

Another developmental explanation for girls reporting higher levels of relational victimization is that they tend to invest a tremendous amount of energy into social comparisons and peer acceptance (Casey-Cannon, Hayward, & Gowen, 2001; Gilligan, 1982). Relying more heavily on peer feedback to inform their self-worth, adolescent girls may be particularly susceptible to both the impressions of others regarding physical appearance or attractiveness and to being accepted as part of a social network (Eder & Kinney, 1995). Like the high-status student being given the “benefit of the doubt,” these bullies are often seen as displaying typical adolescent behavior by adults. When perceived victimization goes unnoticed, students are less likely to feel safe in their schools. Making adult intervention even more difficult is that the negative consequences associated with being bullied, on a single occasion or repeatedly, may not be evident until long after the incident has occurred.

Yet this behavior is given tacit approval by American society. According to Brown and Gilligan (1992), relational aggression is considered a female rite of passage and exacerbated by the absence of access to constructive conflict resolution. In fact, girls approaching adolescence often disavow their feelings and suppress their experience in order to preserve relationships. According to Brown and Gilligan (1992), “women excuse, justify, or actively impose on girls the self-censorship that they once suffered, promoting an intergenerational cycle of silencing which deadens relationships and undermines the potential for change” (p. v).

Despite studies suggesting the detrimental impact of bullying, a thorough exploration of the long-term consequences of relational aggression is missing from existing literature, in particular its impact on a victim’s ability to form adult friendships. Moreover, research suggests that resiliency strategies are imperative for the survival of individuals marginalized by a variety of physical and emotional abuses, yet relationally aggressive infractions have not been studied from a resiliency perspective.

Therefore, this study examines whether resiliency characteristics in victims of adolescent relational aggression helped or hindered formation of adult friendships. The following questions guided the research: (a) in what ways does a childhood experience of bullying create trust issues for women in adult friendships, and (b) can women develop healthy relationships after they have been the victims of relational aggression?

One approach to studying a victim’s relationship-building efficacy is through the lens of resiliency—or an individual’s ability to bounce back after repeated traumatic experiences. Research in this area indicates that victims of physical and mental abuse are able to overcome some long-term psychological effects and ultimately lead satisfying and productive lives through a combination of innate personality traits, such as temperament and skills, and distractions, like sleeping or eating (Bogar & Hulse-Killacky, 2006; Everall, Altrows, & Paulson, 2006; Grossman & Moore, 1994).

In a longitudinal resiliency study, Herman (1992) discovered that one child out of ten showed an unusual capacity to withstand an adverse early environment providing the child was characterized as having an alert, active temperament, unusual sociability and communication skills, and a strong sense of being able to affect his or her own destiny. Additionally, certain personality traits and processes have been identified as fostering resilience, including:

- (a) special talents or skills, (b) a sense of humor, (c) creativity, (d) an ability to plan, dream, hope, and fantasize, (e) an ability to tolerate pain, (f) insight, (g) independence, (h) self-respect, (i) an ability to restore self-esteem when it is temporarily lost, (j) a capacity for learning, (k) cognitive flexibility, (l) an interest in information seeking, (m) good school performance, (n) good impulse control, (o) determination, (p) social consciousness, (q) internal locus of control, and (r) a philosophy of life that offers personal meaning. (Flach, 1997, p. 287)

To escape the barrage of abuse, victims often remove themselves or find temporary sanctuary by creating diversions or by self-soothing. Identified by Eder (1997) as states of distraction, (a) sleeping, (b) eating, (c) immersion in books, television, or movies, (d) physical activity and (e) anti-social behaviors like shoplifting or reckless driving are often used to create distance between the individual and the abuse. When bully victims are absorbed in other activities, they can be in another world in which their personal characteristics do not elicit hostility from others.

A victim’s ability to establish and maintain at least one relationship—with a pet, family member, or peer—allows the victim to develop an ability for constructive interaction which can offset the impact of relational abuse (Higgins, 1994). Higgins also contends that even the most basic expression of warmth and compassion can matter for decades.

Method

Framework

Because the inclusion of the victim's perspective over time is an important addition to the theoretical and clinical views on the ramifications of relational aggression, content analysis of published resiliency studies of situational childhood abuses, such as sexual, physical and emotional, was coupled with grounded-theory based research in this study. I analyzed responses through constant comparison with the goal of illuminating how personal resiliency tendencies fostered survival during and an ability to develop friendships following relationally aggressive situations.

Participants and Setting

A convenience sample of three women, Julie, Susan and Caroline, participated in this study. They were recruited by personal solicitation or were referred by other contacts. Research criteria specified that participants (a) were women between the ages of 21-45, (b) had been bullied during their adolescent years, (c) currently had satisfying careers of their choosing, (d) felt relatively content with themselves, and (e) maintained a close relationship with at least one woman. Participants all lived in northeast Ohio at the time of the interviews.

The interviews occurred at convenient sites in which participants felt safe discussing their experiences. I interviewed two individuals at places of employment, and the third chose to meet at a coffee shop near her home. As long as the participant felt comfortable, the setting was otherwise incidental.

Data Collection

Data collection and analysis focused on participant perspective and personal accounts. Using a purposeful sampling approach, I collected data through semi-structured interviews and case study questions. These methods, respectively, were designed to provide opportunities for information to emerge spontaneously and to validate information provided in interviews.

I used an interview protocol containing queries and interviewer follow-up prompts to ensure that respondents provided information required to examine the global research questions. The guide helped keep the interviews on track. This approach proved successful in that all of the women shared stories with little prompting and without undue anxiety.

I developed the interview questions, piloted them with a colleague, and then fine-tuned them (see Appendix A). The pilot process proved to be helpful in several ways. First, it allowed for practice conducting an interview. Secondly, it identified redundancies and inappropriate phrasing in the questions. As a result, I rewrote questions prior to the administration of the survey. Interviews were audiotaped and transcribed within five hours after each interview and ranged from 1 to 1.5 hours each.

The first set of interview questions probed memories about adolescent bullying experiences, including the participants' most significant encounter, their emotions around it, who, if anyone, championed them, and how they coped with the aggression. The second interview asked about current relationships in which they were involved.

Following the first round of data collection, a case study question was created based on schema from problem-based learning literature. The case study incorporated items from the research objective and explored the question: Can women develop healthy relationships after they have been the victims of relational aggression? (Hall, 2006) (see Appendix B). Following the personal interviews, I sent the case study via email to each participant. In addition to addressing the research question in a different way, the case also served to check the validity of interview responses to determine if the questions posed actually led the respondents to the stated research objectives.

An Introduction to the Participants

Susan, Julie and Caroline each had a unique story to tell about her experience and subsequent trauma of relational aggression. Susan, a Caucasian, married woman from Ohio at the time of the interview, grew up in a suburb about 5 miles from Cleveland. A stand-out athlete at the private high school she attended, Susan was bullied by a group of girls because of her prowess on the field. She dealt with the trauma by "walking away" from her tormentors and subsequently avoiding them, while pouring her energy into her game. Susan avoided telling her parents because she did not want to worry them and felt that telling school officials would only escalate the issue. She explained:

I kept ignoring the girls at first. Then the first bullying started, when they would knock my books out of my hands. I got really angry when they pushed me down the stairs but I was afraid to do anything because I didn't want to get expelled or anything. I wanted to punch them or kick their asses but one of the girl's fathers was the coach for the boys' sports teams so I knew anything I said would be ignored.

Injured by the fall, Susan could not continue sports and switched schools. Anger created a wall between her and her parents, and she turned to gang membership for support.

Julie, a Caucasian, married woman living in Ohio at the time of the interview, grew up in rural northeastern Ohio and attended a small, homogenously-populated high school. She was bullied by a group of girls because of her size and her family's stature in the community. Julie, however, was bullied in concert with the rest of the girls in her group which provided some in-group empathy and support. Nevertheless, she feared the confrontation, which happened in the lunchroom, even though she rationalized that she would not be harmed in front of the teachers and other students. She said:

I remember being scared to death to go to the cafeteria, not even thinking in my own mind that they couldn't even do that in the cafeteria. I think we just sat down at our own table and a couple of (the bullies) went by and they would say things to us, like you're this or you're that.... We're going to kick your butt when you walk out to your car tonight... just kind of harassing us. They threw some things on us, too. I just remember sitting there thinking I wanted lunch to be over.

To deal with the bullying, Julie and her group avoided the lunch room and she changed her appearance by dressing in a more understated way. However, she did not solicit help until her anxiety grew:

I remember being embarrassed to tell my parents that people wanted to kick my butt because I didn't want to be perceived like that. I was physically small and more or less scared that they would really hurt me. I feared confrontation in general so even when they'd say something to me, I'd get completely nervous and scared. My brother did say something to these girls on more than one occasion. I didn't ask him to do it, but he knew what was going on and he kind of did it when he was in the right place at the right time.

Caroline, a divorced African-American mother of one, lived on the East Coast at the time her bullying experiences took place. She attended a large urban school and used public transportation to get to and from school. Her bullying experiences occurred predominantly on the bus and were conducted by a group of girls. Caroline's mother was not supportive about Caroline's issues, but Caroline could confide in her father. While he did not take action, he was a sounding board. Caroline dealt with the trauma by burying herself in books and schoolwork, sleeping, avoiding her tormentors by intentionally missing the bus, and changing her appearance. Eventually, she moved and the bullying stopped. She explained:

They would draw pictures of me and put them up. I would wait until all the buses they had specifically for our school left, and then I would have to take just the main bus line so I wouldn't be on the bus with them. When I would be on the bus with them, I would be the person that everyone talked about and then, on top of that, they would throw things at me or push me. It came to a head one day when I was trying to get on the bus and one of the girls sat down on the seat and put her leg across the aisle to the other seat and said, "I dare you to walk past me." And I stood there. The bus driver was screaming for everybody to move, the kids were pushing me, some were pushing me into her, and I knocked her leg off the seat and that set off the chain reaction of her hitting me. The bus driver put us all off, so there was me—and four girls—beating

me up and the rest of the bus of kids watching. So the next day at school I come having been beat up and so not only did I have the extra stuff going on then... I had a black eye.

Data Analysis

According to Merriam (2002), theory building involves the identification of a core category or the main conceptual element through which all others are connected. With resiliency as the focus, I searched the interview transcripts for key categories relevant to the research questions using a scheme of open and axial coding (pp. 143-149). I also consulted Everall et al. (2006) multi-categorized, four-domain framework for resiliency of victims of sexual abuse as a secondary method of identifying resiliency. Data analysis considered social, emotional, and cognitive processes and goal-directed action to determine how participants created positivism in their lives despite victimization. As an active participant in data collection, I used rigorous coding procedures to understand how bully victims came to form trusting relationships, particularly with women.

During the open coding process, themes of trauma, survival strategies, and personal attributes emerged from the data, underscored by social, cognitive and emotional processes. Subsequently, I incorporated the themes into a chart (see Table 1). I read each interview transcript twice to determine thematic incidences. Using axial coding, I then grouped comments and incidents into the column I judged to be the best fit. The core category of resiliency was substantiated during the selective coding process.

I used the same framework in the case study analysis to determine if respondents employed strategies in concert with resiliency tendencies. A comparison of case study responses to personal interviews further validated the hypothesis of resiliency in bully victims. A final analysis of participant perspectives using supporting literature indicated that friendship and trust building after victimization is an active process that can be described best through the lens of resiliency.

Findings

Previous studies present resiliency theories related to verbal and physical aggression (Everall et al., 2006), but less research has been done on the victims of relational aggression. This study concurs with the literature that an individual's ability to negotiate and survive bullying experiences is testament to his/her resiliency and introduces new ideas about the long-term effects of adolescent relational aggression on women's ability to form trusting relationships.

Commonalities existed in both the content of the victims' experiences and how they addressed them despite age and racial differences among the three participants. Additional themes emerged from the language participants used to describe their experiences of bullying and their adoption of coping strategies (see Table 1). The language of trauma,

Table 1
Actions and Emotions as Related by Victims Indicating Resiliency Tendencies

Trauma	Survival	Personality Traits
Scared	Used avoidance strategy	Relating to others
Nervous	Confided in group	Facing feelings
Feared confrontation	Family intervention	Shifting perspectives
Embarrassed	Moved away	Taking action
Lack of confidence	Hid	
Depressed	Changed appearance	
Insecure	Retaliated	
Physical abuse/hospitalization	Fought	
Felt unsafe	Slept	
Fear	Journalled	
Low-self esteem	Excelled at sports	
Pushed family away	Joined a gang	

indicated in the first column, and the survival mechanisms, in the middle column, correlate with the last column showing personality-trait categories, which have been identified as determinants of individual resiliency in supporting literature (Everall et al., 2006).

In addition to a common discourse, participants reported other similar anecdotal evidence. First, in all cases bullies and victims were often friends or acquaintances. Julie's tormentors were a group of older girls in her school. Caroline was bullied by a gang of girls who rode her bus, and Susan's friends and teammates victimized her. These findings support extant research indicating that relational aggression is generally directed at friends or same-sex peers (Simmons, 2002).

Second, participants experienced traumatic feelings of fear, anxiety, low-self esteem, and lack of safety. In all accounts, the victims pushed away family members or interventions unless the interventions were performed without their knowledge. Of her experience, Susan said: "I did lots of bad things to people then. I pushed them away... like my parents. Uh, you don't wanna do that to your parents. But I was angry."

The women's feelings of guilt, inferiority and a core of ever-present existential anxiety resulted from human disconnection. They were reluctant to seek help which led to isolation. The recurring rejection by a social group is experienced by an individual as punishment for simply existing (Perera, 1986). So, having grown accustomed to shouldering the burden alone, these victims no longer felt that they could ask for assistance.

Third, while none of the participants could pinpoint what instigated the bullying, they all had well-defined theories related to the shape and size of their bodies. Physical appearance and athleticism were reported as primary causes of bullying in all cases. Ironically, at the same time that being overweight is reason for ridicule, being athletic is also grounds for bullying (Eder, 1997). Fried and Fried (1996) write that "being overweight makes one a prime target for abuse" (p. 11).

While small in stature (an attribute she claims prevented her from standing up to the bullies), Julie also was a noted athlete—yet she was the subject of ridicule by a group of older high school girls. Susan reported being overweight but athletically gifted—singled out for trophies, awards and often in the media for her athletic prowess: "I would still get teased sometimes about my size. But it wasn't so bad because I was good at sports and that made me feel good about myself." While not athletic, but self-described as overweight, Caroline said:

It started with me having glasses and continued with them noticing that I had crossed eyes. So it kind of started when they called me the names that had to do with crossed eyes, and then the glasses issue, and then it went from that to my skin because I had acne. (They proceeded to attack) my clothing choices and then my hair. Plus, I was chubby. This chain reaction created a phenomenon in which I became the person in class that everyone messed with.

Because fault can be found with anything, once someone has been targeted, there is little they can do right and the abuse escalates (Samuels, 2002). In her interview, Caroline referred to this phenomenon as a "chain reaction" and nothing she did, including resorting to violence, could rectify the situation.

Even though the respondents in this study made personal choices that at times contradicted these determinants (such as physical retaliation and joining a gang), they possessed a number of personal characteristics and strategies that enhanced their resiliency. For example, Susan exhibited an extreme tolerance to pain—even continuing competitive sports with an undetected broken wrist. Julie persevered in finding self-esteem in her prowess as an athlete, and Caroline's school performance helped her cope.

Bogar and Hulse-Killackey (2006) explain that "to be resilient an individual must first be exposed to a traumatic situation, then act in ways that provide protection from negative affects that might typically occur" (p. 319). In other words, what serves as a protective factor for one person may be a

risk factor for someone else, so protective processes tend to be unique to individuals. This proved true in this study as each woman used a different type of personal strength as an escape mechanism. Caroline used avoidance and escapism (into literature); Julie changed her appearance by donning less-preppy clothing; and Susan increased her intensity toward sports.

Everall et al. (2006) report that resiliency is aided when social support exists—and resilient individuals seek out alternative sources of support if needed. This played out in the respondents' lives as they gravitated toward groups or individuals. For instance, Julie relied on her "group" for solace and empathy. Susan acculturated with a gang in order to feel she belonged. Emotional outlets were an essential tool used by the participants to handle the trauma. For example, Susan relied on her boyfriend, Caroline wrote in her journals, and Julie talked to her brother or group members.

Additionally, each participant took charge of her life by taking action. According to Everall et al. (2006), action serves as a distraction from negative thinking and provides temporary relief from emotional pain. To escape persecution, Julie reported that, "We stayed out of their way. If we got near them, they'd say stuff to us and threaten us." Likewise, Caroline avoided her tormentors by waiting until all the buses had left for the school and took the main bus line so she would not have to ride with the bullies. Susan ignored her tormentors—until the bullying became physical. Eventually, Caroline moved to another city; Susan changed schools; and Julie finally confided in her parents who took action to stop the attacks.

All women excelled at scholastics or sports or both. Julie and Susan reported an increased sense of self-esteem and worth due to their prowess in school and sports, indicating that this enabled them to cope better with the bullying. Caroline did not excel at sports, but was a self-described excellent student who wrote and read a lot in her spare time to escape her tormentors. Susan said:

There was a group of friends I had in elementary school and we all played sports. We were friends then but I would still get teased sometimes about my size. But it wasn't so bad because I was good at sports and that made me feel good about myself.

Caroline used school work and literature to escape and reported, "I read a lot and wrote a lot in journals." Julie reported: "I guess just like being involved in sports and things like that kept my mind off it and made me feel good about myself." Being in charge of cognitive processes and the ability to redirect thoughts into more positive channels are additional resiliency tools (Everall et al., 2006). In this case, each participant's ability to use cognitive processes to distract or self-soothe helped her control negative thinking patterns.

To an extent, these findings support the theory that resiliency is promoted by the ability to establish and maintain at least one relationship (Higgins, 1994). Julie and Susan chose to affiliate with a group in order to cope, while Caro-

line disassociated herself from an outside group but was able to change her home life (which was not contributing to her feelings of self worth) so that she was in a more affirming situation. Interestingly, members of Julie's group also were bullied and she maintained friendships with members of that group into adulthood. Susan selected a more self-destructive route and joined a gang after her athletic career was ended by a particularly vicious and physical bullying incident that shattered her wrist.

Finally, it is interesting to note that physical separation was the only relief from bullying that the victims were granted. In all cases, either the victim or the bullies moved away or changed schools. Julie confided that the following year, when she was a sophomore, her tormentors went to another school—so the bullying stopped for the remainder of her high school years.

Discussion and Implications

Based on the perspectives and accounts of Julie, Caroline and Susan, the results of this study suggest that certain individual traits, developed as or through coping mechanisms during experiences of adolescent relational aggression, led to resiliency which, in turn, helped these individuals develop an ability to form trusting relationships. Conversely, the absence of these traits, and subsequent undeveloped coping mechanisms, appear to have hindered the formation of trusting adult relationships in participants.

For instance, consistent with previous research (Everall, et. al, 2006; Smith & Carlson, 1997), the women demonstrating fewer resiliencies during and after the trauma seemed less able to negotiate functional adult relationships, indicating that social-emotional support is essential for developing resiliency and that the lack of this support during trauma inhibits future healing. Resiliency factors for these participants seem to be inextricably linked to one another, enabling positive steps in one area to produce positive changes and added momentum to the entire process.

This study supports a call for more research that will tease out a resiliency effect in bully victims, and it also presents a possible theory that all resiliency factors need to be present to ensure full recovery from the trauma of bullying. In their accounts, Caroline and Susan reported the least amount of positive social support which appears to have affected their choices of coping mechanisms and, subsequently, their ability to negotiate trusting relationships. They used more emotion-focused coping strategies—also called passive strategies—when external stressors seemed beyond their control (Smith & Carlson, 1997). This contrasts with the problem-focused coping, or active, strategies that Julie used more consistently in her attempt to actively alter the stressor, which ultimately enhanced her resiliency.

In the resiliency literature, emotion-focused coping is portrayed as creating a more helpless pattern in a victim,

whereas problem-focused coping is active and carried out when the victim believes she has the opportunity to change a situation (Smith & Carlson, 1997). This pattern is played out in participants' accounts of current relationships. According to Susan:

I don't have any close women friends because women are petty. I'm still angry about what happened in high school. I have a lot of anger. At work, I'm up for a promotion and there is this woman who is calling people up and saying bad things about me because she wants the job. In a way I don't care because I have a thick skin, but I'm still angry about the physical stuff that happened in high school. Men just tell it like it is, and I like that. I'm close with my mom now—does that count for a close woman friend? I don't tell her everything, though. I'm not sure I'd tell any woman everything.

Likewise, when asked about confronting a situation with a "trusted" friend in a case study question (see Appendix B), Julie and Caroline provided responses that correlated with the coping mechanisms they developed during their bullying experiences. Julie and Caroline said:

Julie: We talk daily so we have disagreements frequently about things but more often than not, I'll just say "I disagree" and give her my point and we can move on. We're at the point where we understand that we both don't have the same opinions. We may try to persuade one another, but I'm not mad if she doesn't take my point of view as her own.

Caroline: I don't get close to anyone because I don't want the same thing that happened to me as a child to happen as an adult. And if I push people away then they can't know enough about me to hurt me. If there is confrontation, then I'm done. I have this one friend who called me out on it, and that's when I realized what I was doing. We had a disagreement about something, and it seemed like she was attacking me and my parenting skills. We didn't talk for a few days. She called me and said that she knew that we could disagree, but that I would then push her away. I still talk with her a couple of times a month, but I stopped telling her stuff and I don't trust her. And that's what I do because I don't want to give anyone any ammunition to bully me. I think as an adult I have more control over my life and who is around me and that's how I like it. I don't have to ride the bus anymore.

This research suggests that when the study participants experienced success across all of the resiliency domains, in particular maintaining at least one healthy social relationship during the trauma, they were more successful in future relationships. Absent one or more resiliency traits, these former bully victims struggled with trust as adults.

Interventions

Ultimately, recognizing relational aggression as a form of bullying is an important consideration for school-based efforts to reduce the behavior. An estimated 30% of students nationwide are either bullies or victims, but nearly 25% of teachers report that they do not think it necessary to intervene in the behavior (Feinberg, 2003). Paradoxically, bullying often is viewed as necessary and positive by people who think that children need to relate in this manner to transition to adults, particularly when it is in the form of relational aggression (Simmons, 2002). In other words, bullying is "okay" because it teaches a lesson about what should be expected from relationships later in life.

Frighteningly, these adult constructs make it possible for teachers, parents, and administrators to conclude that aggressive behavior is, in fact, not abuse but rather, a learning and growing experience. Because of the complexity involved and absent the tools needed to recognize, understand and mediate aggression, adults have further justification to ignore relational issues. Failure to stop relational aggression implies tacit approval; therefore the prevalence and surreptitiousness of the action demand that teachers and other adults become more aware of the bullying behavior that is perpetrated and possibly legitimized when engaged in by both genders. It is for these reasons that bullying in schools and finding effective solutions for managing this conflict are challenges for the leadership of educational organizations.

Many successful intervention programs are based, in part, on Olweus' (1997) work that targets the context in which bullying occurs and the behavior of both bully and victim. While his program does not differentiate between gender or physical and relational aggression, it provides a solid underpinning to creating an anti-bullying culture that promotes learned positive behavior for both students and adults, zero-tolerance of adult bullying, and meeting the needs of individuals. School psychologists and other trained mental health professionals are critical to making this process work. Olweus' approach has been shown to reduce bullying by 50% and includes (a) early interventions that target specific risk factors and teach positive behavior and critical-thinking skills at the classroom level, including lessons, discussion and parent meetings, (b) intensive individual interventions that provide bullies and victims with individual support through meetings with students and parents, counseling, and sustained child and family supports, and (c) a school wide foundation that offers universal interventions; a value system based on caring, respect, and personal responsibility; positive discipline and supports; clear behavioral expectations and consequences; skills development; and increased adult supervision and parental involvement.

Likewise, Simmons (2002) provides strategies for policy making and teaching geared toward parents and educators. She focuses her attention on relational aggression and con-

tends that active listening is the most vital contribution from parents. While there is not much a parent can do to alleviate the problem, offering a refuge at home can help a victim survive. Working with a child—allowing her some autonomy in strategizing—provides her the power she needs, but feels she is lacking, as a victim. Getting the facts, making sure the classroom teacher knows, asking for a seating change, encouraging the formation of protective social bonds with other students are effective parental interventions. Also—helping a child choose activities in which she will make a contribution, rather than be judged by what she is wearing, can alleviate popularity contests. Passion for a sport, hobby, or volunteering can move a child out of the social misfortune in which she finds herself at school and vault her to a position in which she is making a difference. Outside of the family, Simmons (2002) advocates an infrastructure with two main components: regulation and education.

At the time of Simmons' writings, the regulatory approach to relational aggression was virtually nonexistent. School districts set broad guidelines for students, allowing some schools to be strict about specific antibullying policies while others hoped the issue would disappear by avoiding it. Recently, as a byproduct of the Safe Schools initiative in the No Child Left Behind legislation, most states have mandated that schools create policies that include anti-bullying language regarding relational aggression (www.nichd.nih.gov, 2007). Simmons suggests further that reasonable rules that can be applied consistently without regard to family, social status, race, or gender should prohibit specific behaviors, such as rumor spreading, alliance building, secret telling, and severe episodes of nonverbal aggression. She also recommends that classroom teachers ban behaviors such as sighing, snorting, eye-rolling, or back-turning, and socialize girls away from these actions. A teacher can integrate lessons with stories about children who experience relational aggression or openly discuss her own history with bullying.

In a study by Bosworth, Espelage, DuBay, Dahlberg, and Daytner (1996), students participated in a multimedia violence-prevention intervention called SMART Talk (Students Managing Anger Resolution Together). The program was grounded in Bandura's social learning theory, Knopczyk's role-model theory and a psycho-educational intervention program called ART (originally developed for juvenile delinquents) and designed to help middle-school students practice social skills. The program's goal was to decrease the number and intensity of aggressive and violent incidents by engaging students in computer-based games, simulations, graphics, cartoons and interactive interviews that impart nonviolent conflict-resolution skills. The researchers concluded that, as an intervention strategy, SMART Talk was appealing to students due to its interactive, multi-media approach and that when used to enhance an organization's conflict-management program, it provided an additional resource that met the learning needs of students in the middle grades.

DeRosier and Marcus (2005) tested the long-term effectiveness of a social-skills program for peer-rejected, victimized, and socially anxious children. Third-graders with peer problems from 11 public elementary schools in North Carolina were randomly assigned to treatment or control groups using S.S.GRIN, a social-skills training intervention considered most effective due to its general applicability as well as its efficiency in reducing multiple problem areas after single interventions at varying sites. In S.S.GRIN, both cognitive and behavioral methods were used to teach and practice each skill, including didactic instruction combined with active practice. Positive reinforcement, corrective feedback, and cognitive reframing were integral teaching methods. The findings from this study supported S.S.GRIN's long-term efficacy for enhancing children's functioning across social, emotional, and behavioral domains. Participation appeared to help children with different types of peer problems and treatment effects built over the year following treatment. Interestingly, the improvements were found largely for measures of self-reported social competence—children who left the program felt better about themselves and their ability to be successful in social situations.

The Expect Respect project, administered by Rosenbluth, Whitaker, Sanchez, and Valle (2004), targeted the involvement of all members of the Austin Independent School District in recognizing and responding to bullying and sexual harassment among students. To achieve reductions in bullying and improvement in school climate, the program utilized five components: classroom curriculum, staff training, policy development, parent education and support services. The authors selected the *Bullyproof* curriculum (Stein & Sjostrom, 1996) because it focused on increasing the ability and willingness of bystanders to intervene, and thus was hypothesized to reduce the social acceptance of bullying. Lessons included writing assignments, role plays, and class discussions designed to help students distinguish playful teasing and joking from hurtful teasing and bullying, to enhance students' knowledge about bullying, and to develop skills for responding as a target or bystander. In addition, there was staff training, policy development, parent education and counselors available to assist school psychologists. The study indicated that the project positively impacted children's awareness of bullying and their intentions to intercede when witnessing bullying.

Salmivalli, Kaukiainen, and Voeten (2005) hypothesized mixed success of bully intervention programs that fail to approach the issue from a participant perspective—a group process in which bystanders often encourage or silently witness bullying while offering little or no support to the victim. Therefore, the aim of their study was to evaluate the effects of an anti-bullying intervention program utilizing a cohort longitudinal design augmented by extensive teacher training. Salmivalli et al. (2005) evaluated the overall effects of an anti-bullying intervention using multi-level modeling and the degree of implementation of the program. They looked for intervention effects for several outcome variables indicating

the degree of bully-victim problems in the class, students' beliefs related to bullying and intervening in it, and self- and peer-reported participant role behaviors. Each teacher in the study attended a one-year training course covering three systemic levels that had been considered important in earlier bullying literature—school, class and individual student level. The main emphasis was, however, on the group mechanisms of bullying and, therefore, on intervening at the class level. This aspect is particularly important in looking at interventions for relational aggression as girls tend to bully other individual girls in cohorts of at least two (Simmons, 2002).

Salmivalli et al. (2005) posit that the participant role approach provided a common framework for teachers to use in curriculum-based, class-level work. Teachers discussed bullying with the whole class stressing group mechanisms and participant roles. For interventions at the student level, individual discussion methods such as shared concern and a no-blame approach were introduced to the teachers. Regardless of the method used, the role of systematic follow-ups after the intervention discussions was strongly emphasized. At the school level, the role of whole-school policy against bullying was emphasized, and printed guidelines were given for developing policies. Salmivalli et al. (2005) found that training teachers in anti-bullying work is not sufficient if they lack either the motivation or resources to implement the program and that support from school management and colleagues is critical for success.

Limitations

The generalizability of this study would be enhanced with a larger sample size for a wider selection of experiences; however these findings align neatly with research conducted on victims of other abuses, such as sexual and physical abuse. Other limitations of this study can be overcome by including participants of different races, such as Asian Americans and Latinas, to determine if race is a factor in female bullying and if resiliency strategies differ. Additionally, the participants studied attended coeducational schools as adolescents, which could have been a factor in the degree of bully aggressiveness. Including women who are products of single-sex educational environments might determine if the absence of a patriarchal structure affects the behavior. Finally, researcher objectivity could have been enhanced by keeping a field journal as well as including inter-rater reliability by incorporating a second data coder to avoid confounding factors for better external validity.

Recommendations

Comprehension of relational aggression can encourage further research to determine where and how society allows the phenomena to develop and can provide information on how to check its progress. Future work should consider the inner qualities victims believe may have contributed to their success in coping with the bullying behavior. Including spe-

cific inquiry about respondents' close adult female relationships might yield information about the specific resiliency domains individuals use to negotiate friendships.

Further research examining relational aggression through a critical lens and from a feminist perspective could identify and explain power issues that contribute to an environment that promotes female bullying. Future studies also should focus on the bullying experiences of women in high-ranking corporate and academic positions and their subsequent relationships with either friends or subordinates.

In this research, usage patterns of resiliency strategies emerged from the collective stories of the participants, providing insights into the processes and determinants that contributed to their ability to negotiate trusting relationships with other women following an experience of relational aggression. Therefore, this study supports the literature that trauma victims, in this case bully victims, can form healthy, trusting friendships with same-sex individuals if there is support and encouragement for them to do so.

Because women's relationships transcend many personal and professional boundaries, it is critical to understand the future ramifications of relational aggression on the next generations. Relational aggression must be taken seriously by the adults who interact with girls on a regular basis. Bully prevention programs in schools and language in policy need to extend to include the covert bullying habits of females.

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Appendix A

Relational Aggression Resiliency Study

Interview I Questions

Experience

1. Tell me about the most significant bully incident of your adolescence.
 2. What can you recall about the content of this incident?
 - a. In what ways were you teased?
 - b. What words were used?
 - c. What was written about you?
 - d. In what context did the bullying take place?
 - e. What was the duration?
 3. What were your thoughts and feelings then about what was happening to you?
 4. How did you express those feelings and thoughts?
 - a. Who were your confidants?
 - b. What did you confide or express?
 5. What were some of your coping mechanisms? Why do you think they worked?
 6. Who were the people who took action on your behalf?
 - a. Did you ask them to or did they do it on without consulting you?
 - b. What were the results of the action?
 7. Tell me what gave you comfort or pleasure during this time?
 8. Was there anything you wished someone did or told you during this time?
 9. What are your beliefs about how you handled the situation in school and how you kept going (what traits did you use to cope?)
 10. Are there any pivotal experiences you identify as having contributed to your ability to move on?
-

Appendix B

Relational Aggression Resiliency Study

Interview II Questions

Current Relationships

Detailed follow up questions will be formulated after the initial interview so that the researcher can ascertain if the coping mechanisms used in adolescent relationships are still in place today.

1. Think about your closest friendship now. Who is it with?
 2. What do you value most about this relationship?
 3. How do you disagree with this friend? Describe a time when you had a disagreement and how you handled it.
 4. What would be something you couldn't or wouldn't tell this friend? Describe an incidence in which she/he betrayed you?
-

Appendix C

Case Study:

Judy and Jill have been friends for 15 years. They have supported each other through failed relationships, struggles with jobs, and career changes. They confide everything to each other.

Last week, a mutual, but distant, friend asked Judy if she was feeling okay and to ask for help if there was anything she needed. Judy was puzzled and questioned the acquaintance about why she would ask this question. The acquaintance told her that Jill had mentioned that Judy was battling some severe health issues, confirming that Jill had divulged private and personal information that Judy hadn't even confided to her family. Judy had specifically asked Jill to keep the information to herself until she had time to figure out how to tell her family the news.

Put yourself in Judy's shoes. How would you handle this situation with Jill?

Julie Answer:

I would call Jill immediately and tell her exactly what happened and sort of play dumb to see how she reacts and to see what her reasoning is. I would tell her that it was upsetting to me especially considering how I hadn't even told my family yet. I would try to listen, but ultimately know that I really trusted her and it just is hurtful that I thought I could tell her in confidence.

Caroline Answer:

I would ask Jill if she had spoken to their friend about the information. More likely than not, Jill will reply, "no." I would just continue by reminding her about how our relationship is based on trust and that it's extremely important that she give me the same discretion that I give her. I would tell her that although she may not have realized it, she revealed enough information that the friend felt involved enough to say something about it. Knowing that this will make for an uncomfortable few days with the friendship, I would drop the discussion with Jill—the motive is to get her to recognize that news travels and that discretion matters in friendship. Unfortunately, I would not hold much trust in Jill any longer and so I would discontinue sharing with her the things dear and personal to me. In other words, I would hold a grudge. Forgiveness is not something I value.

Appendix D

Screening questions used during recruitment process:

1. Why do you want to participate in this study?
2. Please explain how you feel the effects of your bullying experience are affecting you now, if at all?
3. Do you have at least one close relationship with a woman?

Frequency of Principal Turnover in Ohio's Elementary Schools

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Abstract

One remedy for Ohio schools that fail to meet the state's test score criteria for "effectiveness" is to force a change in the principalship. Concerns have been raised that such a remedy may simultaneously undermine the organizational stability of the school. The researchers in this study examined the frequency with which elementary building principals in 109 southwest Ohio schools changed during the 7-year period of 1996-1997 (FY 1997) through 2002-2003 (FY 2003). The researchers found that urban and rural schools had a significantly higher turnover frequency than did suburban schools. Ways to counter frequent principal turnover while, at the same time, generating improved principal leadership, pose great challenges for those at the helm of many Ohio districts.

What effect does frequent principal turnover have on a school? Must a principal remain in the position for a given number of years to make a significant impact upon the school community? A building principal plays an important role in school reform (Hipp, 1997; Kowalski, 1999; Oberman, 1996; Ogawa & Hart, 1985). The idea that principal stability is related to school improvement is based on the belief that for reform to be meaningful, it must take place at the school level (Fullan, 1991, 1993; Hall & Hord, 2001); that change at the school level involves a cultural dimension (Deal & Peterson, 1990; Peterson & Deal, 1998; Stolp, 1994); and that a change in school culture takes time. Estimates of the time required for significant school reform at a given school are 5 to 7 years (Deal & Peterson, 1999; Fullan, 2001; Villa, Thousand, Meyers, & Nevin, 1996). That principal turnover is seen as an important event is evidenced by some researchers calling it a "succession crisis" (Grusky, 1960).

Purpose of the Study

This study focused on the frequency of principal turnover in Ohio. To what extent is this a concern? The term "principal turnover frequency" refers to the frequency with which principals in Ohio public schools were replaced over a 7-year time span. These researchers examined both the phenomena of succession and turnover frequency in the literature. Succession (or turnover) can be understood by seeing how much it affects the school organization (Johnson & Licata, 1995). Principal succession is examined in schools for the consequences on school personnel, programs, culture, and student achievement. Some studies have explored the stages of principal succession and the reaction to principal succession (Gordon & Rosen, 1981; Hart, 1993; Miskel & Cosgrove, 1985). In particular, there is a paucity of information about turnover rates in the elementary principalship in urban public schools across the nation. Urban schools in major metropolitan areas in this country experience differ-

ent problems than other schools (Balfanz & MacIver, 2000; Kozol, 1991). They have been the focus of far more school reform measures. For example, after *A Nation at Risk* was published in 1983, the public outcry for reform was so great that reforms occurred at an unprecedented rate; one study found an estimated 3,000 separate school-reform measures enacted during the 1980s (Hess, 1999).

The primary question guiding this study was: What is the profile of principal turnover in a selected group of elementary schools in one geographic region of Ohio that encompasses urban, rural, and suburban schools? Principal turnover frequency was defined as the frequency of changes in this position in a school over a 7-year period from the 1996-1997 school year (FY 1997) through the 2002-2003 school year (FY 2003). More specifically, we asked: What is the principal turnover frequency of selected urban, suburban, and rural elementary public schools in southwest Ohio during the 7-year period of 1996-1997 (FY 1997) through 2002-2003 (FY 2003)? Do differences exist in the principal turnover frequencies in urban schools as compared with suburban and rural schools?

These three settings were described as follows. Urban schools are located in large urban centers that have student populations with high concentrations of poverty. Suburban schools surround major urban centers. They are distinguished by very high income levels, almost no poverty, and a very high proportion of the population characterized as professional/administrative. Rural schools represent two categories: The first group tends to comprise rural districts from the Appalachian area of Ohio with high poverty and low socioeconomic status families as measured by average income levels and percentage of population with some college experience. Districts in the second group tend to be small and very rural outside of Appalachia. They have a work force profile that is similar to schools in the first group but with much lower poverty rates (Ohio Department of Education, 1996).

This study was limited by several factors. Generalizing the findings of the study was limited to the schools in a 19 county region of Ohio that served as the population. Another limitation addresses reasons for the turnover of the principal. Principals leave for positive and negative reasons. Positive aspects are promotion and opportunities for higher levels of leadership. Negative reasons are removal by superiors of principals who are ineffective, or principals who leave because of unsatisfactory conditions (Miklos, 1988). No evidence about reasons for principals leaving their positions was included in the study. In addition, to determine the number of principals at each designated school, the database included school years FY 1997 to FY 2003 and the principals during those years. The data were limited to these years and did not show whether or not the principal at a school in FY 1997, the first year included in the count of principals, had been in place for a number of years prior to that date. Similarly, the end of the frequency count, FY 2003, did not take into account the length of future service of those principals in place that final year.

Other boundaries of the study included the fact that schools included in the database were those that were open continuously from FY 1997 through FY 2003. Schools that were consolidated, changed names, or closed as well as any school opened after FY 1997 were eliminated from the database.

Although findings of the effects of principal turnover are varied and inconclusive, educational researchers believe that administrators and policymakers need to have a better

understanding of the dynamics of principal turnover and the implications of change in the principalship (Macmillan & Meyer, 2003).

Selection of the Sample

The following process was used to select the sample which included multiple steps. In the first step, the 19-county geographic region of Ohio was identified as the population area (See Figure 1). Those nineteen counties included: Butler, Champaign, Clark, Clermont, Clinton, Delaware, Fairfield, Fayette, Franklin, Greene, Hamilton, Licking, Madison, Miami, Montgomery, Pickaway, Preble, Union, Warren. We justified this bounded region because it is in relative close proximity to us should we decide to visit the schools in a follow-up study; also, the region includes urban, suburban, and rural districts.

The eight category Ohio typology of school districts (Ohio Department of Education, 1996) created a typology (or classification) so that a rational basis for making data driven comparisons of “like” districts would be available. ODE used four dimensions –(1) Rural, Small Town, Urban/ Suburban, Major City; (2) Socioeconomic status (as defined primarily by level of education and work force profile); (3) Poverty level; and (4) Size. These four dimensions tended to cluster school districts into eight groupings (See Table 1). Because we were interested in comparing urban, suburban, and rural schools, only certain categories from the typology were used.

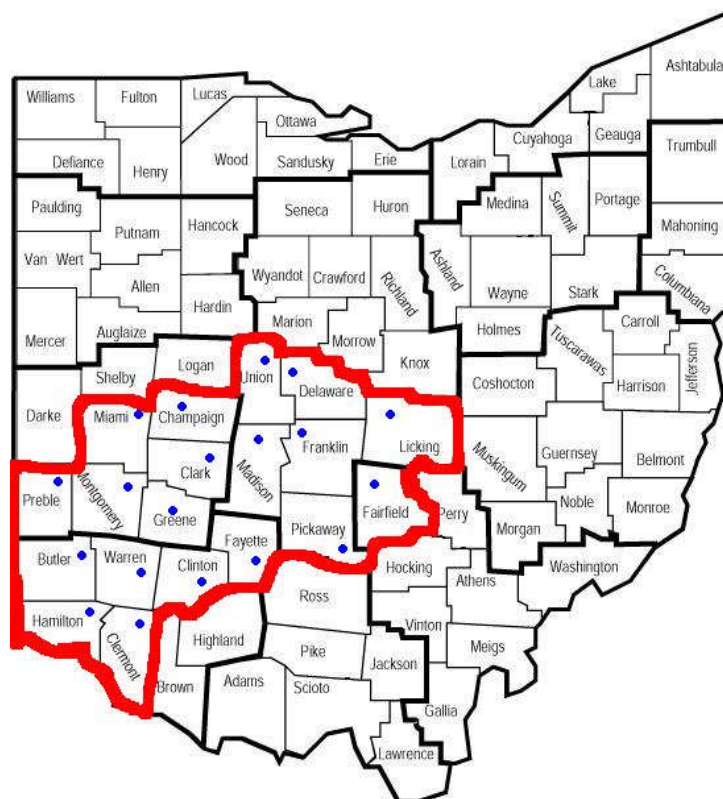


Figure 1. 19 Counties in Ohio in the selected population

(Partlow article continued on page 21)

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■ ■ ■ ■ ■ Thursday Morning Keynote Address ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

David Flinders, Ph.D.

Globalization, Teacher Education, and Standards



David J. Flinders (Ph.D., Stanford University) is a Professor of Education at Indiana University, Bloomington. His professional interests focus on curriculum theory, educational foundations, classroom-based research, and qualitative research methods. He has also written on federal education policies that influence educational research and on the problems of No Child Left Behind. Flinders has published six books on education. Currently he is working (with co-editor Stephen J. Thornton) on the third edition of *The Curriculum Studies Reader*. Flinders is also the current AERA Vice President for Division B: Curriculum Studies. A former middle and high school English teacher, Flinders has taught in Utah, California, Oregon, Texas, and Indiana.

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■■■■■ Friday Luncheon Keynote Address ■■■■■

Elaine Jarchow, Ph.D.

*The Global Teacher Educator:
A Peripatetic with Purpose*



Elaine Jarchow (Ph.D., Kent State University) is Dean of the College of Education at Northern Kentucky University. Prior to her arrival at Northern Kentucky, she served as Dean of the College of Education at Zayed University, United Arab Emirates, as Dean of Academic Affairs, Dar Al Hekma Private College, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, and as Dean of the College of Education at Texas Tech University. Her major research area is international education, specifically curriculum decision making in emerging democracies and cultural awareness in international student teaching and faculty exchange settings. She has served as a consultant in China, Thailand, Egypt, Ghana, New Zealand, Australia, Mexico, Belize, Poland, and Honduras. She is the author of more than 50 manuscripts, more than 70 conference presentations, and 18 funded grants. She chaired the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education's Committee on International Education and was a member of the Association of Teacher Educators' International Affairs Committee, Global Education Task Force, and Publications Committee. She was the treasurer of the World Council for Curriculum and Instruction and is a member of the International Council on Education for Teaching's Board of Directors.

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(Partlow article continued from page 16)

Next, we needed to identify elementary schools in urban settings and elementary schools in suburban and rural settings in order to make comparisons. We first listed all school districts in each of the 19 counties—a total of 152 school districts were included in the study. Seven hundred and seventy elementary schools were identified in the 152 school districts.

To select the schools, only certain categories from the Ohio typology were used. The first category selected was category 6 (Major urban, large city, average SES, high poverty school districts) because the focus of this study was to learn more about large, urban, public school districts and schools. Comparison groups of suburban and rural schools were needed. Because urban schools in category 6 have the highest poverty of all urban schools, suburban schools from category 8 (Urban/suburban, high SES, very low poverty) were selected next for the greatest variance. To form a rural group category 1 (Rural – high poverty, low SES) was selected because, again, it represented the most extreme cases. Because there are only two elementary schools in category 1, category 2 was combined to increase the number of schools. Having determined that categories 1 and 2, 6, and 8 were appropriate for this study, a proportional stratified random sampling procedure was used. Because maximizing differences among groups increases power (Heiman, 2000), this decision to examine the extreme categories of urban schools (Ohio category 6),

suburban schools (Ohio category 8) and rural schools (Ohio categories 1 and 2) strengthened the design.

Results showed that of the total 770 schools, 358 were in the selected categories. Sample size was determined by considering several factors. First, the unit of analysis was the elementary school and the sample of schools was randomly selected, increasing the likelihood that the sample was representative of the population of schools in these categories. The need for a large sample size was tempered, somewhat, by the fact that a proportional, stratified, random sample was selected, a strategy that is more efficient than simple random sampling relative to sampling error and thus requires a smaller sample size (Johnson & Christensen, 2004). In addition, because response rate was not a concern, almost no attrition needed to be taken into account, a factor that requires larger samples. The data for this study were gathered from Ohio databases. Considering these issues along with the plan to potentially include eight predictor variables in the correlational analysis (some methodologists claim a 10 to 1 ratio of *N* to variables is minimally required) a sample of 120 was determined to suffice.

Of the population of 358 schools, approximately one-third (120 schools) was selected by interval sampling. This was accomplished by listing all 358 schools and taking every third one beginning with school number one in order to insure that one school from category 1 would be included.

Table 1
Typology of Ohio School Districts

Category number	Category name	Category description
1	Rural-High poverty, low SES	Rural districts from the Appalachian area of Ohio. As a group they have the lowest SES profiles as measured by average income levels and percentage of population with some college experience.
2	Rural-Low poverty, low SES	Small very rural districts of the state outside of Appalachia. Contain a work force profile that is similar to districts in Group 1, but with much lower poverty rates.
3	Small town-moderate SES	Small economic centers in rural areas of the state outside of Appalachia. Contain both some agricultural and some small town economic characteristics.
4	Small cities/towns, very high poverty, low SES	Small or medium size “blue collar” cities and towns with very high poverty rates. Among small cities and towns, they generally have the lowest SES characteristics.
5	Urban-Average poverty, moderate SES	Larger districts that have a higher SES profile than group 4. Poverty levels are average.
6	Major urban-very high poverty	Includes all of the 6 largest core cities (Akron, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, Toledo) and large urban centers with high concentrations of poverty.
7	Urban/suburban-high SES	Typically surround major urban centers. Often contain industrial economic activity and modest poverty levels. They are more generally characterized as upper SES communities with a highly professional/administrative population.
8	Urban/Suburban-very high SES	These districts also surround major urban centers. They are distinguished by very high income levels, almost no poverty, and a very high proportion of its population characterized as professional/administrative.

Note: From Ohio Department of Education (1996).

One hundred and twenty elementary schools were identified and the percentage in each Ohio category was the same as the percentage in the 358 schools, a proportional, stratified, random sample. The sample included 19 rural schools, 70 urban schools and 31 suburban schools. Of these 120 schools, five were eliminated because they were not in operation consecutively from school years FY 1997 through FY 2003. Since state test scores in 4th grade were of interest in another study using these same data, elementary schools that did not include 4th grade were also eliminated (n= 6). The exclusion of the 11 schools reduced the sample size to 109.

Data Collection and Analysis

The first author established 59 databases for this study from sources at the Ohio Department of Education: the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) website (ode.state.oh.us), the Education Management Information System (EMIS), and the research department of ODE. ODE has compiled spreadsheet reports based on data submitted by public school districts via the Educational Management Information System (EMIS).

The principal turnover frequency between FY 1997 and FY 2003 for the sample schools was calculated. Principal turnover was measured by the number of individual principals employed in a school over the 7 year period. Data were entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and analyzed. Data on principal turnover frequency were obtained from the Education Management Information System (EMIS) and ODE research department. Of the total 109 schools in the sample, 68 were urban, 26 were suburban, and 15 were rural. Of the 34 school districts included, 5 were urban, 15 were suburban, and 13 were rural.

The number of individual principals hired in each school over the 7-year period from FY 1997-FY2003 was the measure of principal turnover frequency for that school. The average number of principals in urban schools was 2.37 and in rural

schools the average was 2.44. (See Table 2). Compared to the average number of principals in suburban schools, (M = 1.77) urban turnover and rural turnover were higher. The highest turnover of principals during the 7-year period occurred in the rural school setting.

It is noteworthy to look at the number of principals employed in the schools over time for the 7-year period (Table 3). Schools having only one or two principals during this period are 57.3% urban, 80.8% suburban, and 60% in rural schools. For schools that had three to five principals during this time frame 42.7% were urban, 19.2% suburban schools, and 40.1% were rural, indicating that suburban principals remain in their schools longer than do urban and rural principals. Also, urban and rural schools over a 7-year period had large changes in leadership compared to suburban schools.

Testing for differences in turnover frequency by district type indicated significant differences among the means of the three settings ($F(2, 106) = 4.36, p < .05$), with a small effect size ($\eta^2 = .08$), limiting the importance of the relationship in interpreting this difference. Post hoc Fishers LSD tests showed that urban and rural schools had a larger turnover frequency than suburban schools. The difference between urban and rural schools was not found to be significant.

The principal turnover frequency in urban schools in the sample was significantly higher than that in suburban schools. The principal turnover frequency in urban and rural schools was not dissimilar. The principal turnover frequency in rural schools was significantly higher than that in suburban schools.

Conclusions and Discussion

Prior studies on principal turnover (e.g., Bainbridge, Lasley, & Sundre, 2003; Balfanz & MacIver, 2000) suggest that principal turnover is highest in the urban schools. This pattern was only partially supported by the data analyzed in this study. Principal turnover frequency was higher in urban schools than

Table 2
Number of Principals for FY 2003-FY 1997 by School Setting

Setting	N of Schools	M	Mdn	Mode	Range	SD
Urban	68	2.37	2.00	2.00	4	0.83
Suburban	26	1.77	1.50	1.00	4	0.99
Rural	15	2.44	2.00	2.00	4	1.09

Table 3
Frequency of Number of Principals for FY 2003-FY 1997 by School Setting

N of Principals	Urban Schools*	Urban Percent**	Suburban Schools*	Suburban Percent**	Rural Schools*	Rural Percent**
1	9	13.2	13	50.0	3	20.0
2	30	44.1	8	30.8	6	40.0
3	25	36.8	4	15.4	4	26.7
4	3	4.4	0	0	1	6.7
5	1	1.5	1	3.8	1	6.7
Total	68	100.0	26	100.0	15	100.0

Note: *Number of schools reporting having had 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 principals during the 7 years.

** Percent of schools in urban, suburban and rural setting having hired 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 principals during the 7 years.

in suburban schools but not higher than in rural schools. This finding raises the question of why and causes researchers to seek possible explanations for this difference.

These findings also have relevance for school reform and the ongoing need to pose ways to improve student achievement. Two dynamics are worth pursuing. First of all, principal turnover has been implicated as a factor that influences school reform. Organizational stability might create conditions more amenable to effective change and possibly an indirect factor favorable to student achievement. In this study, both urban and rural schools showed lower stability than did suburban schools. Future studies should focus on comparing urban and rural schools because they have similar leadership turnover frequencies.

Secondly, a remedy for Ohio schools in which test scores repeatedly fail to meet the state's thresholds of "effectiveness," is coerced change in the principal. While arguably an approach grounded in attempts to improve the school (i.e., raise test scores) by "improving the leadership," this remedy may simultaneously undermine the organizational stability of the school. Ways to counter frequent principal turnover while, at the same time, generating improved principal leadership, pose great challenges for those at the helm of many Ohio districts. It is clear that further studies examining these phenomena are needed.

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Teacher Efficacy and Career Indecision among Pre-Service Teachers: A Model of Direct and Indirect Effects

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Abstract

The present study investigates, through path analytic techniques, the influence of teacher efficacy on the career indecision of pre-service teachers. The sample consists of 305 students enrolled in Teacher Education programs at two southeastern universities. Results indicate that general teacher efficacy and career self-efficacy have significant direct effects on career indecision. Career self-efficacy mediates significant indirect effects for both general and personal teacher efficacy.

To what degree do the teaching-related personal and professional beliefs held by pre-service teachers impact the career choices they make upon graduation? The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, which was meant to improve public education, has also created an atmosphere of uncertainty that surrounds school systems across the United States. The long-term implications of such issues as holding teachers accountable for student outcomes (Schrag, 1995), increased demands for new teacher hires to handle burgeoning public school populations (Voltz, 2003), and the specter of teacher attrition (Delgado, 1999), make it imperative that educators involved in the preparation of new teachers gain a better understanding of the emerging professional beliefs of teachers who are preparing to enter the workforce. Toward this end, we propose that empirical measures of teacher efficacy can be combined with measures of career indecision to paint, in broad strokes, a picture of the role that pre-service teachers' beliefs about their ability to "make it" as classroom teachers play in career decision making. While researchers continue to develop explanatory models of self efficacy, teacher efficacy, and career indecision (Gati, Krausz, & Osipow, 1996; Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998; Gati, Osipow, Krausz, & Saka, 2000), little research has focused on the effects of teacher efficacy beliefs on career indecision among preservice teacher candidates.

Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy as first conceptualized by Albert Bandura (1977) refers to the ability of an individual to create self-perceptions of capability that become integral in motivating and guiding his or her actions. The concept of self-efficacy is theoretically grounded in social cognitive theory particularly as it relates to human agency (Bandura, 2000). The ability to intentionally act upon the environment and thereby influence a course of events is key to the understanding of personal agency. According to Bandura, self-efficacy beliefs reflect the degree to which an individual believes in her or his ability to perform a given task or engage in a given behavior; furthermore, these beliefs can, to a great extent, direct that person's sense of personal agency. Self-efficacy beliefs and the attendant outcome expectations are developed based on past performance, accomplishments, and emotional arousal (Bandura, 1982). Efficacy

expectations are personal prompts for the initiation of behavior, the expenditure of effort, and influences persistent in a behavior. This cyclic relationship between beliefs, actions on the environment, and feedback may lead to decisions about whether or not to again engage in some action. This phenomenon is at the root of Bandura's concept of reciprocal determinism: "the view that (a) personal factors in the form of cognition, affect, and biological events, (b) behavior, and (c) environmental influences create interactions that result in a *triadic reciprocity*" (italics in original, Pajares, 1996, p. 544), such that there is a continuous feedback loop that may embolden or modify efficacy beliefs.

Teacher Efficacy

Self-efficacy theory has been applied to virtually every dimension of the educational enterprise. Most notably for our purposes, self-efficacy has recently been applied to teachers and their beliefs about teaching. Indeed Bandura (1993) himself first proposed that the research community look closely at the construct of teaching efficacy. Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) suggested that teacher self-efficacy be defined as a teacher's "judgment of his or her capabilities to bring about desired outcomes of student engagement and learning, even among those students who may be difficult or unmotivated" (p. 783). This judgment of capability as it relates to teacher efficacy involves both *perceived* level of competence and *actual* competence level (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998).

In the spirit of Bandura's own beliefs about the power of self-efficacy, Pajares (1996) notes, "self-efficacy judgments should prove excellent predictors of choice and direction of behavior" (p. 570) but cautions,

It serves no research agenda to engage in a duel of self-beliefs when deeper understandings of human behavior may be better had by exploring how, why, and under what conditions certain self-perceptions are especially useful and predictive. (p. 570)

It appears, then, that self-efficacy applied to teaching (teacher efficacy) should be a particularly useful and predictive construct. Indeed, ten years ago, Guskey and

Passaro (1994) reported that teachers' perceived sense of self-efficacy in teaching was being treated as a significant variable in a growing number of educational research studies. For example, teacher efficacy has been found to be related to such variables as classroom management (Ashton & Webb, 1986), the adoption of innovative teaching materials (Guskey, 1988), student achievement (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Ross, 1992) and motivation (Midgely, Feldlaufer, & Eccles, 1989; Pintrich & Schunk, 2001). These research findings focus primarily on the impact of teacher efficacy on teaching behaviors and student outcome variables. However, there is a dearth of research investigating the relationship between teacher efficacy and career indecision among pre-service teachers. In an age of teacher shortages, determining how teacher self efficacy impacts the career decision-making of pre-service teachers could be a critical issue for education.

Career Indecision and Career Self-efficacy

The study of career indecision has long been a focal point in the career development literature (Osipow, 1980, 1999; Fassinger, 1990; Gati et. al, 1996; O'Brien & Fassinger, 1993). Interest in career indecision is spurred by researchers, practitioners, and counselors who are concerned with: (a) how individuals make career choices, and (b) how those same individuals go about implementing those choices. These investigations often involve antecedent and outcome variables associated with career indecision. According to Betz (1992), career self-efficacy includes both the process of making a career decision and the domain content of that career. Judgments of personal efficacy regarding the skills and dispositions involved in a particular career are fundamental to career decision-making.

Among the first to empirically study the relationship between self-efficacy and career indecision, Taylor and Betz (1983) investigated career decision-making self-efficacy and found that students who were more indecisive reported lower levels of confidence in their abilities to perform the necessary tasks associated with career decision-making. Other studies investigating the relationship between career indecision and career self-efficacy produced similar results. Taylor and Popma (1990), Wulff and Steitz (1997), and Wulff (1998) all found career self-efficacy to be significantly and inversely related to career indecision. These studies indicated that higher levels of career self-efficacy were associated with lower levels of career indecision.

Much of the research concerning career development and career indecision has focused on a college-aged population and has investigated how career development and career self-efficacy relate to other variables. For example, researchers have examined the effects of sex role on career development (Millard, Habler, & List, 1984; Gianokas, 1995), gender differences in career development (Sandberg, Ehrhardt, Ince, & Meyer-Bahlburg, 1991; Wilson, Stocking, & Goldstein, 1994), or racial differences in career development (Williams, 1987; Ogbu, 1989). There is, though, a lack of literature investigating the relationship of career indecision and career self-efficacy within a particular subset

of the college population—those who are being trained for a specific profession. This group of individuals has entered pre-requisite educational programming, so in essence they have already made a career decision, yet for many of these students, there comes a point in their programs where a new wave of indecision surfaces. Pre-service teacher education majors are an example of just such a population.

Methodology

The present study investigated the career indecision of pre-service teachers. Specifically, the study sought to investigate the direct and indirect influences of the antecedent variables of general teacher efficacy, personal teacher efficacy, and career self-efficacy to that of career indecision. It was hypothesized that teacher efficacy, represented individually by general and personal teacher efficacy, as well as career self-efficacy would have direct effects on career indecision with higher levels of efficacy being associated with lower levels of career indecision.

A path model was developed based on teacher efficacy research and career research findings that suggest career self-efficacy mediates career indecision. Path analysis was chosen primarily because the focus of this study was to examine specific variable outcomes. Both general teacher efficacy and personal teacher efficacy are exogenous variables while career self-efficacy and career indecision are endogenous variables. In the path diagram, the exogenous variable (teacher efficacy—general and personal) has no incoming arrow meaning that there is no particular cause being attributed to it. The endogenous variables all have arrows coming into them suggesting that these paths are direct influences from the other measured variables. A mediating variable has both incoming and outgoing arrows indicating that it has both a direct effect as well as an intervening effect on other measured variables. The order of the variables in the model allows for the investigation of the impact of teacher efficacy on both career self-efficacy and career indecision. The ordering also allows exploration of career self-efficacy as a mediating variable. The following hypothetical path model was proposed:

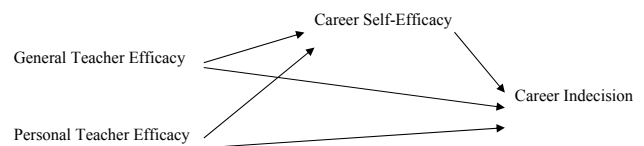


Figure 1. Hypothesized path model.

Sample

The sample consisted of 305 students enrolled in teacher education programs at two southeastern universities. The breakdown of the sample by gender consisted of 88 males and 217 females. Two hundred and eight of the students were undergraduates and 97 were graduate students seeking initial certification to teach. It should be noted that while the life

experiences of graduate students differ from those of undergraduates the program requirements are the same. Since this investigation focused on the preparation of new teachers both traditional and non-traditional students were included.

All students had completed their undergraduate coursework and were attending a seminar held prior to student teaching. As previously noted, these students have intentionally enrolled in a specialized program and therefore have made an initial career decision. Yet, oftentimes these same students become indecisive as they learn and experience more about the profession. It is at this time in their preparation that we suspect some students begin to experience a new wave of indecision about their career choice and that this indecision may relate to their sense of efficacy as teachers. Participation in the study was voluntary. Participants ranged in age from 20-54 years old. The sample was comprised of students enrolled in early childhood education, elementary education, secondary education, and P-12 certification areas. In terms of race, 82% of the participants were White, 16% were African-American, 1% were Asian, and .66% were Native American. The mean grade point average of the group was 3.30.

Measures

Teacher Efficacy. Teacher efficacy was assessed using 16 items from the Teacher Efficacy Scale (Gibson & Dembo, 1984). These 16 items were found by Gibson and Dembo to reflect two distinct factors: General Teacher Efficacy (GTE) and Personal Teacher Efficacy (PTE). GTE represents a teacher's belief that any teacher's ability to bring about change is limited to external factors not controlled by the teacher. PTE represents a more personal belief that one has the needed skills to bring about student learning. Each factor was used individually in the analyses conducted here. Gibson and Dembo reported internal consistency reliability coefficients of .78 for the PTE factor, .75 for the GTE factor, and .79 for the total 16 items.

Career self-efficacy. Career self-efficacy was assessed using the Wulff-Steitz Career Self-Efficacy Scale (Wulff & Steitz, 1996). This scale consists of four items that relate directly to a career choice. The items are:

1. Have chosen a specific career.
2. Know the qualifications for a career.
3. Can see yourself in a career.
4. Can see yourself remaining in a career for at least 3 years.

Respondents were asked to rate each item according to how much they believed the quality applied to them. The items were rated on a 4-point Likert scale of strongly disagree to strongly agree. Scores range from 4 to 16 with higher scores indicating greater career self-efficacy. The test-retest reliability for the items was found to be .85 for a sample of high school students, and the standardized alpha for the four item instrument is .75 (Wulff & Steitz, 1996).

Career indecision. The Career Decision Scale (Osipow, 1980) was used to assess career indecision. The instrument

contains 19 items, 2 that measure career certainty, 16 that measure indecision and 1 free response item. The free response item is used mainly for counseling purposes and was not included in this study. Responses are recorded on a Likert response scale ranging from 1 indicating 'low similarity of respondent to item' to 4 indicating 'high similarity of respondent to item'. Scores on the certainty scale can range from 2 to 8 with higher scores indicating greater certainty. Scores on the indecision scale can range from 16 to 64 with higher scores indicating greater indecision. Osipow, Carney, and Barak (1976) reported test-retest reliabilities for the Indecision Scale to be .82 and .90 using two separate samples of college students.

Analyses

The data were analyzed using path analytic procedures. Path analysis, a subset of structural equation modeling (SEM), is a multivariate analytical technique that is closely related to multiple regression. As such, it requires that the usual assumptions of regression are met such as linearity of relationships and interval level data. Both path analysis and SEM allow for the examination of possible causal orderings of variables in a given set of relationships. A major difference between path analysis and SEM is that structural equation modeling includes both measured and latent variables. This study focused primarily on the measured variables only and attempted to reveal direct and indirect pathways by which general and personal teacher efficacy and career self efficacy influence career indecision. The use of path analysis in this study allowed for a better understanding of the strength of the relationships among these particular variables along both direct and indirect (mediating) pathways. While it is understood that path analysis deals with correlations of variables and not causation, it is a very useful technique for illuminating how patterns of correlations fit the data.

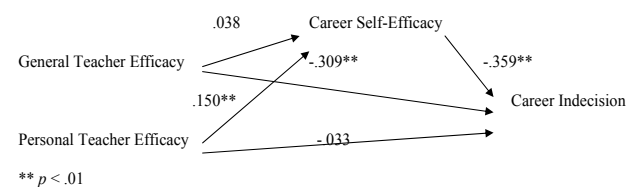


Figure 2. Path model with coefficients.

The proposed causal model was estimated with ordinary least squares (OLS) analysis procedures using the GEMINI statistical package (Wolfe & Ethington, 1985). In this model direct causal effects are represented by regression coefficients, either standardized (beta weights) or metric (b weights). The indirect effects are estimated by the sums of the products of direct effects through intervening variables in the model. These indirect effects represent the influence on the dependent variable through the direct results of the prior intervening variables in the model. Total effects are represented by the sum of direct and indirect effects. All analyses were conducted using means, standard deviations, and correlations of the variables included in the hypothesized model and are provided in Table 1.

Table 1
Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations

	1	2	3	4
1. General Teacher Efficacy	1.000	.197	.067	-.340
2. Personal Teacher Efficacy	.197	1.000	.156	-.150
3. Career Self-Efficacy	.067	.156	1.000	-.385
4. Career Indecision	-.340	-.150	-.385	1.000
Means	25.750	40.580	18.780	23.170
Standard Deviation	5.180	4.670	1.920	7.090

Results

The inverse relationships (Table 1) between general teacher efficacy and career indecision (-.340) and career self-efficacy and career indecision (-.385) are most notable. Personal teacher efficacy revealed only a slight negative correlation with career indecision (-.150) which was an unexpected finding.

The parameter estimates for the equations defining the model of career indecision can be found in Table 2. General and personal teacher efficacy along with career self-efficacy explained 25% of the variance in career indecision, $F(3, 301) = 33.07, p < .001$. Career indecision was significantly and directly influenced by both general teacher efficacy (-.309, $p < .01$) and career self-efficacy (-.359, $p < .01$) as shown in the path model with coefficients. This negative relationship suggests that when the levels of general teacher efficacy and career self-efficacy are high, the level of career indecision is low. Examination of the relative magnitude of the betas indicates both general teacher efficacy and career self-efficacy equally impact career indecision. Personal teacher efficacy was found to have a direct effect ($p < .01$) on career self-efficacy, indicating the higher the personal teacher efficacy the higher the career self-efficacy.

Table 2
Direct Effects in Model of Career Indecision^a

	Dependent Variables	
	Career Self-Efficacy	Career Indecision
General Teacher Efficacy	.038 (.014)	-.309** (-.423)
Personal Teacher Efficacy	.150** (.061)	-.033 (-.051)
Career Self-Efficacy		-.359** (-1.326)
R-Square	.026	.248

^a Metric Coefficients given in parentheses

** $p < .01$

The summary of these direct effects along with the indirect and total effects of the variables in the model of career indecision can be found in Table 3. Both general and personal teacher efficacy were found to have significant indirect effects on career indecision. These indirect effects were mediated through career self-efficacy. The negative indirect influence of these variables (through career self-efficacy) suggests that higher personal and general teacher efficacy are predictive

of lower career indecision. This indirect influence appears to be the result of higher personal and general teacher efficacy which very likely leads to higher career self-efficacy, and this in turn reduces career indecision.

Table 3
Direct, Indirect, and Total Effects on Career Indecision^a

	Direct	Indirect	Total
General Teacher Efficacy	-.309 (-.423)	-.014** (-.019)	-.323*** (-.441)
Personal Teacher Efficacy	-.033 (-.051)	-.053** (-.081)	-.087 (-.132)
Career Self-Efficacy	-.359 (-1.325)		-.359 (-1.325)

^a Metric Coefficients given in parentheses

** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Due to the number of participants, particularly the low numbers within the subgroups of gender and race, statistical investigation of the between-group effects of the model were not conducted.

Discussion

The goal of this study was to investigate the direct and indirect influences of teacher efficacy and career self-efficacy on career indecision in pre-service teachers. The hypothesis that teacher efficacy and career self-efficacy would have direct effects on career indecision was partially supported as was the mediating effect of career self-efficacy. In the final analysis only the general teacher efficacy component of teacher efficacy as well as career self-efficacy were found to have significant direct effects on the career indecision of pre-service teachers.

The importance of career self-efficacy, as both a direct influence on career indecision and as a mediating variable for indirect effects, clearly coincides with other research findings (e.g., Hackett & Betz, 1981; Taylor & Betz, 1983). Two studies by Wulff and Steitz (1995, 1997) found career self-efficacy to be a strong predictor of career indecision. In fact, in the second study, Wulff and Steitz found that among a number of variables only career self-efficacy had a significant direct influence on career indecision.

The lack of a significant direct relationship between personal teacher efficacy and career indecision was a little surprising. While this appears to indicate that a teacher's personal belief that he or she can bring about student learning has less of an impact on career indecision than general teacher efficacy, there are other possible explanations for this finding. Specificity of teaching situation, subject matter, and personal interest may all contribute to varying levels of personal teacher efficacy. Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) posit that "many standard efficacy instruments overlook the specific teaching context" (p. 790). In addition, the optimal level of specificity needed for accurate measurement is still being debated. The TES as developed by Gibson and Dembo is a standard and popular measure, and probably the best available instrument at the time of this

study, but it places little emphasis on the specific teaching context (Coladarci & Breton, 1997; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001).

While the current findings offer only partial support for the hypothesized model, the proposed path model does provide insight into the relationships between various types of self-efficacy and career decisions and indecision. It also suggests that other variables may be playing a role in pre-service teachers' beliefs about their teaching efficacy and career decision. The fact that the proposed model explained only 25% of the variance is perhaps reflective of the need for better operational definitions of the variables of interest and how the construct of teacher efficacy can best be measured. As a preliminary model it illuminates the need to further delineate what constitutes personal teacher efficacy and to recognize the importance of context and specificity of tasks when measuring this construct.

Limitations

The regional demographics and the lack of differentiation between subgroups of pre-service teachers are limitations of this study. Larger and more representative samples of pre-service teachers from across the country should be selected for future research. The specific certification program should be identified for each participant and possible differences in these subgroups of teachers should be explored. Given a large enough data set, it would be interesting to see how the direct and indirect effects of teacher efficacy on career indecision may differ for those in different certification programs, different genders, and different ethnicities.

Implications for Future Research

The concept of teacher efficacy has proven to be a strong addition to educational research but there is much refinement needed in terms of operational definitions and better instrumentation such as inclusion of context and level of specificity of tasks within domains. It is imperative that this "elusive construct" (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001, p. 783) be fully understood and accurately represented if research on teacher efficacy is to move forward. While the use of path analytic techniques, as in this study, have helped to clarify the relationship of teacher efficacy to that of other variables, such as career indecision, much is left to investigate. In order to understand the role of teacher efficacy beliefs in pre-service teachers' career indecision there must be a focus on antecedent variables related to teacher efficacy and how these may have differing effects at different times of teacher preparation. Structural equation modeling may elucidate other factors that contribute to the relationships found here particularly with regard to latent variables. In addition, it is important to know what high and low levels of teacher efficacy mean in the context of real classrooms and actual teaching. Pre-service teachers expect to enter the teaching profession but if they believe themselves to possess a low level of competence it is quite possible, even probable, that they may experience a new level of indecision about their career choice.

A unique contribution of this study lies in the potential for these research findings to stimulate fellow researchers to engage in dialogue about the need for and possibility of creating developmental models of career growth in teachers. Teacher preparation programs would certainly benefit from knowing how both personal and collective beliefs of pre-service teachers have an impact on professional performance and commitment. This information would help schools of education to provide the academic, personal, and professional support that preservice teacher candidates need and, as a result, reduce the levels of career indecision.

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Choosing to Serve? *An Exploration of Student Self-Selection of Service Learning Projects*

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Abstract

This study explores student selection of service learning projects in lieu of traditional library research projects. One hundred fifty-four strategic management students completed surveys exploring their tolerance of ambiguity, time pressure, attitudes toward civic participation, self-efficacy toward service, political conservatism, and the role business school's should play in civic education. The study examined their responses to survey questions in light of their project selection. The study identified factors important for faculty in designing and developing service learning projects as well as key areas for future research.

Introduction

In recent years, numerous universities have aggressively pursued an increase in the use of service learning approaches in the classroom (Jones, 2003). This powerful pedagogy allows students to apply classroom theories and expand their knowledge base while serving in the community. Service learning has been defined in numerous ways. For the purposes of this study, we have adopted the following definition:

Service learning is a credit-bearing, educational experience in which students participate in an organized service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility. (Bringle & Hatcher, 1995)

A wide variety of studies have shown that service learning has a positive effect on student personal development in the areas of personal efficacy, moral development, leadership, social responsibility, and civic participation (Astin & Sax, 1998; Eyster & Giles, 1999; Vogelgesang & Astin, 2000). However, the literature has not explored situations where students are given the *option* to select a service learning project in lieu of a traditional library research project. Will students select service learning? If so, which students and why? What demographic differences may exist between those that select a service learning project and those that do not? What factors might affect a student's decision to choose a service learning project? What might pre-dispose a student to choose service learning? Answers to these questions can help guide practitioners in the design of service learning projects and also provide important insights on the benefits gained by students involved in service learning projects. Our hope is that the results of this exploratory study will help frame a series of hypothesis to be investigated in future research.

Context of the Study

For this study, senior undergraduate business students in a large mid-western university were surveyed during the first class session of a required strategic management course. For the major project in this capstone strategic management course, students were given a choice of completing a traditional library research project or a service-learning project. One hundred fifty-four students—85 male (55.2%), and 69 female (44.8%)—in seven different course sections were participants in the study. All of the students were taught by the same professor. Students included representatives from a wide variety of business majors including accounting, management, computer information systems, marketing, and finance. After completing the survey, students were formed into groups by the professor based on their preferred type of project (i.e. service learning or library research).

The traditional library research project assignment required students to identify an industry and three organizations within that industry for strategic analysis. Next, they were to assess the industry and compare and contrast the three companies' operations, business practices, financial results, strategic position, etc. In addition to an industry analysis, the students were asked to highlight the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) in the internal and external environments of each of the companies. Next, they were asked to develop strategic plans and make strategic recommendations for future actions in each organization. This first option will subsequently be referred to as the *library research project*.

The service learning project assignment asked students to select a not-for-profit community organization (from a list provided by the professor) that they would contact and work with directly to develop a strategic plan. These organizations had responded to a university request for community organi-

zations desiring assistance with strategic planning. The goal of this project was to assess the organization's existing situation (including strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats) and develop strategic plans and recommendations for the organization. Their analysis and recommendations were shared with the organization according to the organization's wishes. This second option will subsequently be referred to as the *service learning project*.

Specific requirements for the paper and presentation were consistent between the two projects. For both projects, students completed a SWOT analysis, mission statement analysis, financial analysis, etc. In addition, the professor attempted to ensure that the time required for each assignment would be relatively comparable.

Study Design

On the first day of class, students were given a 46-item survey to complete. The survey was comprised of six different scales plus demographic questions. Table 1 presents demographic information.

Each of the six scales were selected for their potential to reveal insight on student selection of service learning projects. As this was an exploratory study, we wanted to examine a variety of potential impacts on students' choices. Therefore, scales were selected to assist us in discovering some of the reasons students may select service learning projects over traditional library research projects. Participants were asked to respond to each scale item on the basis of a 5-point Likert-type scale from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. The scales used were:

1. Tolerance of Ambiguity, 5 items; Sample Question: "I would like to live in a foreign country for awhile" (McQuarrie & Mick, 1992).
2. Self-Efficacy Towards Service, 6 items; Sample Question: "I can have a positive impact on social problems" (Weber, Weber, Sleeper, & Schneider, 2004).
3. Civic Participation, 5 items, Sample Question: "I am concerned about local community issues" (Weber, Weber, Sleeper, & Schneider, 2004).
4. Political Conservatism, 5 items, Sample Question: "Labor unions should be stronger and have more influence generally" (Shimp & Sharma, 1987).

5. Business Education's Role in Social Issues (BERSI) 6 items; Sample Question: "Colleges of business must prepare students to be civic leaders as well as business leaders" (Sleeper, Schneider, Weber, & Weber, 2006).
6. Time Pressure, 3 items; Sample Question: "I seem to be busier than most people I know" (Srinivasan & Ratchford, 1991).

Exploration of Demographic Differences

What percent of students would select the service learning project? We anticipated students would be more likely to choose a library research project as this assignment is more familiar to them. We thought the community service projects would be more intimidating, given the need to interact directly with the community. In fact, a surprising 105 students (68.2%) elected the service learning project. The remaining 49 students (31.8%) chose the library research project.

We also wondered if those that selected a service learning project would differ by gender from those that selected the library research project. Historically, women have been viewed as more likely to care about others and to act on those concerns. They have been viewed as more nurturing and more willing to engage personally with those in need (Keith, Nelson, Schlabach, & Thompson, 1990; Lauber, Nordt, Falcatto, & Röessler, 2002; Pancer & Pratt, 1999). Therefore, we thought that perhaps females would be more likely to select service learning projects. The study revealed that females were slightly more likely to choose service learning projects (75.4%) versus males (62.4%). The difference was statistically significant at the .10 level ($\chi^2 = 2.97, p = .085$).

Another demographic we wished to explore was whether grade point average (GPA) would differ between students who selected a library research project and those that did not. Our a priori perception was that students with higher GPAs might be more concerned about maintaining their GPAs and thus, less likely to select a project with more unknowns. Surprisingly, on a 4.0 scale, there was virtually no difference between the mean GPAs of the students who chose the service learning project ($M = 3.09, SD = .32$) and those that chose the library research project ($M = 3.04, SD = .36$). This difference was not statistically significant ($t = .20, p = ns$).

We were also curious if different majors would be more likely to choose the service learning project. We anticipated

Table 1
Demographic Survey Data

Subject Subgroup	Mean	SD
Hours students volunteered for charitable or non-profit organization in past year	22.6	2.6
Hours per week students worked in the past year	25.2	10.0
Number of years student was member of any charitable or non-profit organization	3.8	6.0
Dollars students contributed to charitable or non-profit organizations in past year	\$88.40	\$205.25
Grade Point Average	3.08	0.35

that students from more quantitative degrees like accounting and finance might be less likely to choose the service learning project because of the need to interact more with people; whereas, we anticipated that marketing and management majors would be more interested in projects that involved higher levels of interpersonal contact.

In fact, approximately 75% of marketing and management majors chose the service learning project. However, it is interesting to note that more than half of the finance majors (64.7%) and half (50%) of the accounting and business computer majors also chose the service learning project (see Table 2). In no discipline were students more likely to choose the library research project over the service learning project. Due to fragmented sample size across nine different business majors, these differences could not be tested for statistical significance.

What would prompt students to select the library research project? Would students perceive the library project as less work? Perhaps they would view this project as more structured and controllable with less ambiguity. Would students who had a higher level of previous civic involvement be more or less likely to choose a service learning project? Would students whose families had a higher level of civic involvement be more likely to choose a service learning project? As noted previously, we selected a number of different scales to help us explore these questions.

Time Pressure

We thought that students might presume that a service learning project that involved interacting with the community to gather information would require a greater time commitment than library research. Therefore, we wanted to explore how busy students were and if students who were busier, or

who perceive themselves to be busier, would be more likely to choose the library research project with an anticipated lesser time commitment.

This was tested in two ways. First, students were asked to indicate the number of hours per week they were employed. The mean number of hours worked per week by students who chose the library research project was 26.0 ($SD = 9.6$). The mean number of hours worked by students who chose the service learning project was 24.9 ($SD = 10.2$). The difference was in the expected direction but the two means were not statistically different ($t = 0.67, p = ns$).

Second, students were also asked to complete a three-item scale designed to measure time pressure: "I seem to be busier than most people I know; usually there is so much to do that I wish I had more time; I usually find myself pressed for time" (Srinivasan & Ratchford, 1991). Students were asked to rate each item from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. The resultant three-item summed scale could range from a low score of three to a high score of fifteen, with larger scores indicating greater stated time pressure. The mean scores were 11.5 ($SD = 2.1$) for students who chose the library research project and 11.4 ($SD = 2.3$) for students who chose the service learning project, a difference in the predicted direction but not statistically significant ($t = .25; p = ns$).

It is interesting to note that at the end of the semester, students working on service learning projects reported investing a mean of 27.6 hours ($SD = 11.2$) on their projects, compared to a mean of 23.4 hours ($SD = 12.8$) for those who chose the library research project. The mean difference was significant at the .05 level ($t = 2.04; p = .043$). So, service learning projects did require more time than library research projects.

Table 2
Percentage of Students Selecting Library Research Project or Service Learning Project by Academic Major

Major	Library Research Project		Service Learning Project	
	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency
Accounting <i>n</i> = 14	50.0	7	50.0	7
Business Computer Information Sys. <i>n</i> = 6	50.0	3	50.0	3
Finance <i>n</i> = 34	50.0	17	50.0	17
Insurance <i>n</i> = 2	0.0	0	100.0	2
International Bus. <i>n</i> = 4	50.0	2	50.0	2
Management <i>n</i> = 24	25.0	6	75.0	18
Marketing <i>n</i> = 58	24.1	14	75.9	44
Real Estate <i>n</i> = 10	50.0	5	50.0	5
Other <i>n</i> = 2	0.0	0	100.0	2

Tolerance for Ambiguity

We anticipated that students would assume that library research projects based on secondary sources would be more easily accessible and somewhat more reliable than the field research needed for the service learning project. Field research depends in part on the perspective and needs of the client organization and on client time available to meet with students on the project. The clients' schedules and prioritization of the service learning project were less directly under the control of the student team. In addition, the quality and type of data available from the field research may vary significantly from what the students required to complete their project. Some people's personalities are better equipped to handle the greater ambiguity posed by these factors. Those less suited to tolerating ambiguity would be expected then to choose the more defined, more controllable library research project.

Tolerance for ambiguity was measured with five items that were the positively scored items from McQuarrie and Mick's (1992) 12-item tolerance of ambiguity scale. Each item was scored from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Scale items included: "I would like to live in a foreign country for awhile; I tend to like obscure or hidden symbolism; I am tolerant of ambiguous situations; Vague and impressionistic pictures appeal to me more than realistic pictures; Generally, the more meanings a poem has, the better I like it." This five-item version of the scale yielded an alpha of .61 in this study. The five-item summed scale had possible scores ranging from five to a maximum of twenty-five, with larger scores indicating a higher tolerance for ambiguity. The mean scores were 15.4 ($SD = 2.7$) for students who chose the library research project and 16.0 ($SD = 3.1$) for those who chose the service learning project. This difference is in the predicted direction but is not statistically significant ($t = 1.19; p = ns$).

Political Conservatism

We wondered if students who were more politically conservative would be less likely to choose a service learning project. We thought that those who want to help the less fortunate may tend toward more liberal politics. To explore this, we included Shimp and Sharma's (1987) 5-item scale that included such questions as: "Poverty could be almost entirely done away with if we made certain basic changes in our social and economic system;" "More government controls over business are needed." Each item was scored from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. The results from this scale were very interesting. Students who chose the service learning project had a mean score of 12.3 ($SD = 3.34$) versus a mean of 12.5 ($SD = 3.2$) for the library research project. Thus, in contrast to our expectations, the more liberal students chose the more traditional library research project although the difference was not significant.

Previous Civic Involvement

Research has shown that individuals who have been involved in service activities demonstrated a higher commitment to serving in the community (Astin, Sax & Avalos, 1999; Sax & Astin, 1997; Eyler, Giles, & Braxton, 1997). Given prior research findings, we anticipated that students with higher levels of previous civic involvement would choose the service learning project. We believed that they would be more likely to feel that such a project is important and, hence, more worthy of their time. Moreover, we thought they probably would have a higher comfort level with conducting community service.

Students were asked three direct questions to assess their extent of civic involvement, including a) how many hours they had volunteered for charitable or other non-profit organizations during the past year, b) how many years they had been a member of any organizations that had a charitable or non-profit service as part of its mission, and c) how much money they had contributed to charitable or other non-profit organizations during the past year. For the first two indicators it was expected that students with more hours of service and more years of involvement in charitable organizations would select the service learning project. For the third indicator, dollars contributed, it was expected that those with a lower level of donations would choose the service learning project.

Prior research has shown that individuals who contribute more financially prefer this method of civic engagement to getting personally involved with civic activities. For all three questions (hours volunteered, membership years in a charitable organization and dollars contributed) the results were in the proposed direction. However, the differences were not statistically significant. These same three assessments were also investigated after dichotomizing each into a) any volunteer hours in past year (yes/no), b) any membership years (yes/no), and c) any dollars contributed in past year (yes/no). Students with any volunteer hours or any years as a member of an outreach organization were slightly more inclined to select a service learning project, while those who had contributed dollars were slightly less inclined to select a service learning project. However, none of these relationships were strong enough to reach the level of statistical significance.

Attitude Towards Civic Participation

It was believed that students with higher scores on a measure of civic participation would choose the service learning project. Illustrative items from this scale include "I am concerned about local community issues" and "I want to support those less fortunate." This hypothesis was tested with a six-item civic participation scale, with each item scored from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. This scale was developed and validated by Weber, Weber, Sleeper, and Schneider (2004). The six-item summed scale scores could range from a low of six to a high of thirty, with larger scores signifying greater civic participation.

Mean scores were 22.8 ($SD = 2.5$) for students who chose the service learning project and 23.4 ($SD = 3.3$) for students who chose the library research project. These results were not in the hypothesized direction (i.e., students who chose the service learning project tended to lean toward less civic participation) but the differences were not statistically significant ($t = -1.06, p = ns$).

Discussion of Exploratory Study Results

The results of this exploratory study provide some important insights for faculty and administrators implementing service learning. We learned that students in this study were more likely (68.2%) to choose service learning projects over traditional library research projects. This is very important information for practitioners in designing projects or in contemplating requiring service learning projects in their courses. This datum can also help administrators encourage faculty to attempt service learning projects. Secondly, this noted preference may be evidence of a positive student bias towards service learning experiences and should be considered when examining the benefits and outcomes of developing service learning projects.

Moreover, all majors either preferred the service learning project or found it of equal interest to a library research project, and there were no differences in the mean grade point average of students selecting service learning. These are key considerations for professors considering developing service learning components for their courses. Whether professors choose to make the project optional or not, it is important to know that grade point averages did not differ between groups nor did the student's selected business major impact student project preferences. Consequently, results of this study provide faculty with empirical support for assuring administration that both low and high performing students are interested in service learning. In addition, faculty administration (Deans) who want to encourage faculty across all business disciplines to undertake service learning projects have initial empirical evidence to support that service learning would interest their majors.

At the end of the semester, students did report that service learning projects took more time than other projects. This is important for faculty to note in developing service learning assignments. Faculty should factor in the extra time needed to meet with clients and to work with less than ideal information provided by clients. This is critical when attempting to balance the workload between service learning and library research projects.

Although the difference was not significant, students who were more tolerant of ambiguity were more likely to choose service-learning projects. Faculty and administration should make every attempt to reduce the ambiguity of the project. This can be done by having prospective client companies make presentations to the class about their organization and about the project they would like completed. In addition, faculty should develop tools for student use in

defining project scope and in reporting on the project both to the client and to the faculty.

As expected, students with previous civic involvement were slightly more likely to select the service learning project. Prior research has shown that individuals with previous civic experience tend to develop a stronger sense of civic responsibility. In contrast though, students with a more positive attitude toward civic participation were less likely to choose service learning, although this was not a statistically significant difference. Several factors may contribute to this interesting finding.

First, students may not yet be secure in their convictions. At this stage of life, they are developing their moral and ethical codes and may not yet feel strongly enough about their personal responsibility for civic involvement. Research has shown that students do demonstrate growth in moral reasoning during college (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). However, the growth in moral reasoning is not sufficient to determining moral behavior (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Rest (1994) suggests that moral reasoning may be only one of four factors leading to moral behaviors. The others are sensitivity to the situation, prioritizing moral considerations, and the capacity to implement one's choice (i.e., character). So, while students may have a positive attitude toward civic participation, it may not yet lead to moral behaviors (i.e. choosing service learning projects).

Second, most college students still operate under the umbrella of their parents. That is, they receive moral support, guidance in decisions, financial and emotional support, etc. from their parents. As such, they may perceive they are too young or that it is too soon for them to assume full adult roles in society with associated civic duties. This feeling could be underscored by the fact that they are still on the receiving end of civic aid such as receiving financial aid or government supported education. Thus, they may perceive the responsibility of giving back to society as a mantle they will not assume until they are graduated, employed full-time, and living on their own. This is an area for future research.

Finally, the focus of the project, strategic planning, may have been too closely related to business and too far removed from the recipient of the service to provide students with a clear perception of the civic value of the project or its connection to civic participation. The fact that the projects were part of a course assignment, guided by the professor, and completed for a grade, may have resulted in the students perceiving this project as more of an academic endeavor than one of civic involvement. These factors provide an important area of exploration for future research endeavors.

Our research provides an answer to the question of would students select service learning projects and provides information on what demographic descriptions might apply to those students. Scales used in the study were selected to help identify these differences. The lack of statistically significant results may suggest that these factors (e.g., tolerance of ambiguity, prior civic involvement, etc.) do not play a key

role in identifying differences between students who choose service learning projects versus library research projects. Alternatively, the sample size may have hindered finding significant differences which could be addressed with a larger sample in a future study.

Future research is needed to further explore why a majority of students selected service learning project over a library research project. Perhaps, as seniors nearing the end of their academic life, they were interested in gaining practical experience to enhance their resume and build confidence in their skills. Perhaps they saw service learning as a great opportunity to get out of the classroom and into the real world. Perhaps students believed that the service learning project, while requiring more time, would be intellectually easier? Other potential predictors could include parent's level of volunteerism, student economic class, religion, and religious participation. Future studies should investigate these factors as well as examine further the exploratory results found in this study.

Future studies that incorporate a pre-measure of student perceptions and attitudes towards civic participation and a post-measure upon completion of a service learning project could also provide additional insights into the selection of service learning and the impact of service learning projects on student development.

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