Letter from the Editors

It has been a pleasure to work on the first edition of the Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities (URCA) Journal. We received amazing submissions and were pleased to work with the amazing authors who were accepted for this edition.

Throughout this process, we want to emphasize how impressed we are with our school and its undergraduate researchers! We received over 25 submissions from Math, Life, and Physical Sciences, Humanities and Fine Arts, and Social Sciences undergraduates. Their hard work definitely revealed itself in the amazing research papers we received. However, these first nine, representing all of the different disciplines, stood out above the crowd and demonstrate how important research by undergraduates are on the campus. Their unique topics, from pole dancing to poverty spending in Central, show how the perspectives and interests of UC Santa Barbara students can expand upon or contradict existing research.

As Professional Editing Minor students, we gladly put our new editing skills to the test for this journal. The papers published were edited specifically for grammar, content, and clarity. We focused on making sure that all of the papers are understandable to a general audience so that it reaches the widest amount of students. We would like to thank our Professional Editing professor, Craig Cotich, for teaching us how to be professional editors, and the authors for trusting us to work on the first edition of the URCA Journal. Finally, we would like to encourage you to check out these amazing research papers and their authors.

Go Gauchos!

Sincerely,
Sarah Allen-Sutter, URCA Journal Editor
Sydney Leigh Martin, URCA Journal Editor-In-Chief

About the Editors

Sydney Leigh Martin
Sydney graduated in June 2019 with a degree in History and a minor in Professional Editing. Throughout her time at UC Santa Barbara, she served as a Peer Advisor for the UC Washington Center (UCDC) Program and a Tutor/Mentor for the UCSB Pathways Program serving underrepresented youth in the surrounding community. She is excited to say that she will be starting law school at UC Irvine in Fall 2019 to pursue her passion of advocating on behalf of underrepresented students in education. Her hobbies include performing in musicals, reading, and binge-watching Netflix.

Sarah Allen-Sutter
Sarah graduated in June 2019 with a degree in Psychology and minors in Professional Editing and Applied Psychology. During her time at UCSB, she worked as a research assistant in Dr. Collins’s Close Relationships lab, and she also worked for the Disabled Students Program on campus, taking notes and proctoring exams to help accommodate UCSB students. Aside from academics, Sarah has loved being a part of the performance community at UCSB. She was a founding member of Shrunken Heads Production Company, UCSB’s student-run musical theater company, and she performed in a number of shows with them throughout her time here. She was also a music director and performer in Vocal Motion, UCSB’s only all-women acappella group—a group of strong women who have supported and inspired her immensely throughout her undergraduate journey.
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Literacy and Social Media: Young Adult Readers in Goodreads Online Communities

Emma Anderson

English, University of California, Santa Barbara

Abstract

Goodreads elevates the user to a level of content producer, which increases student engagement with literature. As all the members within the group are simultaneously promoted in status and begin developing relationships, they create trust and are more willing to take book recommendations from each other, tying in the readers’ advisory component of the site. As a result, Goodreads users are being encouraged to read novels recommended by their peers and are given autonomy to choose based off trusted recommendations. The combination of autonomy and connection that Goodreads offers creates not only a more culturally relevant classroom, but one filled with students more likely to see being a reader as part of their identity significant.
Background

As part of the techEQUITY program, Santa Barbara Unified School District has distributed iPads to all students in grades 4th through 12th over the past two years. As a tutor in AVID classrooms, I have watched students transition to participating in a more intensive digital learning experience. I have noticed students often lack interest in their assigned reading or English classes and are hesitant to participate in class discussions, while consistently turning to social media apps for entertainment and participating in online discourse in moments of free time. As a result, I began to wonder if a platform exists that combines social media and literacy, which led me to Goodreads. Goodreads, a social media platform, allows users to build an online bookshelf, participate in larger discussions via community groups, and message other users to build online connections. My research analyzed social groups on the site to track styles of communication that motivate users to read within a community of other readers. The goal is to accumulate guidance for secondary school educators to better engage their students within the humanities.

Literature Review

Students as Content Producers

Historically, students have displayed their knowledge of literature to an audience of one, their teacher, in the form of a book report or an essay. However, with the rise of technology in classrooms, students’ work can now contribute to a larger public sphere online, elevating them to the role of content producers. In the article “‘Words with Friends’: Socially Networked Reading on ‘Goodreads,’” Lisa Nakamura examines the user relationship to Goodreads, comparing it to online shopping and other popular social networking sites. Goodreads’ familiar layout has similar features to Facebook and Twitter with an inbox, notifications, and ability to post status updates and comments. Hearing the ping of notifications “provides the psychic payoff of shopping without the cost” and building a public bookshelf contributes to an “egocentric network of public reading performance” (Nakamura, 2013, p.40). The content production and performance aspect of Goodreads provokes lively conversation among users about novels, a valuable element of processing literature that is lost in the traditional book report model. With every book a user reads and discusses, their status as a respected book reviewer is promoted. The motivating factor to gain this status is contributing to a community discussion, rather than attaining a grade.
According to Peter DePietro, the contribution element is a key component in engaging students. In “Social Media and Collaborative Learning” he states:

Social media are all about connecting individuals to communities of people who have elected to become part of that network, because these individuals want to engage as much as possible and as often as possible with that network. The quality of the engagement does not seem to matter as much as the amount of engagement, which for avid users of social media, is a lot. (DePietro, 2013, p. 47)

Social media engages students within the classroom, and this engagement does not come from the quality, but the quantity of content. This is evident within these Goodreads communities as often the discussion does not consist of deep, long comments back and forth on the literature, but rather brief casual conversation. In the article “Introduction Social Media as a Component of Reading Courses,” Allison Bremer et al. details the implementation of Goodreads as a social media platform used within a college level writing class as a method to promote casual writing practice (Bremer et al., 2015, p. 56-63). The professor notes how the class set up their Goodreads accounts and joined the private class group together, mentioning student relief at the realization that only their classmates would see their comments. The instructor explains that at the beginning they posted questions to spark discussion, but over time students became more comfortable within the group and started sharing on their own. Some students enjoyed the private group so much, they joined public communities to meet other readers, and continued connecting on the site after the course concluded. These are markers for successful integration of the site into the curriculum.

However, in order to garner this participation, social media must be integrated with a critical and ethical understanding of technology’s role in the classroom. In the late 1990s, Vanessa Domine published the article “‘Doing Technology’ in the Classroom: Media Literacy as Critical Pedagogy,” and although it is an older case study relative to today’s rate of technological innovation, its exploration of the ethics behind integrating technology into the classroom remains relevant today. It makes the point that:

an educational climate of knowledge acquisition, technological proficiency, and efficiency overshadows and even undermines the critical, political, and ethical understandings essential for thriving as adults in a social and political democracy as well as global community. (Domine, 2007, p. 132)
In order to protect the “microcosm of democracy” that social media learning communities can be, educators must have a critical and comprehensive commitment to technology that views it as a tool to support learning rather than vice versa (Domine, 2007, p. 132). Domine advocates for the development of media literacy within classrooms under an “interdisciplinary framework” because it strengthens students’ ability to apply information with deeper critical awareness (Domine, 2007, p. 134). Just as technology prompts teachers to be aware that “the medium of exchange in which education is conducted-language—can never be neutral,” it pushes students to grow in their awareness of “the conditions surrounding their own subjectivity as well as the subjectivity of others” (Bruner, 1986, p. 121-122; Domine, 2007, p. 138). If these aspects of Domine’s critical pedagogy around media and literacy are present in the integration of Goodreads into classrooms, students can have more freedom to express their opinions to a larger audience and experience contributing to a public sphere.

**Autonomy**

In a typical English class, students are assigned literature to read that is chosen by their teacher and the entire class reads the same set of books. In this model, students are introduced to a narrow reading selection as “academic,” and if they do not develop an appreciation for those genres, can develop the mindset that reading is not their forte. For any given student, it could just take one book for them to change that mindset, but if they are only assigned a limited selection, the odds that one book that incites enjoyment landing in the right student’s hands seems unlikely. As a result, students attempt and give up on yet another book that does not provoke interest and turn to sites like Sparknotes to give them enough of an understanding of the novel to get by in their class. Imagine if in that moment students had the option to turn to Goodreads to find another book better suited to their tastes. Rather than settling for a superficial understanding of a book they do not enjoy, students could opt to have a deeper knowledge of a book of their choosing.

Margaret Mackey’s article “Learning to Choose: The Hidden Art of the Enthusiastic Reader,” supports the significance of autonomy within English classes, giving students an opportunity to choose the books they want to read. Mackey further problematizes the notion that reading extended fiction is the only genre for academic readers. After establishing that genre is not an indicator of ‘successful’ reading, Mackey claims that selection proficiency is what matters: “often…poor or non-readers are in fact simply poor choosers of reading material, a very different concern” (Mackey, 2014, p. 526). With Goodreads’s review and rating features, users can easily de-
velop the skills to choose the best fit for them, taking the pressure off of educators to select literature that will create lifelong readers. Mackey argues for autonomy not for the sake of a ‘successful’ class, but to

...support the ongoing significance of [reading as a] cultural act, if we want to sustain the novel, the biography, the history, the complex scientific or philosophical discussion, the play, the collection of poetry— if we want to keep readers reading as one significant part of our educational mission- then we need to be very clear that the importance of selection is still paramount. (Mackey, 2014, p. 523)

If the larger aim of English courses is to produce global citizens who can read news articles, complex scientific journals, or thought-provoking novels and contribute to public discourse in an educated and impactful way, then students must first acknowledge themselves as readers and be able to choose literature of their own accord. Following the acknowledgement of Mackey’s claim that reading is a “cultural act,” educators must then recognize that global citizens should not be assigned reading material but should be encouraged to choose for themselves. It is imperative that this element of autonomy is introduced and developed within educational settings early on.

Following advocacy for autonomous reading selection in classrooms via social media, one must address concerns of implementation. The article, “If Not Us, Who? Social Media Policy and the iSchool Classroom,” addresses concerns from both students and educators “that current [social media] use was not well integrated into their coursework” (Nathan et al., 2014, p. 123). Acknowledging the concerns raised about the constraints of technology in educational contexts, including accessibility and implementing it in support of learning, Lisa Nathan et al advocates for an “adaptive design” regarding social media policy. By creating policy in the form of living documents that do “not to stifle innovation and learning,” according to Nathan et al., educators can be free to experiment with giving students autonomy on social media platforms.

Despite concerns expressed by participants in Nathan et al.’s study, “the majority of students believed that learning ‘about’ and ‘with’ social media tools should be an essential part of the education they receive” (Nathan et al., 2014, p. 123). Although concerns about implementation is valid, the benefits of autonomous social media use in educational contexts are longstanding. In 2005, Ulises Mejias wrote an article about experimenting with then referred to as “social software” use in his graduate course at Teachers College, Columbia University. Mejias found student engagement in
“learning to learn by having them assume some of the responsibility for integrating and maintaining the social software systems that allow learning to happen” (Mejias, 2006, p. 1). Mejias reports that by giving students a sense of control over pursuing their individual research interests resulted in diversity, which enhanced the learning experience for all members of the course. Giving students autonomy in choosing their reading material both benefits the individual student and the larger group because it cultivates authentic interest in reading that translates to a more engaged, student-led classroom.

Readers’ Advisory Component

If the secondary school educator were to shift from assigning books to teaching students how to choose their own reading material, the question of what specialists call “readers’ advisory” [RA] would be an invaluable component within that decision-making process. For decades, readers’ advisory, referred to as RA, was a term reserved for librarians who aimed to be able to recommend the perfect book to any patron. Now, as sites like Goodreads are on the rise, online reviewers and ratings have revolutionized the process of advising.

In “Finding Good Reads on Goodreads: Readers Take RA into Their Own Hands,” Yesha Naik and Barry Trott delve into the relational aspect of Goodreads’ readers’ advisory, specifically from the perspective of a librarian. They emphasize how the “trust relationship” and the “real life” friendships Goodreads users seem to develop allows for more willingness to read recommended books. Often times, those recommendations take the form of “organic, natural, and sometimes messy online discussions and comments” (Naik & Trott, 2012, p. 320). In the study, the researchers noted how Goodreads users intuitively used RA strategies such as incorporating positive and negative appeal terms to promote and discourage reading specific books. The appeal terms used and flow of discussion differed between threads, which Naik and Trott attribute to differences in the book genres. The difference in how readers communicate with each other depending on the book being reviewed is a testament to how individualized social media can make the RA experience.

According to John Wesley White and Holly Hungerford-Kresser in “Character Journaling Through Social Networks,” the RA component of social media use can engage students in a “culturally relevant” way. The authors argue that not integrating technology would “hinder educators’ ability to teach appropriate uses of the technology, erase what could be a useful tool for a classroom-home curriculum from the things that most interest our students” (White, 2014, p. 642). Allowing users to bring their funds of
knowledge into a multimedia-collaborative space will enable them to “negotiate and create new meanings” of the text while strengthening their “adolescent identity via social connectedness” (Sweeny, 2010, p. 121). One of the successful aspects of this research project is how “participants/readers were responsible not just to their teacher but to each other” (White, 2014, p. 649). Rather than the teacher being the only recipient of student work (often for the sole purpose of grading), social media sparks cooperative learning in that users often feel obligation to their peers to contribute to the discourse.

In part, using social media in the classroom is culturally relevant because the open invitation to participate in RA transforms the users into “cultural curators,” as stated in Anna Kiernan’s “Future-book Critics and Cultural Curators in a Socially Networked Age.” Kiernan quotes Mark Fidelman, a social media marketer, asserting that “‘there are no ‘professional’ critics that matter anymore. In our new social world, the crowd must decide,’” (Kiernan, 2017, p. 117).

Although there can be controversy in handing such power over to ‘the crowd,’ in this shift of power to the students, significant aspects of popular culture are being reclaimed from the hands of the elite. By allowing entire classrooms to participate in critiquing literature on social media platforms, educators are simultaneously facilitating the reclamation of the public sphere by young people of color, women, members of lower classes, and other marginalized groups.

Methods

Selection of Community Groups

The communities that I researched were the YA Book Club with 3,144 members, the YA Buddy Readers’ Corner with 11,709 members, and the Perustopia Book Club with 19,089 members. YA Book Club’s biography states “We will be discussing books, and reading books together, and we’ll just get to have fun reading,” emphasizing reading as an engaging group activity. YA Buddy Readers’ Corner focuses more on creating space that generates “honest feedback” after reading books with a buddy. Perustopia Book Club emphasizes blogging and has links to both the moderators YouTube channels so members can watch videos about various books and topics as a supplement to the discussion boards.
Features of the Site

On the banner across the top of the site, there is a Community Tab (image below) with a dropdown menu containing a variety of options to participate in a group. The first section on the menu is “Groups,” which can be public or private, and can be dedicated to any topic, genre, etc.

On the top right corner of the screen, users receive notifications from friend requests, discussion boards, the general site, and a message inbox.
On the bottom right of the screen, each group is linked to Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and Google Plus. By associating with these other big-name social media platforms, Goodreads is presenting itself as a social media form as well. The site mimics these other platforms by having cover photos, profile pictures, number of views visible, etc.

To the right of the community group’s short description and avatar, the specific features of community groups are listed as detailed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home</td>
<td>Mission statement and highlights current read</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bookshelf</td>
<td>Sorts read, currently reading, and to read</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussions</td>
<td>Discussion boards for conversation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenges</td>
<td>Users compete in reading challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events</td>
<td>Range from author appearances to book swaps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photos</td>
<td>Often for profile picture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Videos</td>
<td>Often for movie trailers inspired by a book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invite</td>
<td>Allows users to invite others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members</td>
<td>Shows member name, avatar, and current read</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polls</td>
<td>Allows user to poll their peers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results
Total Views to Total Posts
In “Social Media and Collaborative Learning,” Peter DePietro discusses the quantity of content being produced as a unique factor
to social media. The article points out that social media platforms are meant to create connection, and typically, for users, the emphasis is on the quantity produced over the quality. The result of this focus on quantity is the “organic, natural, and sometimes messy” form of conversation that Naik and Trott discuss in “Finding Good Reads on Goodreads: Readers Take RA into Their Own Hands” (Naik & Trott, 2012, p. 320).

To measure Goodreads’s quantity of interactions, I created a spreadsheet recording the topic, starting user, number of posts, number of views, and date of last activity of all the discussion boards within each community group. Comparing the number of posts to the number of views, I noticed that Perustopia Book Club and YA Book Club only averaged 4.12 and 4.75 views per post. Interestingly enough, in YA Buddy Readers’ Corner, the views per post was .87 meaning that not all users’ posts were being viewed. While other social media platforms, like Instagram, are far more centered around getting a good engagement ratio, meaning the proportion of comments, views, and liking number of followers, these Goodreads community users seem more focused on contributing to a larger discussion than receiving validation from engagement via a large number of likes, comments, and views.

![Graphs showing Goodreads interactions](image)

**Diversity in Genres and Mediums**

The users in Goodreads community groups demonstrate their autonomy within the variety of book genres they explore and mediums through which they analyze literature. The YA Buddy Readers’ Corner has a bookshelf of 1,401 books and showed the most diversity in genres represented in a sample of 100 of the most recently read books. Below is a pie chart to illustrate the breakdown of book genres represented within the sample.
As seen in the pie chart above, users in the YA Buddy Readers’ Corner are reading a mix of fantasy, science fiction, general young adult, romance, and fiction novels. Their freedom to choose is evident in the diversity of genres explored. As I scrolled down the bookshelf, I saw that it is not uncommon for a user to branch out to one genre, series, or author and then continue to read one or two more along the same thread. The users’ experimentation is shown in the “Other” category, which is made up of randomly placed Italian, thriller, or even children’s books in a new topic of interest. As stated in Mejias’ article, a sense of control over learning results in diversity, which enriches the educational experience for the larger group.

In the YA Book Club community, the sample size of books from the group’s bookshelf was 50 due to its smaller collection. The shelf displaced a similar breakdown of genres to the YA Buddy Readers’ Corner as illustrated above.

In the Perustopia Book Club, the two starting users made the channel to supplement their YouTube channels. Combined, their YouTube channels have 640,298 subscribers and 69,910,908 page views. While the bookshelf does not seem to be updated by users, the discussion boards and number of views per video signify engagement from the Perustopia group. The two videos with the most views from each channel are “5 Books That Will Blow Your Mind” at over 757,000 views and “My Favorite Fantasy Books” at over 303,000 views. Interesting to note, the second most watched video on one account is “How to Get Instagram Followers,” showing that these groups are discussing and interacting across social media platforms. This is supported by different discussion boards across groups dedicated to sharing usernames on other social media platforms to connect. In future studies, it would be interest-
ing to further investigate successful aspects of Goodreads pages that integrate other social media platforms and how that could be utilized in the classroom.

**Types of Discussion**

The conversations on review centered discussion boards are casual, and relatable to young users. Within dialogue, commonly used abbreviations are “LOL,” meaning “Laugh Out Loud,” and “OTP,” meaning “One True Pairing” or a fictional couple a user loves together. Additionally, there are many exclamation marks and smiley faces indicating excitement about different books or responses from other users on the thread. In one thread about The Fault in Our Stars, a user replied “waaaaaaaaah, I love TFIOS!” The elongated “waah” noise brings a sound to mind, as if you can hear the user’s own voice, instead of just reading the words. After another user uploaded four books in one post, another user responded “Four books?!!! Really?? How do you do that???!!! lol!!” The use of excessive punctuation and abbreviations, like LOL, makes the receiver imagine a sound or physical cues indicating interest that makes the interaction feel more real and personal. All of the question marks and exclamation points after “How do you do that” indicate that the user is genuinely curious and really wants to know. As a result, a whole conversation began about staying up late to read and not getting enough sleep. From the springboard of a simple book review, the users have better insight into the everyday aspects of each other’s lives, down to their sleep schedule.

As they do so, they become more aware of each other and the various interests represented in the community group within their reviews. For example, in a review, a user might suggest a book to another user based on that user’s interests, even if they did not personally like the book. Similarly, users might say “fairies were a bit much for me! I gave it 3 stars. If fairies are your thing, I’d recommend it.” These sorts of reviews show a sense of group awareness that develops in these users who are reading with other perspectives or opinions in mind, creating a more open reader. If a reader is not just reading for their own tastes, then they could be more likely to finish a book that they did not immediately take pleasure in.

**Limitations**

This research is meant to explore the benefits of using social media in secondary school English classrooms as a means to promote literary engagement, which is dependent on students having access to technology. Ideally, implementation of Goodreads as a classroom resource would take place in schools that offer students individual iPads, but it could also take place in classes with access
to a computer lab. Another limitation to consider is the types of users naturally attracted to using Goodreads. In this study, I looked at pre-existing Young Adult community groups. After studying usernames and pronouns used, it seems to be predominantly female users, which is something to note in co-ed classrooms. Lastly, social media is a relatively new phenomena, so it is difficult to predict the long-term effects of bringing it into the classroom.

Acknowledgements
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About the Author
Emma is a third year English major with minors in Education and Applied Psychology. Outside of class, Emma enjoys working with students at Goleta Valley Junior High, Dos Pueblos High School, and Girls Inc. After UCSB, she plans to pursue graduate programs in education policy.
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Effects of Stress on Cognition and Performance

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Abstract
The purpose of this study is to gauge the effects of perceived general stress levels and acute stress on working-memory-based cognitive performance. Cortisol is the long-term stress hormone of the body, and is vital to enacting a quick and efficient stress response. However, when chronically present at higher-than-normal levels—as often can be the case with long-term perceived stress—cortisol has been known to negatively affect many bodily systems, including reproductive, immune, and cognitive function. Our study seeks to explore the effect that higher-than-average perceived general stress levels have on female students' performance on two cognitive tasks: a math exam with gradually increasing difficulty, and a complicated traceable maze that participants must solve after being shown the answer key for a few seconds beforehand. This study will utilize a basic health questionnaire, a general stress questionnaire, a mental math exam that gradually increases in difficulty and has a time limit (thus creating increased stress with urgency to complete), and a traceable maze test that is intended to test working memory. This study has far-reaching implications in understanding the relationship between ambient stress, general stress and cognitive performance, and could pave the way for improvements in mental health resources, accessibility to these mental health resources in higher education, and women's health in general.
Introduction

The stress response is one of the most valuable mechanisms human beings have. Finely tuned to any possible threat, it is incredibly sensitive and has both short-term and long-term functions. In the short term, the stress response is governed by the hormones norepinephrine and epinephrine, which dilate peripheral blood vessels, inhibit digestive function, and increase heart rate. They serve to "turn off" any functions that are not necessary for escaping the danger at hand. During more long-term stress, the steroid hormone cortisol is released to activate glucose release and turn off even more energy-wasting bodily functions. It is important to note that these stress responses evolved to combat evolutionary stressors, such as escaping a predator or seeking out food.

In today’s industrial world, fast-paced, high-stress work and school environments have become synonymous with success and modernity. Unfortunately, our stress responses are not evolved to handle such long-term, chronically stressful situations, and chronic stress is doing far more harm than good. High levels of cortisol for long periods of time can completely impede some of the body’s most important functions, and this can result in serious issues like anxiety, depression, memory and concentration problems, infertility, and gastritis. Specifically, in college students, high perceived stress levels have been observed, usually occurring during stereotypically stressful times such as midterms and finals (Lee & Jang, 2015). Additionally, further studies have shown that long-term high perceived stress levels are directly related to “high cortisol levels, which have been documented to have a negative effect on neurocognitive functioning and general mental wellness” (Suor et al., 2015).

Higher education is notoriously expensive, and financial constraints can be a huge source of stress for undergraduates. Additionally, stress associated with leaving home and making the necessary adjustments to excel within the rigorous demands of university can also take a huge toll on students. These aforementioned sources of chronic stress are a large part of the reason that American college students consistently report a much higher level of stress than students from most other countries (Misra & Castillo, 2004).

Unfortunately, there is not much data on the effects of general stressors on the academic prowess of college students, as most research focuses on the effects of intense academic demand on college performance. Although cortisol has been linked to decreased memory and cognitive function, few connections have been drawn regarding the effects of chronic perceived stress on academic performance. For our study, we felt that approaching the issue with a broader perspective would be more useful: do higher perceived stress levels negatively affect higher cogni-
tive function? We felt that this was a useful approach because a marked flaw in many of these studies was that they measured perceived stress only before and after an exam, which failed to take into account other types of stressors, or the fact that some students’ sources of stress might have chiefly been their preparation for the exam. Preparation for the exam introduced a confounding variable, and thus it is difficult to pinpoint if the stress is what caused the students to score poorly, or if the stress was simply a result of the students knowing they were going to score poorly. Our study hoped to eliminate this variable by having students take a general stress questionnaire that gauges interpersonal, academic, financial, and health-related stress. We also chose to focus on a primarily female population, as ambient stressors have been shown to affect women very differently, and women often face a variety of specific stressors related to interpersonal relationships and violence (Gender and Stress, 2018; Joo, Durband, & Grabble, 2018).

Additionally, we had participants take a timed, 32-question multiplication test, as well as a working-memory maze test, which eliminated the “preparation” aspect. We also introduced a potential reward of 12 dollars as a stressor, in which students could lose money from this reward based on their accuracy and speed. We predicted that we would observe a positive correlation between the total amount of stress participants reported and the amount of time they took to complete the tasks, the amount of money they lost, and the number of questions they answered incorrectly.

Methods

We chose a participant population of 30 female undergraduates from the University of California, Santa Barbara (30 female, ages 18-24, M=19.41, SD=1.01). Participants completed a pre-test stress questionnaire, created by the researchers (see Figure 1), where they were asked to rate their General (overall stress), Interpersonal (roommates, intimate partners, friendships, classmates, professors), Financial (student loans, rent, food insecurity, school expenses), Academic (grades, degree choice, degree progress, schoolwork, falling behind), Familial (family issues, siblings, extended family, foster care), and Personal (mental health, body image, adjusting to college, fulfillment) stress levels on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (“Not Stressed”) to 5 (“Extremely Stressed”). Participants were instructed that “Extremely Stressed” meant that they spent time on a daily basis worrying about this stressor, and that it affected their day-to-day functionality. They were also instructed that “Not Stressed” meant that they never thought about the given stressor. They were then asked to complete a 32-item math test (see Figure 2), which tested single-digit and double-digit multiplication. Participants were instructed to attempt to finish in 2 minutes, but that that
the task would cut off at 3 minutes (180 seconds). The following consequences were outlined to the participant:

- For every incorrect question, subjects were told they would lose 1 dollar from a starting point of 12 dollars.

- For every 10 seconds over 2 minutes subjects took to complete the task, they would lose 75 cents.

Next, subjects were asked to complete a maze intended to test working memory (see Figure 3). Researchers showed participants the answer key to a medium-difficulty maze for 5 seconds. The participants were then asked to reproduce the answer on an unsolved maze. Subjects were told that they should attempt to finish in 1 minute, but that the task would cut off at 2 minutes. The following consequence was outlined to the participant:

- For every 10 seconds subjects took to complete the task over the allotted 1 minute, they would lose 50 cents off the amount they had left over from the math test.

When processing data, the total amount of stress was added up via three categories: General, Financial, Academic, and Interpersonal (included familial, interpersonal, and personal). For data coding purposes, “Extremely Stressed” was given a 5, "Not Stressed" was given a 1, and so on. This was summed, and participants were given 4 scores.

**Results**

To examine the association between types of stressors and executive functioning, we conducted a bivariate linear regression analysis predicting the number of math mistakes and time to complete the task from different stressors. Results revealed a significant association between financial stress and the number of math mistakes ($t(30) = 4.28, p < 0.001$, one-tailed). All other stressors were not significantly related to math mistakes (see Table 2), nor were any stressors significantly related to performance on the working memory task (see Table 3). In addition, results revealed a significant association between financial stress and the amount of time taken to complete the cognitive task ($t(30) = 0.31, p = .042$, one-tailed).

Participants with higher levels of financial stress tended to make more math mistakes and take longer to complete the task ($b = 7.99$, $B = 2.41$; $b = 173.78$, $B = 1.52$) (see Table 1 & Figure 4). Although this association was significant, the magnitude of the effect was moderate; financial stress explained approximately 38% of the variance in math mistake scores ($r^2 = .379$). In addition, as indicat-
ed by the unstandardized slope, for each increase of one point on Likert scales measuring financial stress, math mistake scores increased by 2.41 points on average.

**Discussion**

Overall, while the association between total stress and task performance was not significant, there was a strong positive correlation between financial stress and general performance on the math task, meaning those who scored high in financial stress tended to make more math mistakes, to take more time to complete the math task, and, therefore, to lose more money during the task. This was a somewhat surprising finding, as we had earlier predicted that a high level of total perceived stress would be correlated with lower performance on the cognitive tasks. Importantly, the fact that financial stress was the only significant mediator for poorer scores points to a few salient implications.

In the past, research has found financial stress to be a contributing factor to academic struggle and dropout rates (Joo et al., 2008). Additionally, financial stress is known to be a “root cause” stressor for a number of other stressors, such that those who report higher financial stress also report more “interpersonal stressors, greater psychological distress, and lower levels of psychological well-being” (Sturgeon et al., 2017). In the modern context, financial crises have had massive impacts on the physical and mental health of those affected; for example, studies have shown that the rise in unemployment, financial stress, increased work hours, and food insecurity during the 2008 Great Recession predicted a rise in cardiovascular disease, dysthymia, and suicide in the general working population (Mucci et al., 2016). In our case, it is also likely that the financial stressor in the experimental conditions itself—the potential loss of money based on performance—had a greater effect on those who were already reporting high levels of financial stress. In fact, it is possible that the prospect of losing more money acted as an acute stressor in the moment, and may have played a role in performance on the math exam. Because financial stress has been known to have such a potent effect, on a number of health-related variables, it follows logically that it might also play a role in cognitive performance, especially in a high-stress environment like a university.

In terms of limitations, our study focused on a relatively small population. While we chose to observe a small population for accessibility and compensation purposes, future studies might benefit from a larger population of female college students. That being said, age also presents another limitation to the study; it might be beneficial for future studies to further explore the effect of financial stress
on cognitive performance within a diverse range of age groups. Additionally, it would be interesting to observe the role that socio-economic status plays in cognitive performance, particularly in the context of math exams. A first-generation college student could be dealing with immediate financial stressors, as well as socio-cultural expectations of providing for a family and community, which could have a large impact on their general stress levels and cognitive performance.

**Conclusion**

Stress is a ubiquitous part of the college experience, academic or otherwise. However, although this stress has become the norm in our culture, it is useful and important to explore the effects of stressors on our cognitive performance, as there are both optimal and detrimental levels of stress. Regarding financial stress, research on its relationship with academic performance and general well-being could lead to more informed policies surrounding financial aid, student mental health resources, and public policy.

**References**


## Appendix

### EscApes: Stress Questionnaire

1. **How would you currently rate your general stress levels overall?**
   - a. Extremely Stressed
   - b. Very Stressed
   - c. Stressed
   - d. Occasionally Stressed
   - e. Not Stressed

2. **How would you currently rate your financial stress level?** (ex. anxiety about student loans, rent, food insecurity, school expenses, etc.)?
   - a. Extremely Stressed
   - b. Very Stressed
   - c. Stressed
   - d. Occasionally Stressed
   - e. Not Stressed

3. **How would you currently rate your academic stress level?** (ex. anxiety about grades, degree choice, degree progress, schoolwork, falling behind)
   - a. Extremely Stressed
   - b. Very Stressed
   - c. Stressed
   - d. Occasionally Stressed
   - e. Not Stressed

4. **How would you currently rate your interpersonal stress level?** (ex. anxiety about roommates, intimate partners, friendships, classmates, professors)
   - a. Extremely Stressed
   - b. Very Stressed
   - c. Stressed
   - d. Occasionally Stressed
   - e. Not Stressed

5. **How would you currently rate your familial stress level?** (ex. anxiety about family issues, siblings, extended family, foster care, etc.)
   - a. Extremely Stressed
   - b. Very Stressed
   - c. Stressed
   - d. Occasionally Stressed
   - e. Not Stressed

6. **How would you currently rate your personal stress level?** (ex. anxiety about personal mental health, body image, adjusting to college, fulfillment, etc.)
   - a. Extremely Stressed
   - b. Very Stressed
   - c. Stressed
   - d. Occasionally Stressed
   - e. Not Stressed

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*Figure 1. Stressor Questionnaire*
You will begin with $126, either in the form of cash or an Amazon gift-card. Theoretically, you could take home all $126. You will have 2 minutes to complete 32 single digit multiplication questions. Every 10 extra seconds you take, there will be a monetary penalty of 25 cents. Accuracy is important here as well; an incorrect question will dock you 1 dollar. The next maze task is estimated to take you 1 minute, and you will be shown the answer key for 5 seconds prior to solving the maze. Every 10 seconds over the minute will result in a 50-cent loss from your total.

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<th>11 x 2</th>
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<td>12 x 4</td>
<td>(55) x (28)</td>
<td>15 x 9</td>
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**Figure 2. Math Task**

![Maze Task](image)

**Figure 3. Maze Task**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Math outcome vs Financial stress</th>
<th>Correlations (r)</th>
<th>Significance (p)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Math time vs Financial stress</td>
<td>0.310</td>
<td>p=0.042</td>
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<tr>
<td>Math mistakes vs Financial stress</td>
<td>0.612</td>
<td>p&lt;0.001</td>
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<td>Math amount lost vs Financial stress</td>
<td>0.616</td>
<td>p&lt;0.001</td>
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<td>Math total earned vs Financial Stress</td>
<td>-0.617</td>
<td>p&lt;0.001</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total earned vs Financial Stress</td>
<td>-0.638</td>
<td>p&lt;0.001</td>
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**Table 1**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Math Outcomes vs Stressors</th>
<th>Correlations (r)</th>
<th>Significance (p)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Math Mistakes vs. General Stress</td>
<td>0.081</td>
<td>p=0.331</td>
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<tr>
<td>Math Mistakes vs. Interpersonal Stress</td>
<td>0.136</td>
<td>p=0.229</td>
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<tr>
<td>Math Mistakes vs. Financial Stress</td>
<td>0.612</td>
<td>p&lt;0.05</td>
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<tr>
<td>Math Mistakes vs. Academic Stress</td>
<td>-0.200</td>
<td>p=0.136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math Mistakes vs. Total Stress</td>
<td>0.280</td>
<td>p=0.060</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Table 2**
### Table 3

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Maze Amount Lost vs. Stressors</th>
<th>Correlations (r)</th>
<th>Significance (p)</th>
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<td>p=0.470</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maze Amount Lost vs. Interpersonal Stress</td>
<td>-0.071</td>
<td>p=0.349</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maze Amount Lost vs. Financial Stress</td>
<td>0.092</td>
<td>p=0.309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maze Amount Lost vs. Academic Stress</td>
<td>0.106</td>
<td>p=0.282</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maze Amount Lost vs. Total Stress</td>
<td>0.007</td>
<td>p=0.485</td>
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#### Figure 4

Figure 4. Positive Correlation between Financial Stress and Math Mistakes
Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the University of California of Santa Barbara, the Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities office, and the Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences for facilitating and sponsoring this study. I would also like to thank Dr. Michael Miller for acting as my faculty mentor, and for taking on my project and making sure I had as many resources as possible at my disposal. Finally, I would like to thank Courtney A. Durdle, a PhD candidate in the Miller lab, for guiding me throughout this entire process and being an endless source of inspiration and encouragement.

About the Author

Chinmayee Balachandra is a graduating senior Biopsychology major, and a Professional Writing Minor on the Civic Engagement track. She is extremely passionate about research that bridges the gap between the humanities and the sciences, particularly through an advocacy-informed lens. She hopes to work in the non-profit health justice sector for a year, and then apply to medical school to eventually become an ob-gyn specializing in high risk pregnancies and community medicine. Apart from academia, she is a passionate writer, singer, and cinephile.
Unpaid Interns: “Breaking Persistent Barriers” without Employee Status and Anti-Discrimination Protections

Chelsea Borg
History, University of California, Santa Barbara

Abstract
This research project examines the history of women’s involvement in internships. It looks at how women used internships to break into higher paying non-traditionally feminine employment while also discussing the problems that interns encountered with sexual harassment. This project explores the rhetoric that allowed for interns to be unpaid and unprotected against discrimination throughout the 20th century. Through examining the rhetoric surrounding internships in the 20th century, this paper found that the framing of interns as students, rather than as workers, caused interns to be excluded from employee status and left them without legal protection from sexual harassment.
Introduction

In 1995, a 22-year-old woman gained a sought-after unpaid internship position at the White House chief of staff’s office. She answered phone calls and retrieved coffee, hoping that her unpaid labor would pay off with letters of recommendations or professional connections. When the government shut down that November, she and her peers—unpaid interns and therefore not on the payroll—continued to labor while all employees were barred from work.

During this period, she became involved in a romantic relationship with her boss, President Bill Clinton. The Lewinsky/Clinton scandal is often viewed as a moral failure on the part of President Bill Clinton. However, this scandal also encompasses many negative aspects of internship labor. The Starr report, the culmination of the investigation into the Lewinsky/Clinton scandal, stated that when terminating their sexual relationship, the “President had told Ms. Lewinsky that he hoped they would remain friends, for he could do a great deal for her.” 1 Clinton’s promises demonstrate the power that he, like many other bosses and supervisors, had over interns. While the Lewinsky/Clinton scandal was distinctive due to its national and international scale, the core dynamic to the scandal is not unique in the slightest.

Although internships have existed in a variety of career paths in the United States throughout the 20th century, scholarship has rarely covered the topic outside of medical internships, until the 21st century. In 2011, journalist Ross Perlin published the first expose of “the exploitative world of internships,” revealing how the 2008-2009 recession initiated the rise of the “Intern Nation,” wherein universities were pivotal in both legitimizing and perpetuating this form of highly exploitable labor. 2 Some scholars such as Malcolm Harris have also addressed the world of internships. Harris argues that recent economic trends have placed the cost of producing “human capital” on the individuals by forcing potential employees to be economically responsible for their own training before attaining paid work. 3 Additionally, both journalists and scholars have examined the legal foundations of unpaid internships. Scholarship on women’s involvement in internships has mainly revolved around sexual harassment law in the 21st century. In her analysis of the plight of unpaid interns, Jessica Greenwald discussed the 21st

2 Ibid.
3 Ibid., pg. 95.
century developments in sexual harassment protections for interns.\textsuperscript{4} Here, Greenvald laid out how a limited number of individual states including California and Oregon have taken action against the lack of sexual harassment protections for interns.\textsuperscript{5}

This thesis broke with previous scholarship, which has focused on the 21st century, by taking the conversation back to the second half of the 20th century. This project examines Women’s Educational Equity Act-funded internship programs and utilizes a variety of news articles and legal documents to explore women’s experiences with internships in the latter-half of the 20th century. Due to the uncertain job prospects of interns and the increasing rate of women interns entering male-dominated workplaces during this period, supervisors had positions of power of their interns that fostered sexual harassment and discrimination, making it a specific focus of this project. Through taking a more historical approach, this thesis reveals that 20th century rhetoric framing internships as outside of employment resulted in interns being excluded from many American labor laws and Title VII Anti-discrimination, which includes sexual harassment protections. From the 1970s to the turn of the century, internships were seen as an avenue to expand employment prospects and feminists also framed internships as a way for women to tackle “persistent barriers” to upward mobility. However, the rhetoric that was utilized framed interns as students rather than as workers by emphasizing the future benefits or compensation of the positions instead of the current realities of the labor. Throughout the 1990s, the compensation that unpaid interns were supposed to receive in the form of future benefits, were found to differ from the legal definition of compensation. This disconnect of meanings ultimately prevented interns who faced discrimination, including sexual harassment, from holding employers legally accountable throughout the 20th century.

Analysis

Since the induction of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) of 1938, employers are required to compensate their workers with a federally-mandated minimum wage; however, the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) only covers employees.\textsuperscript{6} In 1947, the court case Walling v. Portland Terminal Co. placed trainees into a different category of worker than employees, which excluded them from the FLSA.\textsuperscript{7}

\textsuperscript{5}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{6}Ibid., pg. 70.
In the years following *Walling v. Portland Terminal Co.*, Congress created more exemptions, including in 1985 when the Department of Labor amended the FLSA to only cover employees who work with the expectation of financial compensation to establish that employers do not need to pay volunteers for their efforts.\(^8\) Thus, trainees and volunteers, both categories that courts have placed interns in, are considered exceptions to many American labor laws.

American women have participated in internships throughout the 20th century, first in the medical field and then, later, in other professions in the creative, academic, and educational careers. When the economy took a downturn in the 1970s, a greater number of men and women undertook internships. By the early-1980s, an estimated one million people and one-in-five college students throughout the United States were participating in internship labor.\(^9\) Throughout the 1970s and beyond, many American families could no longer support themselves through a sole breadwinner, making women’s economic contributions to the household increasingly necessary. Although women’s wages were essential for many families, women were concentrated in lower-paid fields, mainly in the service sector.\(^10\) Some avenues around these economic constraints were through education, training, and internships. To combat the barriers preventing women from breaking into higher paying fields and positions, feminist groups fought for the passage of the Educational Amendment of 1972 Title IX which states that: “No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”\(^11\) Thus, women were gaining greater opportunities and protections in education and career training.

Throughout this period, women-specific internship programs began to pop-up at universities throughout the United States. For example, in the mid-1970s, Pace University began advertising for their MS and Professional diploma programs in Educational Administration that included on-the-job supervised internships.\(^12\) There were also various community-based programs affiliated with universities such as Yale that included internships to aid women in entering

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\(^9\) Ibid.


\(^11\) Ibid.

the “business or professional world on a higher level.” These internship programs often aimed to increase women’s ability to get higher paying and leadership positions in careers that were traditionally male-dominated.

Women’s Educational Equity Act

Although there were a number of internship programs aimed at increasing women’s employment opportunities, many of these were federally funded by one particular public policy: the Women’s Educational Equity Act. Driven by women’s concentration in low paying careers, feminists’ lobbying efforts culminated in the passage of the Women’s Educational Equity Act (WEEA), authored by Representative Patsy Mink as part of the Special Projects Act of 1974, two years after Title IX. WEEA internships focused on giving women chances to demonstrate their competence and to create networking opportunities. The development of female or gender-inclusive professional networks would reduce the exclusive nature of certain male-dominated professions that were controlled by “old-boys networks.” The existence of the “old-boys networks” as a cause for concern, was demonstrated by an all-male club in early 1980s Texas. One of the 17 female administrators in Texas, none of which were invited to join the club, titled it part of the “Good old-boys network” that impedes women’s advancement because, like any sex-restricted group, it “put forth the goals of that sex at the expense of the other.” Hence, WEEA-funded programs emphasized that women would have better chances of succeeding in careers they had historically been excluded from by neutralizing “persistent barriers.”

This thesis will now examine two of the numerous WEEA funded internship programs: Internships, Certification, Equity Leadership and Support (ICES) and Women’s Management for Professional Job Entry. Although it is unclear to what extent these specific programs influenced the intern market, they did make an impact through their visibility with their produced models that were distributed

15 Ibid.
17 Ibid.
nationwide within their fields, which garnered interest from other employers, universities, and students who wanted to create and participate in similar programs.\textsuperscript{19} Further, these programs demonstrate some of the common successes and concerns with female interns placed in male-dominated professions.

ICES was formed in 1977 to combat the lack of women in educational administrative and decision making positions through placing thirteen women in administrative internship positions in school districts throughout the state of Kansas.\textsuperscript{20, 21} ICES strongly emphasized giving interns the opportunity to demonstrate their competence through using strategies such as daily logs in which interns had to determine if they were “passive” or “active” participants in the day’s activities.\textsuperscript{22} The ICES program attempted to make it easier for individuals heading single parent households to participate, ensuring that all interns were paid and providing each intern with a support team to aid in the transition; due to ICES’s numerous considerations, ten out of the thirteen participants received job offers in administrative positions.\textsuperscript{23}

However, the potential for sexual harassment as a major concern for women interns, was made evident in the self-reported description of ICES’s own successes. In the final section of the ICES report titled “Dissemination,” the author describes the progression of how people perceived the participating interns at the United School Administers (USA) National Convention for education administration over the three years in which the interns attended.\textsuperscript{24} It is casually mentioned that the interns were initially considered as “oddities” and even as “sexual objects” at the convention during the first years. However, by the last year, the interns were “treated as professionals.”\textsuperscript{25} The short mentioning of interns being treated as “sexual objects” suggests that this was a common occurrence and not viewed as a major concern to be dealt with in a serious manner. There is no mention of either the interns or facilitators of

\textsuperscript{19} ICES, A Project of Internships, Certification, Equity Leadership, and Support Final Report.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., pg. 8.
\textsuperscript{22} Judith Adkison, A Project of Internship, Certification, Equity-Leadership, and Support (“Example of a Daily Log”), report, Sponsoring Agency: Women’s Educational Equity Act, Kansas University Lawrence School of Education (WEEA Publishing Center). pg. 58.
\textsuperscript{23} Judith Adkison, A Project of Internship, Certification, Equity-Leadership, and Support, report, Sponsoring Agency: Women’s Educational Equity Act, Kansas University Lawrence School of Education (WEEA Publishing Center). pg. 1.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., pg. 81.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., pg. 82.
the internship programs attempt to alleviate this issue, and there is no inclusion of training or preparation for unwanted sexual harassment, which had become a newly recognized issue in the early 1970s, within the model.26 Thus, the ICES program, although careful to make the internships paid and educational, failed to prevent the participants from facing sexual discrimination.

Similar to the ICES program, Goucher College’s Developing Women’s Management Program for Professional Job Reentry aimed to place women in leadership positions.27 The most significant element of the Goucher College’s model program was a timeshare model that provided schedule flexibility by allowing “displaced mothers” to intern on a part-time basis. Although these work-share programs were beneficial in making the internships more accessible and short-term, they resulted in low-rates of offers for permanent positions.28 The program creators stated that the internship should be regarded as a “transitional aid” rather than a direct route to employment since there “is no guarantee” of job offers.29 Furthermore, they emphasized that a “positive recommendation from the intern’s supervisor” and fostering “valuable contacts” would be essential in the women’s attempts to gain permanent positions.30 Therefore, the benefits of internships on the participants relied heavily on the goodwill of the interns’ supervisors.

The combination of the position of power, placing supervisors over their interns due to intern’s uncertain job prospects, and the fact that women interns were entering male-dominated workplaces, led to sexual harassment and discrimination. Despite this danger, the sample documents utilized to facilitate employer-intern-university cooperation do not mention sexual harassment training under any terminology.31 As for the educational training course of the program, unwanted sexual advances were only addressed once in a write-up question, but did not include steps for preventative training.32 The write up gives hypothetical situation in which a “close working” male associate would act in an uncomfortable and sexual manner toward the intern, who would continually brush it off until the male associate committed a third offense.33 This hy-

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26 Ibid., pg. 81-81.
28 Ibid.
29 Ibid., pg. 117.
30 Ibid.
31 Ibid.
33 Ibid.
pothetical implies that action would only need to be taken once the harassment had occurred multiple times rather than suggest that interns should inform supervisors or take other action immediately. Additionally, the single hypothetical scenario would not prepare students to deal with sexual harassment if the perpetrator was their supervisor or someone with power over their current and future career prospects. Both ICES and the Goucher College internship programs illustrate how internships could be utilized to help women attain positions in nontraditionally feminine career paths. However, the interns in these programs nevertheless faced job insecurity, uncertainty regarding the balance between education and labor, economic inaccessibility, and lack of training or protections against unwanted sexual advances from their coworkers and supervisors.

Sexual Harassment Law Applicable to Interns

Throughout the 20th century, both employees and students were able to take legal action against the institutions that failed to adequately handle their experiences with sexual harassment. The passage of Civil Rights Act in 1964 Title VII made sex-based discrimination against an employee illegal in the workplace.\(^ {34} \) In the initial years after the Act’s passage, the courts did not find that sexual harassment was discrimination eligible for protection under Title VII.\(^ {35} \) However, in the 1970s a number of women were able to successfully utilize Title VII to sue their employers for sexual harassment, which was upheld by the Supreme Court in 1986 with \textit{Meritor Saving Bank v. Vinson}.\(^ {36} \) Similarly to Title VII, Title IX of The Educational Amendments Act of 1972 prevented discrimination in an educational setting on the “basis of sex.”\(^ {37} \) In 1992, with the case \textit{Franklin v. Gwinnett County Schools}, the Supreme Court found that sexual harassment would be considered “discrimination on the basis of sex” for Title IX purposes.\(^ {38} \) Therefore, by the early 1990s both students, with Title IX, and employees, with Title VII, had clear legal avenues to contest the improper handling of sexual harassment by the institutions they were involved with.

By definition and in practice, internships are work-experiences. However, due to the 1947 \textit{Walling v. Portland Terminal Co.} decision


\(^{35}\) Ibid. 8-11.

\(^{36}\) Ibid., pg. 9-11 and 20.


\(^{38}\) Bernice Resnick Sandler, Title IX: How We Got It and What a Difference it Made, 55 Clev. St. L. Rev. 473 (2007)
that created the worker category of “trainee” and the cultural association of interns with youthful students, unpaid interns are not legally considered “employees.” Interns’ lack of employee status exempts them from Fair Labor Standard Act (FLSA) protections, allowing them to legally be unpaid. Since interns lack “employee” status, they are also exempted from the 1964 Civil Rights Act Title VII antidiscrimination protections. Therefore, throughout the 20th century, unpaid interns could not sue their employing institutions for either violating Title VII through direct discrimination against them or violating it by not adequately handling discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national orientation.

The 1996 court case O’Connor v. Davis established that unpaid interns qualify as volunteers rather than employees, for the purposes of Title VII and that the institutions in which unpaid interns’ labor cannot be regarded as educational institutions for the purpose of Title IX unless educating is their “primary purpose.” The plaintiff-appellant Bridget O’Connor was enrolled at Marymount College where she was required to conduct field work which led her to obtain an unpaid internship with Rockland Psychiatric Center where she received federal funding as “work study” for her labor. O’Connor stated that while interning at Rockland, she was sexually harassed repeatedly by Dr. James Davis, a Rockland employee, who called her “Miss Sexual Harassment” and suggested that they participate in an orgy. O’Connor reported these occurrences to her supervisor, Lisa Punzone, who stated that Davis said similar things to her and that O’Connor should try to ignore him. Eventually, Punzone did report Davis’ behavior towards O’Connor to her own supervisor, who failed to take further action. In 1995, O’Connor filed lawsuits against Marymount and Rockland claiming sexual harassment in violation of Title VII and Title IX.

The district court concluded that O’Connor was not an employee under Title VII due to “volunteering” her labor at Rockland rather than receiving compensation for it. O’Connor argued that the district court’s decision was “improperly concluded” because she

39 Ibid.
40 Ibid.
41 Ibid.
43 Ibid.
44 Ibid.
45 Ibid.
46 Ibid.
47 Ibid.
satisfied the common-law agency definition and that she was compensated through federal work-study.

The Court of Appeals disagreed with O’Connor’s argument by stating that a “hire,” or agreement for compensation, by the institution itself must occur for the common-law agency definition to apply. Therefore, O’Connor would be considered a volunteer rather than an employee of Rockland, disqualifying her from claiming that the institution violated Title VII through their inadequate handling of Davis’ sexual harassment of O’Connor.

O’Connor also claimed that for the purposes of Title IX, Rockland was an educational institution because it “both receives federal financial assistance either through the state, its patients, or its employees” and also operates “vocational training through an organized educational program.” However, the court of appeals also disagreed with O’Connor’s argument because it declined “to convert Rockland’s willingness to accept volunteers into conduct analogous to administering an “education program” as contemplated by Title IX.” The court concluded that Rockwell was not an educational institution because its “primary purpose” was not to educate. Ultimately, O’Connor’s unpaid intern status prevented her from gaining reparations for the sexual harassment that she encountered from the institution that inadequately handled the situation either through the utilization of Title VII or Title IX.

O’Connor v. Davis was a significant case because it established that unpaid interns would be limited in their legal options for fighting harassment or any other forms of discrimination since they are considered volunteers rather than employees. The term “volunteer” means that an intern is not controlled by the employer to the extent that an employee would be through the employers economic control over them meaning that they are not tied to the employer in a substantial way, allowing them to leave more easily. However, the issue with this reasoning is that in O’Connor, the intern’s educational career would be hindered by her leaving Rockwell without finishing her internship. Although O’Connor was able to be placed in another internship with the help of Marymount, this still raises the issue of how much control an employer really has over an unpaid intern.

48 Where “Common Law Agency” means that employer has the agency to speak/take action on behalf of the employee.
49 Ibid.
50 Ibid.
51 Ibid.
52 Ibid.
53 Ibid.
54 Ibid.
A similar case, *Lippold v. Duggal Color Projects* (1998), was brought up in New York a year later where the Plaintiff, an intern named Jennifer Lippold, claimed that Duggal Color Projects violated Title VII by failing to adequately address her supervisor’s sexual harassment of her.\(^{55}\) Lippold was training to become a teacher through a vocational program run by the Board of Education which required that she work at an outside site for three years leading to her become an intern at Duggal Color Projects.\(^{56}\) Lippold argued that, “Duggal Color Projects exercised employment-type control over her hours, daily activity, and work assignments.”\(^{57}\) In order for Lippold to get credit towards her educational program for her work as an intern, she was required to produce supervisor-signed time cards and evaluation sheets.\(^{58}\) While Lippold was interning at the company, her supervisor sexually harassed her and refused to sign her time cards and evaluation sheets. Although she argued that Duggal had “employment-type control” over her labor, the court cited cases such as *O’Connor* which established that in order to be considered an employee for Title VII purposes, the plaintiff must have been directly compensated by the employer. As in *O’Connor*, Lippold’s claims against the corporation were “dismissed” because she was considered a “volunteer” and the corporation did not directly compensate her with a “wage or salary” or other forms of compensation such as health care.\(^{59}\)

**Conclusion**

The *O’Connor* and *Lippold* cases established that although in order for someone to be an employee they should either paid or receive “other compensation.” They also established that direct financial compensation was a prerequisite of employee status even when the intern position was “employee-like” and that unpaid internships are compensated through other means.\(^{60}\) As made clear by the WEEA-funded internship programs examined earlier, the benefit of the temporary internship position is the ability to increase your chances of gaining permanent employment through making connections and attaining recommendations from supervisors.

Thus, advocates of women’s specific involvement in internships argued that the real compensation for their labor lay with the

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\(^{56}\) Ibid.

\(^{57}\) Ibid.

\(^{58}\) Ibid.

\(^{59}\) Ibid.

\(^{60}\) Ibid.
potential for future economic compensation, through increased job opportunities, etc. Both O’Connor and Lippold were compensated for their labor as unpaid interns through positive supervisor evaluation forms that were essential for them to gain credit at their educational institutions and advance their careers. Since that compensation was withheld from Lippold by her supervisor due to her rebutting his sexual advances, he had immediate control over her educational, financial, and career prospects. O’Connor and Lippold’s cases show the inconsistency of the utilization of the term “compensation” for interns. Moreover, this inconsistency demonstrated the legal loopholes in which the categorization of interns as volunteers, regardless of the economic value for the intern of this form of labor, created.

The breaking of the intern from the student identity allows for the labor essence of internships to be increasingly visible and the notion of mandatory compensation for internships more palatable even though it contrasts the rhetoric of early internship advocates. This thesis has stressed that work as an intern is indeed labor and that the framing of interns as student, trainees, or volunteers without an adequate emphasis on their labor aspects established the foundation of pervasive concerns about and problems of sexual harassment in the intern economy. Moreover, the pro-internship rhetoric utilized by those attempting to expand opportunities for individuals, especially women, fostered problematic power-dynamics and legal ambiguities that made discrimination in the form of sexual harassment a real concern and a partially uncontestable legal issue, whose effects were felt by people just beginning their path towards employment.

About the Author

Originally from Fallbrook, CA, Chelsea Borg is now a senior graduating with distinction in her major in History, as well as with a minor in Labor Studies. She was the History Department peer-advisor for two years. After graduating, she plans to pursue law school and cultivate a career in family law.
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ICES, A Project of Internships, Certification, Equity Leadership, and Support Final Report


How Remittances Are Changing Poverty Spending in Central America

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Abstract

In the past two decades, remittances have overtaken official development assistance to developing countries while eclipsing other vehicles of development such as foreign direct investment. This begs the question of how these multinational transfers between households are affecting the role of governments in matters pertaining to poverty alleviation. This project will answer this question by analyzing what the effects of remittances and levels of democracy have on government social spending in Central American countries. This project hypothesizes that as remittances increase, the level of social spending in those countries will decrease and that this effect will be stronger in more autocratic societies.
Background

The purpose of this statistical analysis is to look at how an increased dependency on remittances coupled with a country’s level of democracy has affected Central American Countries’ spending on poverty alleviation. When it comes to Latin America, the study of these effects has typically focused on Mexico. Although Mexico does receive a large share of remittances, which are monetary transfers migrants send back to their home country, an argument could be made that the countries in Central America are more dependent on them. This argument is based on how remittances make up a larger share of these countries’ Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Bank, 2017). This paper uses GDP to show dependency because it measures the production output of a country and is used as an economic indicator of a country’s performance. If this dependency exists, it becomes even more important in light of President Trump’s refusal to renew temporary protected status for Salvadorans and Hondurans, as well as his policies which attempt to limit their entry into the United States. His refusal means that these immigrants would not be able to send remittances back to their home countries. Therefore, to understand the effects of remittances, it is important to branch out of the typical data samples so that one can create a more nuanced understanding of their effect.

The relevance of probing the effects of remittances on poverty reduction is evident to all the scholars that have approached the question. These multinational monetary transfers are used as supplementary income as well as substitution for income depending on the case (Fajnzylber, 2008). In Central America, 20% of some countries’ populations live outside their nation of origin (Pew, 2017). Through their remittances, these individuals have an aggregate effect on macroeconomic indicators (Fajnzylber, 2008). As a result, the individuals residing in the home countries become dependent on these sums of cash to maintain their livelihoods. The dependency this creates is exemplified through the proportion of the home country’s GDP that consists of remittances (Bank, 2017). However, although there is a lot of existing research on how this dependency on remittances affects poverty, very little looks at whether the amount of remittances affects the government’s decision to spend on poverty. Considering that many studies find that there is a relationship between remittances and poverty, which governments claim that they are consistently trying to eradicate, would it be nonsensical to assume that there might be a relationship between government poverty eradication spending and remittances? If such a relationship existed, would the type of

1 This excludes Costa Rica, Belize, and Panama which will not be analyzed in this paper.
regime prevalent in a particular country have any effect on this relationship? These questions are what this analysis seeks to explore. Furthermore, this project will hypothesize that:

1. In countries where the poor receive a larger than average share of remittances (El Salvador and Guatemala), the government will reduce their spending on the poor which will be indicated by the number of people receiving conditional cash transfers.

2. The effect mentioned in the first hypothesis will be stronger in less democratic countries.

There are many advantages to looking into Central America. Similar history, geography and resources make it a lot easier to understand the factors driving conditional cash transfers, our dependent variable. Conditional cash transfers are transfers of money given to the poor by Central American governments to incentivize elementary school enrollment and prenatal care. Furthermore, the cases selected in Central America all have 10% of their GDP or more coming from remittances (Bank, 2017) and are all within the partly free ranking when it comes to their level of democracy scores (House, 2017). These similarities are helpful in that they create an appropriate environment for analysis. In addition to these factors, Central American countries also instituted similar poverty alleviation policies (Programas, 2017). The similarity of these policies allows for a more robust evaluation of how remittances and democracy levels affect government spending. Lastly, the migration patterns for these countries are also alike, with the majority of immigrants moving to the United States in hope of fleeing violence and finding better economic opportunities (Kate, 2011). All these factors considered, it makes sense to look at Central America because the level of homogeneity that exists in that region allows one to better evaluate the degree to which democracy and remittances affect poverty alleviation. This study’s findings suggest that that El Salvador and Guatemala experience a reduction in the proportion of people receiving conditional cash transfers as remittances go up and the regime becomes less democratic. For Honduras and Nicaragua, there is actually an increase in this proportion, and each finding is statistically significant except in the case of Guatemala.

Methods

This portion of the paper is a quantitative analysis that looks at the relationships between remittances, government spending, regime type and poverty. The majority of the data is drawn from multilateral institutions such as the World Bank and the rest comes from the Freedom House Index or the United Nations. The data which was gathered for this quantitative analysis spans roughly 30 years for
each variable. The analysis is conducted by using linear regression models whereby remittances and democracy are independent variables, and the proportion of people receiving conditional cash transfers is treated as the dependent variable. It is also important to note that due to the way Freedom House collects data, the higher the number is for the democracy variable, the less democratic the country (House, 2017). This analysis looked at these effects on all the countries in one model and then proceeded to look at them individually.

Quantitative Data

In order to figure out how remittances affect poverty in light of regime, this study had to pick which type of remittances indicator it would use in order to represent remittances. The study ended up settling on remittances as a percent of GDP. As mentioned earlier, this indicator was picked because it is the best at measuring the strength of an economy and because there is consistent data for the study’s time frame. All of this data was available on the World Bank website and it was present for each Central American country in this study. The data for remittances as a percentage of GDP started in 1991 and ended in 2017. This time frame was chosen to analyze remittances at a time when they were not a significant portion of Central American economies to when they became one so that this paper could better track changes to the dependent variable.

The other variable that this study needed to measure was regime type. To do this, this study turned to the Freedom House index which measures levels of democracy within a country by putting them on a scale of 1 to 7 whereby a score of 1 is completely free and a score of 7 is the least free (House, 2017). Although the initial goal was to compare democracies versus autocracies, this study quickly encountered a problem due to Freedom House’s methodology. To begin with, the majority of the countries examined were in the partly free range (3-5), meaning that they were neither totally free nor completely autocratic (House, 2017). To account for this, the study had to change the way it was describing regimes in its analysis. Rather than say if a regime falls into the dichotomy of either a democracy or an autocracy, this study instead chose to describe regimes as either being more democratic (lower scores) or less democratic (higher scores). This was done because this better suited Freedom House’s data. In addition, this study was able to find the data it needed from 1991 until 2017.

There were two aspects of poverty reduction that this study wanted to capture. The first was how much the government spends on poverty reduction and whether it fluctuates due to remittances.
Many studies have looked at education spending as an indication of government spending on poverty; however, this study wanted to capture the funds that go directly to the poor of a country. That is why this paper decided to look at conditional cash transfers because they are transfers of money that go directly to the poor to cover a variety of costs. The best data for conditional cash transfers in Central America was available on the United Nations website which keeps records of conditional cash transfer programs throughout Latin America. However, the amount the different governments spent on conditional cash transfer was often either an estimate or it was missing. Due to the gaps in this information, this study decided that it was better to look at the proportion of the population receiving conditional cash transfers rather than the dollar amounts being spent by Central American governments. Although this data set had many gaps due to poor reporting, it had the best information on conditional cash transfers. Another obstacle with this data set was that the majority of conditional cash transfer programs began in the early 2000s instead of the 1990s which is where the analysis conducted by this study began—which significantly lowered the sample size.

The other aspect of poverty that this paper attempted to look at was the poverty headcount measure. This measure looks at the number of people under the poverty line within a country (Bank, 2017). The purpose of looking at this measure was to see whether the number of people experiencing poverty is going down while remittances are going up and to further inspect if this relationship is stronger in less or more democratic regimes. Another purpose is to see how programs such as conditional cash transfers affect the population of individuals experiencing poverty. To get this data set, this study turned to the World Bank yet again. However, unlike in the case of remittances, there was missing data for most years, so this paper decided to discard this measure.

Findings
The first main model looked at how remittances affected the proportion of people receiving conditional cash transfers. In this case, remittances as a percentage of GDP was the independent variable while the proportion of people receiving conditional cash transfers was the dependent variable. This study hypothesized that as remittances got larger over time, the proportion of people receiving conditional cash transfers would decrease. This hypothesis was tested by running a linear regression model. Upon doing running the regression, this study found that while remittances as a percentage of GDP got larger over time, the population of individuals receiving conditional cash transfers decreased. However, although the findings were consistent with the hypothesis, this finding
was not statistically significant which would suggest that something other than remittances is driving how many people receive conditional cash transfers.

The second model looked at the effects of democracy on the number of people receiving conditional cash transfers. This study hypothesized that the less democratic a country was, fewer people would receive conditional cash transfers. This was assumed because previous studies that have looked at democracy have concluded that the more democratic a country the more likely it is to engage in social spending (Jennings, 2014). Due to conditional cash transfers being a kind of social spending, this study hypothesized that the effect seen in previous studies on regime type and social spending would translate to the analysis this study conducted. Upon running a linear regression model to test this, this study found that in terms of statistically significant results, the majority of findings showed that the dependent variable was going in a different direction than expected. The less democratic a country was correlated with a larger proportion of people within the country receiving conditional cash transfers. This finding was statistically significant and would suggest that lower levels of democracy correlate with more expansive forms of poverty reduction.

Table 1: Remittances and Democracy’s effects on Conditional Cash Transfers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Remittances</th>
<th>Democracy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Model 1</td>
<td>Model 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>-0.19771*</td>
<td>-0.19771*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.08184)</td>
<td>(0.08184)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditional Cash Transfers</td>
<td>-0.00127</td>
<td>0.09206***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.00217)</td>
<td>(0.02369)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Estimated coefficients and standard errors for the models comprising the Remittances and Democracy’s effects on the proportion of people receiving Conditional Cash Transfers. Significances codes are two sided tests, all calculated prior to rounding to two significant digits; 0.01,***, 0.05**,0.10*. 
However, in spite of these findings in Table 1, this study still had not tested the main hypotheses which was that as remittances as a percentage of GDP increased, the proportion of individuals receiving conditional cash transfers would decrease and that this effect would be more pronounced in less democratic countries. With the previous findings of remittances and democracy, this study decided that the only way to truly test the first hypothesis was to make the variables of democracy and remittances interact so that one could perceive their effect on conditional cash transfers. Furthermore, because four distinct countries were being looked at, this study decided to analyze them all individually so that it could see whether there were country specific factors that would create divergent effects.

The first country this study looked at was Honduras. After running a linear regression model where the interaction of remittances and democracy’s effect on the percentage of population receiving conditional cash transfers was analyzed, this study found that the effect was positive and statistically significant. This means that the increase in the variable that catches the interaction of remittances and democracy over time correlates with an increase in the population of individuals receiving conditional cash transfers. This finding goes against the previously stated hypothesis in which this study anticipated to see fewer people receiving conditional cash transfers under the assumption that less democracy and increasing dependence on remittances would result in Central American governments spending less on their populations.

Table 2: Honduras Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Honduras</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>0.0312481</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.0140081)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remittances and Democracy Interaction</td>
<td>0.0007998*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.0003183)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R squared</td>
<td>0.4742</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Estimated coefficients and standard errors for the models comprising the interaction of Remittances and Democracy’s effects on the proportion of people receiving Conditional Cash Transfers in Honduras. Significances codes are two sided tests, all calculated prior to rounding to two significant digits; 0.01,***, 0.05**, 0.10*
Nicaragua had similar significant findings. This means that the interaction of remittances and democracy positively correlated with proportion of the population receiving conditional cash transfers. Furthermore, this relationship between remittances and democracy as influencers of the number of people of receiving conditional cash is significant.

Table 3: Nicaragua Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Nicaragua</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>-0.0334046*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.0129305)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remittances and Democracy Interaction</td>
<td>0.0021069**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.0004906)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R squared</td>
<td>0.7867</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Estimated coefficients and standard errors for the models comprising the Interaction of Remittances and Democracy’s effects on the proportion of people receiving Conditional Cash Transfers in Nicaragua. Significances codes are two sided tests, all calculated prior to rounding to two significant digits; 0.01,***, 0.05**,0.10*

However, the findings in El Salvador and Guatemala showed that the dependent variable veered in the opposite direction when the interaction of remittances and democracy was analyzed. In the case of El Salvador, the findings showed that an increase in the interaction variable correlated with a reduction in the amount of people receiving conditional cash transfers. This means that in El Salvador, as remittances as a percentage of GDP increased and the regime became less democratic, there was a downward trend for the number of people receiving conditional cash transfers. Not only was this finding statistically significant, it was also consistent with the hypothesis stated earlier in this paper that such an interaction would have a negative impact on the dependent variable.
Table 4: El Salvador Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>El Salvador</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intercept</strong></td>
<td>0.1103879***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.0177761)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Remittances and Democracy Interaction</strong></td>
<td>-0.0019611***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.0003646)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>R squared</strong></td>
<td>0.7431</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Estimated coefficients and standard errors for the models comprising the Interaction of Remittances and Democracy’s effects on the proportion of people receiving Conditional Cash Transfers in Nicaragua. Significances codes are two sided tests, all calculated prior to rounding to two significant digits; 0.01,***, 0.05**, 0.10*

Guatemala had similar findings to that of El Salvador, minus the fact that the finding was not statistically significant. This means that there are other factors besides remittances and democracy that are probably driving how much of the population will receive conditional cash transfers, whereas remittances and democracy are poor predictors. However, this does not completely remove remittances and democracy as influencers of the number of people receiving conditional cash transfers. It is also important to note that there was a lot of missing data for many of these countries which could have potentially swayed the outcome from statistical significance. However, the finding still confirmed the hypothesis despite it being statistically insignificant.
Table 5: Guatemala Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>El Salvador</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>0. 60521</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0. 53232)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remittances and Democracy Interaction</td>
<td>-0. 01003***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0. 01373)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R squared</td>
<td>0.1178</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Estimated coefficients and standard errors for the models comprising the interaction of Remittances and Democracy’s effects on the proportion of people receiving Conditional Cash Transfers in Guatemala. Significances codes are two sided tests, all calculated prior to rounding to two significant digits; 0.01,***, 0.05**,0.10*

Discussion and Implications

As noted in the findings section, the countries looked at in this study were split between seeing the interaction of democracy and remittances as having a positive effect on the percentage of people receiving conditional cash transfers and others having a negative effect. Honduras and Nicaragua both experienced a positive outcome while El Salvador and Guatemala experienced a negative outcome. Among these outcomes, only Guatemala did not have a statistically significant outcome while the others had one going in either direction. Furthermore, due to tests conducted at the beginning of this analysis whereby the effect of remittances and democracy on conditional cash transfers were looked at separately, it is clear to see that the level of democracy has a stronger influence on the outcomes.

However, these findings do raise the question of what is influencing the interaction of democracy and remittances to have differing effects that are both statistically significant? Looking just at Honduras and El Salvador, because scholars have explored Nicaragua in depth, it is apparent that there is an underlying factor that is unaccounted for that is causing these countries to have such differing outcomes. Furthermore, the levels of democracy seem to have stronger influence on the percentage of individuals receiving conditional cash transfers. Considering that both of these countries are within the same range when one considers levels of democracy and remittances as a percentage of GDP, a more thorough qualitative analysis is needed to examine what specific
aspects of these variables are causing these countries to diverge in outcomes. That is why the next portion of this project will focus on other aspects of the countries in attempt to provide a deeper understanding of what causes the divergence.

About the Author
Kuvimbanashe Edwin Chikukwa is a 4th year Political Science major enrolled in the political science honors program. He was an Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities Slam finalist and will be graduating with honors from the College of Letters and Science.
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White by Association: The Mixed Marriage Policy of Japanese American Internees

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Abstract
The purpose of “White by Association: The Mixed Marriage Policy of Japanese American Internees” is to describe in detail the Mixed Marriage Policy, implemented during World War II regarding the incarceration of Japanese Americans, and the reasons for its implementation. This policy allowed for specific multiracial Japanese Americans and those involved in mixed marriages with White males to exit the camps and return home to the West Coast if they could prove their lifestyles to be culturally Caucasian. This paper argues that the Mixed Marriage Policy was created in order to prevent White males from challenging the constitutionality of the Japanese American incarceration.
Introduction

“One obvious thought occurs to me—that every Japanese citizen or non-citizen on the Island of Oahu who meets these Japanese ships or has any connection with their officers or men should be secretly but definitely identified and his or her name placed on a special list of those who would be the first to be placed in a concentration camp in the event of trouble.’ – Franklin D. Roosevelt, President of the United States, 1936.1

The imprisonment of Japanese Americans in U.S. concentration camps during World War II violated the constitutional rights of the imprisoned American citizens and residents who were denied citizenship. The same right-violators who were responsible for this incarceration, were also the creators of the Mixed Marriage Policy, which allowed multiracial couples and individuals to return to their homes on the West Coast and avoid incarceration. I will be examining the contextual reasons why such a policy existed alongside an already established racialized imprisonment system known as the internment of Japanese Americans.

The sudden imprisonment of almost 120,000 people was no easy task for the United States, on top of the fact that some within the government’s Justice Department and the FBI initially opposed the action entirely. Regardless of their opposition, most departments, members of Congress, and the American people favored “relocation” or “evacuation” – nicer words for the forced dislocation of Japanese Americans used often in government policy. However, as quickly as evacuation and incarceration began, exemptions were made almost immediately to certain Japanese Americans, allowing them to stay or return to the West Coast. This paper examines why the selectivity existed.

The Mixed Marriage Policy, first written in 1942, allowed for the release of Japanese Americans who fit the specific criterion of being multiracial or married to a non-Japanese, U.S. citizen. This policy, while gendered and racist, allowed certain ethnically full-blooded Japanese individuals to return to the West Coast within a couple of months after the release of Executive Order of 9066 which allowed for the ban of all Japanese Americans from this area. However, if the goal of the government was to protect national security from

all Japanese descent individuals, then the creation of the Mixed Marriage Policy comes off as contradictory and bizarre.

A fabricated justification for incarcerating Japanese Americans beyond just the national safety of the United States was the War Department’s claim to protect Japanese Americans from potential racism by White Americans and to assimilate Japanese Americans to White American culture. This claim became a useful tool as the threat of sabotage and internal conflict became more noticeably improbable. The government agencies in charge of incarceration were attempting to balance the constant public push for Japanese expulsion and the illegal removal of the constitutional rights of Japanese Americans. Finding social justification and a way to circumvent the Constitution became the government’s priority in continuing the massive and invasive operation of incarceration based on race.

This paper concludes that the reasoning behind the almost immediate creation and utilization of a policy allowing the exemption of specific types of Japanese Americans was not done out of some need to preserve the Whiteness of these individuals and families, nor out of a sudden moral obligation from the policy-makers. Instead, I argue that the Mixed Marriage Policy was conceived as an attempt by the Western Defense Command, the War Relocation Authority, and the Executive Branch to avoid potentially winnable cases against the constitutionality of the entire internment and relocation process. This is due to how the policy was implemented and how the criteria for exemption relied on a White male figure, shared children within the mixed marriage families and proof of a “Caucasian” lifestyle.

I will support this argument by breaking down the Mixed Marriage Policy and how it was applied, and by analyzing the writers of the policy, their spoken worries of repressing the constitutional rights of Japanese Americans, and how they were still able to do this while also preventing White male interference.

**Part I: The Mixed Marriage Policy**

“The Japanese race is an enemy race and while many second and third generation Japanese born on United States soil, possessed of United States citizenship, have become ‘Americanized,’ the racial strains are undiluted.” – General John L. Dewitt, Head of the Western Defense Command, 1943.$^2$

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In the National Archives at College Park, Maryland lies a detailed copy of the Mixed Marriage Policy. This small booklet, approximately twenty pages, consists of the entire policy outline as well as the exemptee application forms and guidelines. This copy is dated September 24, 1943. The original Mixed Marriage Policy, however, began as a memorandum issued to all evacuation assembly centers, the original place holders for evacuated Japanese Americans until the opening of the official internment camps. This memorandum was issued by the Western Defense Command on July 12, 1942 and it outlined the detailed regulation of all accepted requirements to qualify under the Mixed Marriage Policy as well as the approach and procedure of assembly center personnel in charge of collecting information on all assembly center inhabitants who may have been eligible for exemption. \(^3\)

These personnel were required to collect all information on all mixed marriage families and multiracial individuals, in order for the Western Defense Command (WDC), and ultimately General DeWitt, to make the decision of granting exemption or not. \(^4\) The original memorandum states:

\[\ldots\text{in contacting the mixed marriage families and mixed blood individuals in reference to this program, care should be taken not to promise said families or persons release from the centers. Every case will be carefully studied, and releases only authorized when the stated conditions have been met, and it appears that the release will not in any way be detrimental to the safety and welfare of this nation.}\]

Here, two points are being made clear. First, assembly center personnel were required to take the utmost caution in collecting this information and to avoid false hope and potential hysteria. Second, even those who met all necessary qualifications were not guaranteed exemption.

Within a few months, assembly centers across the West Coast began sending in lists of those with potential to qualify through the Mixed Marriage Policy. These lists included not only individual names, but the race, children and economic stability of each evacuee and their family.

The Tanforan Assemble Center of San Bruno, California, responded to the memorandum’s request on July 16, 1942, with their lists of

\(^3\) Memorandum from Herman P. Goebel, Jr. to A. H. Cheney on the release of mixed marriage families, July 12, 1943, MMP.

\(^4\) Ibid.

\(^5\) Ibid.
evacuees seeking release. We see one of many examples in the Cruz family:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Height</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Mildred Cruz| Mother       | F   | 35  | 5' 1/2  | 115 lbs.
| Theodore Cruz| Son         | M   | 12  | 54 inches | 79 1/2 " |
| Carmen Cruz  | Daughter     | F   | 10  | 51 "     | 77 "    |
| Anna Cruz    | "            | F   | 9   | 49 "     | 69 "    |
| Theresa Cruz | "            | F   | 7   | 46 "     | 62 "    |
| Kenneth Cruz | Son          | M   | 5   | 43 "     | 53 "    |
| Donald Cruz  | "            | M   | 3   | 42 "     | 41 "    |
| Peter Cruz   | "            | M   | 1 1/2 | 33 1/2 " | 32 "    |

The head of the above mentioned family is Alfonso Cruz, who is presently employed at the Richmond Shipyard No. 2, earning $1 per hour as a steamfitter’s helper. Mr. Cruz is a caucasian, American citizen, and the environment of the family has always been caucasian.

Mrs. Cruz states that if she is granted a release for herself and family that they would reside with her husband at the home of his mother at 1332 Carolina Street, San Francisco, California. The plan for their support is Mr. Cruz’s continued employment at the Richmond Shipyard.

The family states that they are able to provide transportation to San Francisco, and will require no assistance from this Administration. 

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6 Attachment to report from Tanforan Assembly Center manager Frank E. Davis to Operations Section Chief of the WDC Emil Sandquist regarding families of mixed marriages and mixed blood desiring release, July 16, 1942, MMP.
We see in further documents that the Cruz family was granted exemption and allowed to return to the evacuated areas. Countless other families were brought under the same scrutiny and judged by racial and gendered guidelines in order to maintain their rights as United States citizens.

In all copies of the Mixed Marriage Policy (MMP), we are presented with strict classes of exemptible persons. However, over time new revisions were added to include more variants of potential exemtees. The original 1942 memorandum is clearest on who was exempt and to where they were allowed to return:

1. Mixed marriage families composed of a Japanese husband, Caucasian wife and mixed blood children may be released from the Center and directed to leave the Western Defense Command area.

2. Families composed of a Caucasian husband who is a citizen of the United States, a Japanese wife and mixed blood children may be released from the Center and allowed to remain within the Western Defense Command area providing the environment of the family has been Caucasian. Otherwise the family must leave the Western Defense Command area.

3. Adult individuals of mixed blood who are citizens of the United States may leave the Center and stay within the Western Defense Command area if their environment has been Caucasian. Otherwise they must leave the Western Defense Command area.

All three of these requirements were gendered and geared toward protecting Caucasians. Those allowed to stay on the West Coast were married couples made up of White males and Japanese females with multiracial children and other multiracial individuals. In both situations, however, the families or individuals had to prove their environment to have been Caucasian. If a family was made up of a White female and a Japanese male with mixed children and had a Caucasian lifestyle, they could leave camp but had to move east. This option, however, was omitted by the time the 1943 revision was released, which no longer allowed exemptions for White female/Japanese male couples or for any full-blooded Japanese male at all.

7 Attachment to report from Major Ray Ashworth of the WDC to unnamed Special Agent in Charge of the FBI regarding a list of exemptions under the Mixed Marriage and/or Mixed Blood Policies, December 10, 1942, MMP.

8 Memorandum from Herman P. Goebel, Jr. to A. H. Cheney on the release of mixed marriage families, July 12, 1943, MMP.
As mentioned, the 1943 outline included adjusted sections of the original policy and specifically changed the wording of qualifications from the previously used memorandum:

II. Classes of persons entitled to return to evacuated areas for bona fide residence:

a. Families which maintained bona fide residence in evacuated area immediately prior to evacuation or families whose unit was disrupted by voluntary evacuation of Japanese members of family where:

(1) Environment of family has been Caucasian and head of family is
United States citizen or citizen of friendly nation; and

(a) Family consists of non-Japanese husband and full-blood Japanese wife.

(b) Family consists of Caucasian mother, minor children sired by Japanese father who is dead, long since departed from family, is resident within War Relocation Authority Project or is resident outside of the evacuated area; or

(c) Family consists of non-Japanese foster parents and adopted child or children of Japanese ancestry; or

(d) Dependent full-blood Japanese mothers of exemptees.9

The head qualifier for each potentially exemptible internee is that the, "environment of [the] family has been Caucasian." This raises the question on how "Caucasian-ness" within each family could be measured. This was done through the initial interview process of those applying for exemption though the MMP. In some documents the results of these interviews are written in detail:

Ogawa, Fukuzo – 63 Years – Japanese Citizen
Ogawa, Nellie – 63 Years – British Subject

History:

Fukuzo Ogawa was born of Japanese parentage at Kanagawa, Japan, in 1879.

Mrs. Nellie Ogawa is of British descent born in England in 1882. She came to the United States in 1901, and

9 Outline of the Mixed Marriage Policy by the Civil Affairs Division, General Staff, Western Defense Command, September 23, 1943, MMP.
applied for the first naturalization papers shortly after, but did not receive her final papers.

Environment:
Acquaintances – 70% Caucasian – 30% Japanese
Diet – 100% Caucasian
Customs – 90% Caucasian – 10% Japanese

By examining the details of a family’s diet, acquaintances, and customs, the WDC felt they could determine how White each family was and then decide if they were White enough to be released from the camps. The idea that race could be measured in percentages had long been accepted in U.S. policy, however, up to this point it was only measured using blood. Now, according to the army, your racial allegiance could be determined by your diet.

The next item on the 1943 re-write of the Mixed Marriage Policy is the second category of requirements that allowed release:

II. Classes of persons entitled to return to evacuated areas for bona fide residence:

... 

b. Individuals of mixed-blood [1/2 Japanese or less], whether single or married, with or without children, provided such individuals maintained bona fide residence in prohibited areas prior to evacuation, and provided environment has been Caucasian.12

When compared to the original MMP’s section on mixed-race people, there are significant differences:

3. Adult individuals of mixed blood who are citizens of the United States may leave the Center and stay within the Western Defense Command area if their environment has been Caucasian. Otherwise they must leave the Western Defense Command area.13

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10 Summary of mixed marriage families, page 9, date unknown, MMP.
11 Bona fide means genuine. This means that they can choose whether or not someone is “genuinely” a resident.
12 Outline of the Mixed Marriage Policy by the Civil Affairs Division, General Staff, Western Defense Command, September 23, 1943, MMP.
13 Memorandum from Herman P. Goebel, Jr. to A. H. Cheney on the release of mixed marriage families, July 12, 1943, MMP.
The 1943 version was updated to answer the likely numerous questions about who qualified as multiracial, what percentage of Japanese ancestry was allowed, and the lifestyle necessary of these individuals to qualify for exemption. It is also reasonable to assume that public backlash to the release of multiracial Japanese Americans had a role to play in the specificity of racial percentages. Note, however, that the necessity for a "Caucasian lifestyle" never changed.

**Part II: Breaking the Constitution**

"If it is a question of safety of the country, or the Constitution of the United States, why the Constitution is just a scrap of paper to me." – John J. McCloy, Assistant Secretary of War, 1942.¹⁴

Franklin Delano Roosevelt signed and issued Executive Order 9066 on February 19, 1942, but the creation of this document, spanning over the course of two months, was plagued by doubt, disagreement, public outcry, and the successful bending and breaking of constitutional rights. Many powerful members of the United States government played a role in the Order’s construction, such as much of the War Department, while others in the Justice Department opposed its clear lack of necessity and breach of personal freedoms.

While most of the War Department was on board with incarceration, Assistant Secretary of War John J. McCloy, coming from a background in law, remained apprehensive to break it. This apprehension juxtaposed to his priority in national security led him to make the controversial but unsurprising-for-war-time statement placed at this beginning of this section, ending with, "...why the Constitution is just a scrap of paper to me."¹⁵ McCloy was ready to disregard the constitutional rights of Japanese Americans if it meant protecting the White ones.

Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson, while in support of mass incarceration, wrote in his personal diary on February 10, 1942, regarding Japanese incarceration:

The second generation Japanese can only be evacuated either as part of a total evacuation, giving access to the areas only by permits, or by frankly trying to put them out on the ground that their racial characteristics are such that we cannot understand or trust even the citizen Japanese.


¹⁵ Ibid., 149-150.
Stimson, an open supporter of concentration camps and one of the key influencers of Executive Order 9066, was able at an early point to recognize the unconstitutionality of the entire ordeal. Yet, the order was still drawn and signed by February 19, 1942.

A month later in April, Assistant Secretary of War John J. McCloy then made an argument for a specific Japanese American’s exemption, “I wonder whether as a matter of law and as a matter of policy it might not be well to include some exemptions of Japanese.” McCloy’s biographer Kai Bird, in an attempt to analyze McCloy’s reasoning behind this change of heart, states: “He [McCloy] reasoned that a few such exemptions could well give the government the evidence it might later need in the courts to prove that the evacuation was not administered strictly on the basis of race.” According to Bird, McCloy had predicted the judicial implications of internment and attempted, as well as Stimson, to circumvent them.

Immediately following McCloy’s suggestion, the writing and enforcement of the Mixed Marriage Policy commenced. However, McCloy’s wish for specific loyal Japanese Americans to be exempted did not match up with the Mixed Marriage Policy’s requirements for exemption. But by examining Bird’s analysis of McCloy’s argument of avoiding future judiciary issues on the constitutionality of internment, it is clear why the Office of the Provost Marshall General, Allen Gullion, so quickly produced the MMP. The sole purpose of this policy was not to show mercy to those of Japanese descent who had assimilated to White culture, but to adhere to the wishes of White men who chose to create relationships and families with Japanese American women, therefore protecting the United States government from these White men who could potentially fight in court for their rights to these choices and the rights to their chosen families.

White American policy-makers were no longer afraid of the claims to the constitution by Japanese Americans. The public was on their side. America was at war with the Japanese, therefore anything was acceptable the sake of national security. But when U.S. policy began to infringe upon the rights of White American men, society and the courts were far less inclined to agree with it.

16 Ibid., 151-153.
17 Ibid., 160.
18 Ibid., 160.
Sympathy for Japanese internees was not guaranteed nor likely, but when a White adult male or White child suffers, the White community and, therefore, White law makers, must listen.

The power of the White voice in U.S. history is not only problematic, but extremely revealing. The powers behind Japanese incarceration were not naïve to this power and, by implementing the Mixed Marriage Policy, made it unlikely for it to interfere. If White male families were excused from the atrocities of internment, then there would be no reason for them to speak out and challenge the WDC in court.

McCloy saw the problematic racism of Japanese incarceration and later took steps to fix it. When he pointed these issues out to the Western Defense Command, they quickly found a way to prevent powerful players, i.e. White males, from challenging the internment’s constitutionality. Thus, the Mixed Marriage Policy was born, and White male advocates against their Japanese families being incarcerated were appeased.

**Conclusion: Legal Injustice**

“I pointed out that what these foolish leaders of the colored race are seeking is at the bottom social equality, and I pointed out the basic impossibility of social equality because of the impossibility of race mixture by marriage.” Henry L. Stimson, Secretary of War, January 24, 1942.19

While tens of thousands of Japanese Americans were kept behind barbed wire for up to four years, many had already returned years prior or had never entered the camps at all. The Mixed Marriage Policy allowed for multiracial couples made up of a White husband and Japanese wife and individuals no more than fifty percent ethnically Japanese, who were all able to prove their Caucasian lifestyles, to potentially be exempted from confinement in the concentration camps. This policy was a direct contradiction to the entire incarceration process that purposely dislocated and imprisoned individuals based entirely on their racial ties to Japan.

The Mixed Marriage Policy was an attempt to prevent White male agents from challenging the constitutionality of the unlawful incarceration of Japanese Americans. More than half of those incarcerated were American citizens, meaning that their imprisonment violated the 14th Amendment of the Constitution by denying them

their rights to due process and equal protection of the law—exclusively because of their race. It took until December of 1944, three years into the government-mandated incarceration, for a Japanese American who challenged the process in court to win her case, Ex parte Endo,20 and for the Supreme Court to officially declare incarceration of loyal American citizens unconstitutional after multiple other cases such as Korematsu v. United States had attempted the same thing and lost. It took another year and a half after the Ex parte Endo decision for the total closure of internment camps and release of the remaining Japanese Americans. If a White male needed to challenge the governments actions sooner, due to his Japanese American wife and half-White children being imprisoned unlawfully, then this verdict would have come sooner and redress (official recognition, apology, and compensation by the government to those incarcerated) would not have taken until 1988.

It is time for us all to recognize not only the terrible actions committed against the Japanese Americans incarcerated during World War II, but the fact this was not the first, nor the last time a demographic group was imprisoned because of the color of their skin and where they or their parents were from. The enslavement of Africans and African Americans, the imprisonment of innocent Black men, and the incarceration of immigrant children at the Mexican border are all examples from our past and our present. We must acknowledge these atrocities and understand why they have happened and continue to happen. More often than not, they arise from the racial hierarchy this country was built on nearly 250 years ago.

**About the Author**

Ashlynn Deu Pree is an undergraduate senior in history at the University of California, Santa Barbara. She is graduating with a distinction in History after writing an honors thesis for the department. She has participated in intensive research and received an URCA grant to fund the process. She was the 2017 receiver of the Marion Ramstad Scholarship which was awarded for her studies in Asian history through the UCSB History Department. Ashlynn is moving to Japan at the end of the summer to begin teaching English for a year before continuing her academic career in graduate school for history.

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20 *Ex Parte Endo* (1944), regarding Mitsuye Endo, was the Supreme Court case to finally declare Japanese American internment as unconstitutional.
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Summary of Mixed Marriage Families, page 9, date unknown, MMP.
Exposure to Multicultural Environments: Influence on Social Relationships and Altruistic Behavior

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Abstract
This research explores the relationship between multiculturalism, diversity, and altruistic behaviors. The researchers hypothesized that individuals with more accepting attitudes toward multiculturalism would be more comfortable with diversity and manifest more altruistic behavior compared to those with less accepting attitudes toward multiculturalism. In addition, the researchers also hypothesized that individuals primed with multicultural images would be more likely to be comfortable with diversity and show more altruistic behavior than those primed with American images. Multiple 2x2 ANOVA tests were utilized to study the effects of multicultural attitudes and cultural priming on comfort with diversity and altruistic behavior. No significant main effect of the priming strategies was found; however, attitudes toward multiculturalism did have a significant effect on all three of the dependent variables, such that participants that scored high on multicultural acceptance were more accepting of diversity and more likely to donate both time and money to a person in need.

Keywords: Multiculturalism, diversity, altruism.
Introduction

The word multicultural seems to be more common nowadays, because culture plays a significant role in our daily lives. Culture is a lens that affects how we see the world (Hong, Morris, Chiu, & Benet-Martinez, 2000), and a multicultural environment provides people with the possibility to interact with people from other cultures (Bodziany, 2008). In addition, race seems to play an important role when forming new relationships. People often show a preference for those who are very similar to them, especially in terms of race and ethnicity (Clark & Tuffin, 2015). From the perspective of cultural psychology, individualism and collectivism are constructs that outline the differences in relationships between individuals and societies, with collectivists tending to value interdependence and individualists tending to value independence (Oyserman & Lee, 2008). This study will examine multicultural-accepting attitudes and people’s preferences in establishing relationships with individuals of diverse cultural backgrounds.

According to the Constructivist Theory, culture is based on constructs, constructs that vary depending on how we use them and how accessible they are. A perfect example comes from priming strategies that can activate a construct without the participant’s awareness that they are being primed (Hong et al., 2000). Certain strategies or methods can prime people to think in a collectivistic or individualistic way. When subjects are primed to have an individualistic self-concept, they are going to focus more on special or distinctive traits and attributes, and focus less on social roles and relationships (Oyserman & Lee, 2008). Previous researchers have used American and Chinese images to prime participants with either an individualistic or a collectivistic mindset, in order to try to identify differences between cultures (Hong et al., 2000).

The attitudes that people form toward multiculturalism play an important role in culture and attitudes about other groups. While members of ethnic minority groups tend to favor multiculturalism, individuals in the majority group often see multiculturalism as a threat rather than a benefit (Verkuyten & Martinovic, 2006). In fact, Caucasians implicitly associate multiculturalism with exclusion compared to ethnic minorities (Plaut, Garnett, Flannery, Buftardi, & Sanchez-Burks, 2011). In addition, friendships with outgroup members tend to have a positive effect on multiculturalism (Verkuyten & Martinovic, 2006). Following the System Justification Theory and the Social Dominance Theory, which focus on social identity, members that belong to minority groups are more likely to favor multiculturalism than members of the majority group (Verkuyten, 2005).
The conventional models of organization and organizational behavior recognize that cooperation is a fundamental concept to the survival of members of social units (Wagner, 1995). Individualism and collectivism have an effect on group cooperation, such that individualists, who are independent, are less inclined to engage in cooperative behavior compared to collectivists, who are interdependent (Wagner, 1995). Cooperation is stronger in collectivistic societies compared to individualistic societies (Marcus & Le, 2013). This study will also examine if priming participants with a collectivistic point of view influences altruistic behaviors. The researchers hypothesized that individuals primed with multicultural images, or a collectivistic point of view, would be more likely to cooperate with or help someone in need compared to individuals primed with American images, or an individualistic point of view. In addition, the researchers hypothesized that participants who were primed with multicultural images would be more accepting of establishing relationships with people of diverse, multicultural backgrounds, compared to participants who were primed with American images. Lastly, the researchers hypothesized that individuals with more accepting attitudes toward multiculturalism, who will be referred to in this paper as having “high multiculturalism,” would be more altruistic and more likely to establish relationships with people from other cultures, compared to individuals with lower multicultural acceptance, or those with “low multiculturalism.”

The purpose of this research is to identify a relationship between multicultural attitudes and both comfort with diversity and altruistic behaviors, and to see if priming participants with multicultural attitudes can influence their decision on forming relationships with people from diverse, multicultural backgrounds. Given that previous studies have shown a relationship between collectivism and altruistic behavior, researchers also wanted to investigate the influence of the priming methods on multicultural attitudes and altruistic behaviors such as donating both time and money to an individual in need.

Methods

Participants

An email was sent out to students of the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB), asking them to participate in an anonymous online survey. One hundred and nineteen responses were received from undergraduate students at UCSB. Demographics such as age, race, and gender were not collected.
Design

A 2 (Cultural Prime: Individualistic/American vs. Collectivistic/Multicultural) x 2 (Multicultural Attitude: High vs. Low) ANOVA was utilized to assess these variables' effect on altruistic behavior and comfort with diversity. Three dependent variables were measured: comfort with diversity, hours willing to volunteer to help someone in need, and amount of money donated to help someone in need.

Procedures

First, a link was emailed to participants via Qualtrics.com that directed them to the survey, where they were presented with a consent form. If participants decided not to give consent they were simply directed to the end of the survey; if participants gave consent, they were asked to complete The Munroe Multicultural Attitude Scale Questionnaire (Munroe & Pearson, 2006).

Next, using Qualtrics, participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions: American prime or multicultural prime. In the American prime condition, participants were presented with images of American icons, and in the multicultural prime condition, participants were presented with images of other cultures. After seeing the images, participants had to write 1-2 sentences reflecting upon the images they saw.

They were then presented with a short story about a person in need, and had to complete a short survey regarding their feelings and thoughts about the story, as well as their willingness to help the person in need with time or money. Additionally, participants had to complete the Miville-Guzman Universality-Diversity Scale (Miville et al., 1999). Lastly, participants were presented with a debriefing form that stated the purpose of the study as well as contact information for additional questions about the study.

Measures

The Munroe Multicultural Attitude Scale Questionnaire (Munroe & Pearson, 2006) is a Likert scale consisting of 18 questions that assess attitudes toward people of different cultural backgrounds, as well as religious affiliations and socioeconomic status. Participants responded on a scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). This scale was specifically employed to measure high vs. low multicultural acceptance. A median split was performed to split participants into high or low multicultural acceptance, with participants who scored a 1 rated as low in acceptance of multiculturalism. The following sentences are an example of the questions in the scale: “I accept the fact that languages other than English are spoken.” “I respectfully help others to offset language barriers that prevent communication.” The questions in the
scale were specifically measuring attitudes towards race, culture, gender, and socioeconomic status. This scale has been previously used by other researchers to measure multicultural attitudes of young people (Weiler, Helfrich, Palermo, & Zimmerman, 2013). The researchers used this scale as a valid form of measuring multicultural attitudes.

Additionally, participants were randomly assigned to either the American prime or to the multicultural prime. The American prime consisted of six images of American symbols: Uncle Sam, the Statue of Liberty, the American flag, the American bald eagle, the White House, and Mount Rushmore. These American images were employed to prime subjects to have an individualistic mindset. The multicultural prime condition consisted of six images of symbols from other cultures: a Mayan pyramid, a Chinese home, the Taj Mahal, a Mexican town, Vietnamese boys staring at a river, and a sculpted figure located in Cambodia.

These multicultural images were employed to prime subjects to have a collectivistic mindset. In both conditions, participants were given 30 seconds to analyze the images and try to internalize their meaning and message. Immediately following the viewing of the images, the researchers asked participants to write 1-2 sentences on any common themes they found in the images presented to them. The purpose of having participants write the sentences was to make them reflect on the images they saw. Our study based this idea of priming participants from previous research in which Hong and colleagues (2000) primed participants with individualistic or collectivistic mindsets using either American or Chinese images.

In addition, the researchers asked participants to read a fictional story about Jane Smith, a UCSB student who lost her father and younger brother in a car accident and was left with two siblings and no financial support. Then participants were presented with a set of questions that asked how distressed they felt about Jane’s situation, using a scale ranging from not at all distressed (1) to extremely distressed (5).

We also asked how willing they were to help Jane, using a scale ranging from not at all willing (1) to incredibly willing (5). Additionally, participants were asked how much money they would donate to support Jane if they were to receive $20. Participants had a bar ranging from $0 to $20 to signal how much they would like to donate (help money). Also, participants used a bar ranging from 0 hours to 40 hours to report how many hours per week they would like to volunteer for babysitting and providing transportation (help time). The purpose of the story was to measure altruistic behavior. More specifically, the researchers’ objective was to measure who
would be more willing to help Jane: those primed with American symbols or those primed with multicultural images.

Next, participants completed Miville-Guzman Universality-Diversity Scale (Miville et al., 1999), a scale consisting of 15 questions used to measure attitudes toward other races. Participants responded on a scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (6), with participants who scored a 6 rated as more supportive of multiculturalism. Some of the questions were modified in order to make a more accurate measurement. The following are examples of questions in the scale: “I would like to join an organization that emphasizes getting to know people from different cultures.” “Getting to know someone of another race could be generally an uncomfortable experience for me.”

With this scale, researchers intended to measure how comfortable an individual is being around people or socializing with people from different cultural backgrounds. Also, previous researchers have validated this scale by measuring diverse orientations on international Asian students (Kegel & DeBlaere, 2014). Researchers used this scale as a valid form to measure attitudes towards other races. Lastly, participants were presented with a debriefing form, which informed them about the design of the experiment. In addition, for further information regarding the study or the results, the debriefing form contained both the researchers’ and the professor’s email.

**Results**

The researchers wanted to test the hypothesis that individuals with high multicultural acceptance would be more likely to perform altruistic behaviors and also more likely to establish relationships with people from other cultures, compared to those with lower multicultural acceptance. Participants who scored low in multicultural acceptance (N = 119, 52.1%) were compared to individuals who scored high in multicultural acceptance (N = 119, 47.9%). The data was analyzed through SPSS using 2x2 ANOVAs in order to determine significant differences.

The data was first analyzed using a 2 (Prime: Individualistic/American vs. Collectivistic/Multicultural) x 2 (High vs. Low Multicultural Acceptance) ANOVA on attitudes towards multiculturalism. It was hypothesized that participants primed with multicultural images would be more comfortable forming relationships with people of diverse cultural background compared to those primed with American images. The results showed no significant main effect of the primes on comfort with diversity [F (1, 115) = 1.16, n.s., Ms = 4.77 vs. 4.88]; the fact that they were exposed to the multicultural prime or the American prime did not affect participants’ decisions in form-
ing relationships with people of diverse cultural backgrounds. In addition, it was hypothesized that individuals with high multicultural acceptance would be more comfortable with diversity compared to individuals with low multicultural acceptance. The data showed a significant main effect of multicultural acceptance on comfort with diversity \(F(1, 115) = 22.9, p < .001, Ms = 5.07 \text{ vs. } 4.58\), such that those who scored high in multiculturalism were more likely to feel more comfortable with diversity. In addition, it was hypothesized that people with high multicultural acceptance who were primed with multicultural images would be the most comfortable with diversity compared to all other conditions.

The results showed a marginal interaction effect of multicultural attitudes and the prime condition participants were exposed to on comfort with diversity \(F(1, 115) = 3.01, p < .10\), such that those who were exposed to the multicultural prime condition and who also scored high on multiculturalism were slightly more comfortable with diversity compared to those in all other conditions.

A 2 (Prime: Individualistic/American vs. Collectivistic/Multicultural) x 2 (High vs. Low Multicultural Acceptance) ANOVA was also used to measure the effect of these variables on altruistic behavior (money donated). It was hypothesized that participants primed with multicultural images would be more likely to donate money to someone in need compared to those primed with American images. The results showed no significant main effect of the primes on the amount of money donated \(F(1, 115) = .31, \text{n.s.}, Ms = 18.43 \text{ vs. } 17.89\), such that participants were likely to donate money to someone in need regardless of the prime condition that they were exposed to.

Also, it was hypothesized that individuals with high multiculturalism would be more likely to donate a larger amount of money compared to individuals with low multicultural attitudes. The data showed a significant main effect of multicultural attitudes on the
amount of money donated by participants [$F(1, 115) = 4.36, p < .05, Ms = 19.18 vs. 17.15$].

Individuals who scored high on multiculturalism were more likely to donate a considerable amount of money to someone in need. Lastly, it was hypothesized that participants with high multiculturalism who were primed with multicultural images would be more likely to donate money to an individual in need compared to participants in all other conditions. There was no significant interaction effect of participants' multicultural attitudes and the prime condition participants were exposed to on the amount of money they donated [$F(1, 115) = 1.10, n.s.$]. Individuals who were exposed to the multicultural condition and who also scored high on multiculturalism did not show any differences compared to other groups in donating money to an individual in need.

Finally, a 2 (Prime: Individualistic/American vs. Collectivistic/Multicultural) x 2 (High vs Low Multicultural Acceptance) ANOVA was utilized to measure these variables’ effect on altruistic behavior (hours donated). The researchers hypothesized that participants primed with multicultural images would be more likely to volunteer time to someone in need compared to those primed with American images. The results showed no significant main effect of the primes on the amount of hours donated [$F(1, 115) = 0.00, n.s. Ms = 7.76 vs. 7.79$], such that the prime conditions had no effect on the number of hours participants were willing to donate to an individual in need. In addition, the researchers hypothesized that individuals with high multicultural acceptance would be more likely to donate higher numbers of hours compared to individuals with low multicultural attitudes. The data showed a significant main effect of multicultural attitudes on the amount of hours participants were willing to donate [$F(1, 115) = 13.19, p < .001, Ms = 10.2 vs. 5.35$], such that participants who scored higher in multiculturalism were more
likely to volunteer or to assist someone in need compared to those who scored lower.

Finally, it was hypothesized that people with high multicultural acceptance who were primed with multicultural images would be more likely to donate hours to someone in need compared to all other conditions. No significant interaction effect of the prime condition participants were exposed to and their attitude toward multiculturalism was found on the amount of hours they were willing to donate \([F (1, 115) = 0.00, \text{n.s.}]\), such that the interaction between the priming conditions and attitudes towards multiculturalism did not affect participants' decisions on donating hours to someone in need.

![Graph showing number of hours donated](image)

*Figure 3: Number of hours donated.*

**Discussion**

Based on previous research, the researchers hypothesized that individuals with high multiculturalism would be more likely to form social relationships with people of diverse multicultural backgrounds compared to those with low multiculturalism. Individuals often prefer to form relationships with those who are very similar to them, especially in terms of race and ethnicity (Clark & Tuffin, 2015), and the researchers hypothesized that this effect would be reduced by multicultural priming. Also, forming relationships with members of outgroups tends to have a positive effect on multiculturalism (Verkuyten & Martinovic, 2006).

The results of this study showed significant effects of multicultural attitudes: individuals who scored high on multicultural acceptance were more likely to form relationships and be comfortable around people with diverse, multicultural backgrounds. Here, the researchers’ hypothesis was consistent with previous findings (Clark & Tuffin, 2015).

In addition, based on previous research, the researchers hypothesized that those with high multiculturalism would also be more
likely to help someone in need, because individuals who are more individualistic are less likely to engage in cooperative behavior (Wagner, 1995), and because cooperative behavior tends to be stronger in collectivistic societies than in individualistic ones (Marcus & Le, 2013). The results for altruistic behavior were also significant. Participants who scored high on multicultural acceptance said they would donate considerably more money and hours per week to help someone in need.

There were some limitations in the study. The condition to which participants were exposed did not influence their decision to form relationships with members of an outgroup.

Priming strategies are used to activate one construct without the participant’s awareness of the prime. Previous researchers have used American images and Chinese images to prime their participants with either an individualistic (American) or collectivistic (Chinese) point of view (Hong et al., 2000); however, in our study, no significant main effect of the priming strategies used by the researchers was found.

Nevertheless, there was a marginal effect of the interaction between the multicultural prime and high multiculturalism, suggesting that those high in multicultural acceptance who were also primed with multicultural images were slightly more likely to be comfortable around those with diverse backgrounds compared to all other conditions. As mentioned before, there was no main effect found for the primes used. Participants that were exposed to the multicultural images did not differ from participants that were exposed to images of American icons; the images did not affect their decision to donate both time and money to someone in need.

One limitation of this study is that its sample size is relatively small and very limited. The participants were undergraduate students from UCSB, which might have had an impact on the study. For example, because it only consisted of college students, the sample may have been more liberal. Also, as a result of the median split, participants who scored a six were rated low in multiculturalism due to the generally high scores of participants on this scale, but in reality, scoring a six would mean that the participant has a fairly high acceptance of multiculturalism.

The priming strategies used had no significant effect on any of the three dependent variables, possibly because the images presented in the priming conditions were misinterpreted by some of the participants as religious rather than cultural. The misinterpretations could be avoided in future research by making the priming images better representations of multiculturalism.
Lastly, further research on multiculturalism should be conducted to have a broader understanding of the concept of multiculturalism and its relation to diversity and altruistic behaviors. This research should also be done in both a more diverse country and a less diverse one to make a comparison between the two populations.

Also, as noted previously, different priming strategies should be used so that the images more accurately represent multiculturalism, which might increase the possibility of obtaining significant results from the prime. Future research could explore the potential benefits of forming relationships with people of diverse, multicultural backgrounds. This research could be especially important considering our current situation in the United States, with the federal government focusing on making laws and policies that target immigrants and minorities. Research like this could have an impact on our society’s views and attitudes toward immigration.

About the Author
Paola is a first-generation college student from Goleta, California. She will be graduating from the University of California, Santa Barbara in Spring 2019. She is a graduate from Santa Barbara City College, holding an Associates Degree in Social and Behavioral Sciences Psychology. Currently, Ms. Rivera is a Psychology major with a minor in Spanish. Education is her life’s biggest passion, and she truly believes in the importance of education. As a result, she would like to pursue further education and eventually obtain a Masters Degree in Educational Psychology. Paola believes in the importance of research and its benefits and contributions to society. As a student of a research institution, she is determined to continue participating in research and apport her time and knowledge to the best of her abilities.
Works Cited


A Black Feminist Approach to Recreational Pole Dancing

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Abstract
This research examines why Black women pole dance and how their participation contributes to building self-confidence and self-efficacy. This study demonstrates how Black women resisted and created spaces for Black women to be empowered and see themselves represented within the pole community. This research explored the ways and to what extent Black women can explore their sexuality through pole dancing as they oppose societal perceptions of Black women as hypersexual beings. I analyzed whether academic literature on Black families aligned with how family members of Black pole dancers received and accepted their involvement.
Introduction

“Oh, you pole dance? ... So that means you’re a stripper? ... Can you do a little dance for me?” is the first response I receive from men after their astonishment and arousal passes from them hearing that I am a pole dancer. By the time I tell them that being a pole dancer is different from stripping, they are dumbfounded. Unable to grasp the idea that women use pole dancing to reject male objectification and to reclaim their sexuality, these men and some women claim that pole dancing and stripping are the same because strippers are sexual with a pole too.

As a young Black female pole dancer, I have encountered this situation many times and wonder why men and some women are convinced that I can only be a stripper on the pole. To distance myself from such hyper-sexualizations of my body, I further suppressed my own exploration of sexuality and sensuality by avoiding sexual forms of pole dance.

Without taking away from the hard work and physical and emotional labor of strippers and acknowledging that pole dancing originates from strip clubs, this research paper asks two things: Why is stripping given such a negative association and tied inherently to the image of the hypersexual Black female body and how do other Black women contest this negative image?

There is a long history of the sexual exploitation of black women. During slavery in the United States, white slave owners justified the rape and sexual assault of their Black female slaves under the assumption that they were “wanton creatures who were sexually immoral” and promiscuous, seen as fundamentally different from white women (Bell 2004: 372).

Thus, for white men and women to control Black women’s sexuality and the exploitation of their bodies, the image of the “Jezebel” became central to the portrayal of Black women during slavery. The Jezebel was framed as a “whore” or “sexually aggressive woman” having “excessive sexual appetites” which was used to justify the numerous sexual assaults on Black women (Collins 1990: 77). As Black women, the color of their skin alone served as an invitation for white men to sexually abuse them. However, they were also masculinized and “desexed” through image of the “Mammy.” The Mammy was depicted as an “unsuitable sexual partner for white men” because of her overweight and undesirable dark, African features (Collins 1990: 78). With whiteness as the standard of beauty, anything that negated from this standard was deemed ugly and barbaric. Furthermore, their bodies were hypersexualized: they were deemed simultaneously ugly and desirable.
In addition, Black women’s sexuality has been understood in relation to white women. White women represented the true cult of womanhood by their skin color and relegation to the home; therefore, Black women stood as the “antithesis of the American conception of beauty, femininity, and womanhood” (Hunter 1998: 520). Although white women’s sexuality has been historically repressed, the feminist movement in the United States has challenged women’s sexual agency and allowed them to freely explore their sexuality. In contrast, contemporary representations of Black women’s sexuality remain the same, which restricts Black women’s ability to explore their sexuality through different modes of expression, such as pole dancing. With the image of the mammy and jezebel salient, Black women struggle to be seen on the pole as someone who is desirable beyond the extent of their bodies.

My research examines why Black women do pole dancing and how their participation influences and impacts those around them. In addition, I ask in what ways and to what extent Black women explore their sexuality through pole dancing. I focus on Black women because the Black feminist movement has different origins and struggles from mainstream white feminism and because Black women have different lived experiences distinctly due to racism, classism, and sexism. My article offers some insight into the Black woman’s experience of sexual liberation through pole dancing.

**Literature Review**

Samantha Holland, a white research fellow scholar with a focus on gender and subcultures and author of *Pole Dancing, Empowerment, and Embodiment*, is one of few researchers who have researched pole dancing and examined the various elements of pole classes and images of pole dancing. Holland (2010) argued that pole classes have become spaces where “women initiate agency and espouse liberation, and sometimes physical empowerment” take place (p. 2).

Using a feminist ethnographic approach, her study offered an in-depth analysis of pole dancing by participating in pole classes and visiting strip clubs. Her research was extensive by interviewing participants in the United Kingdom and internationally, using online questionnaires and taking field notes. Although her book does an effective job of looking at various aspects of pole dancing, it was also lacking in several areas. Holland’s book only discusses race and diversity on four out of 187 pages. Her engagement with diversity was limited due to the lack of women of color that participated in her study. Her investigation of diversity remained surface level, only observing the demographics in pole classes and a
closer look at one South Asian and British Asian participants’ experiences and backgrounds (Holland 2010: 93-95).

Holland’s examination of race is insufficient and leaves the unique experiences of women of color, who are largely misrepresented in pole dancing, unexplored. My research seeks to bridge this gap by centering on the pole dancing experiences of Black women.

Scholars Mia Pellizzer, Marika Tiggemann, and Levina Clark have drawn from Holland’s research to examine pole dancing in Australia. As in Holland’s book, the demographics of their study lacked diversity, primarily focusing on white respondents. They argued that the relationship between “enjoyment of sexualization” and negative body image is not only a unidimensional construct of self-objectification, but also relates to embodiment which in turn relates to positive body images (Pellizzer, Tiggemann and Clark 2015: 35). Their study argues that “self-sexualizing behaviors,” those that present bodies and persons in a sexual manner, have the potential to offer positive benefits for women to have power over their bodies and create a sense of empowerment (Pellizzer et al. 2015: 36-7).

For recreational pole dancers, the enjoyment of sexualization is both positive and negative.

While recreational pole dancing produces confidence and positive body images among pole dancers, Pellizzer et al. (2015) also argued that this results in women basing their value on appearances and viewing their bodies as objects for consumption (p. 36). This view supports the notion that the enjoyment of sexualization can have negative consequences, suggesting that stripping could potentially have negative consequences as well, given that the profession involves being an object of consumption for economic exchange.

Although the authors state other negative outcomes of self-objectification relating to mental health issues and self-esteem problems, this definition does not consider a person’s agency in choosing to be an object of consumption and the sense of power and authority held in such positions. Nor does this study consider race, ethnicity, culturally valued body sizes, and other factors that affect perceptions of oneself and how others may positively view being an object of consumption.

This research addresses these issues by focusing on Black women’s agency and empowerment through recreational pole dancing. A Black feminist approach is best exemplified by the Combahee River Collective Manifesto (1986), which centers its commitment to combat major interlocking systems of oppression, like racism, heterosexism, and classism, to create a praxis that analyzes the multiple oppressions of women of color. A Black feminist approach values Black women and recognizes that their oppression is not
only against a patriarchal and male-centered society. By using a Black feminist approach to pole dancing, this study examines pole dancing through an intersectional lens that looks at the multidimensional racial and gendered construction of Black women. In addition, this paper offers a more-nuanced understanding of the relationship between women of color and recreational pole dancing, especially regarding sexual agency and expression. With Black feminist theorizing, these methods are able to "explore how ordinary Black women understand their social condition and by working with and through them to engender their will and agency as a force for social change" in the realm of pole dancing and sexuality (Radford-Hill 2000: xxii).

**Methods**

In order to recruit research participants, I gave out flyers to nine pole studios within Los Angeles County. Studios were selected based on a website search, where businesses explicitly stated or displayed that they are either a pole studio or have pole dancing classes. Flyers were also shared on social media platforms, including Facebook and Instagram.

The original study recruited female participants between the ages of 18 to 45 years of age who resided within Los Angeles County. Participants also had to self-identify as Black or African-American and have been recreationally pole dancing for at least six months. The extended study allowed for the inclusion of any self-identified Black or African-American women within the United States of America that was 18 years or older and had been recreationally pole dancing for six months or longer. Eleven participants participated in the study. Interviews took place over the span of January to February of 2019 from online platforms, including Skype, Zoom, and in-person. Three interviews were conducted in person and eight were done through online video or audio chat. Interviews were between thirty and seventy minutes in duration.

Respondents all self-identified as Black or African-American. Their ages ranged from 23 to 58 years, with most respondents falling within their late twenties and early thirties. Five respondents resided in California, two in Florida, and with the others living in Pennsylvania, Tennessee, North Carolina, and Georgia.

Interested participants had to fill out an online form that was posted on the flyer to confirm their age, how they racially identify, time spent doing pole dancing, and general location. Participants were given the option of using a pseudonym. The form also included information suggesting possible in-person interview times and dates.

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1 I received URCA funding for my grant proposal and Human Subjects Approval for this research study.
and an alternative option to do an online interview. The interview was initiated with questions asking why the participant started pole dancing, their favorite part about pole dancing, what pole dancing has offered them, and if their perceptions of the pole have changed over time. My questions then followed more specific topics of race that included whether participants had been treated differently by their race or believed that pole dancing was experienced differently among racial categories. Final questions focused on family perceptions and support of the participant’s involvement with pole dancing.

Discussion

The results suggested that eight out of eleven participants felt that their racialized gender affected their relationship to and/or experience of pole dancing. Five participants talked about body size or image during the interview, and some explained that body size played a bigger role than race in their experience with pole dancing. In addition, eight participants reported positive overall receptions of immediate family members to pole dancing. However, two respondents stated that their immediate family did not know, while one had both positive and negative reactions from immediate family members. Several respondents came from conservative, Christian backgrounds or similar religious traditions.

The way in which respondents discussed their relationship to pole dancing suggests that it has become a unique form of healing for Black women. Many respondents expressed that pole dancing did more than just give them confidence or an avenue to express their sexuality, as Holland (2010) and Pellizer et al. (2015) argue, but, rather, acts as a bridge for these women to get in touch with their bodies. For Michelle, a 41-year-old woman who had been dancing for almost one year, the cultural pressures that told her how to view her body are contested by the way in which she viewed pole dancing as a humbling process.

“Having the choice of, okay, are you going to appreciate your body right now today for what it can do? Are you going to be mad that you can’t do the thing that the other girl can do it at the next pole over? Um, and so having to make that choice of like, so you can be thankful to your body today and say, oh, thank you for stretching this way and bending this way and doing this thing...I always have to choose to be proud of what my body can do...to keep working on whatever it is, keep connecting...in some ways that like forces me out of the self-hatred, body-hatred
and shame that culture gives us...I can choose to hate myself more. But why? And for what?"

People of different ages come into pole dancing with various physical strength levels and previous backgrounds in dance or gymnastics. Since pole is an activity where competition and ability are measured against oneself rather than against others, pole dancers must learn that they cannot compare themselves to others. The healing and mending of pole dance extend beyond connecting the individual with oneself, but also to one’s relation to the world. For Makeda, a 58-year-old pole dancer of eight years, pole dancing revitalized her spirit and connection to the earth:

“Pole dancing has given me my divine feminine-inity back and has heightened it and turned me into a superwoman, a super divine feminine priestess temple goddess. Pole dancing has awakened me to who I am and who I was.... pole dancing has put me in alignment with mother earth because she spins and I spin with her when I’m on the pole...pole dancing is a sacred art. We as women used to gather in temples and dance and move and sing to nurture each other and now we go to pole dance studios and dance studios and we dance and sing and move around to music and nurture each other.”

Makeda’s notion of healing is understood in relation to the ways that Black women’s bodies have been hypersexualized. For all the participants, pole dancing provided confidence and the ability to own their bodies. Given the history of Black women not having agency over their bodies, pole dancing serves to mend this historical wound and restore a sense of power.

Makeda’s final remarks offer that pole dancing has also opened her ability to connect with other women. Likewise, other respondents talked about the ways in which pole studios contained pole communities and referred to the community as a family. Moreover, these women built strong friendships with others in their studio and found a space that was encouraging, loving, and safe.2

Contrary to original expectations when designing this project, respondents reported that they received support overall from immediate and or extended family members. Parental reactions ranged from being indifferent to enthusiastic support of their daughter in the form of attending showcases to participating in trying to do

2 In this context, I refer to safe as a space that is free of judgement. Interviews did not go into depth on whether participants’ studios were co-ed or not. The inclusion or exclusion of men from these spaces may have influenced how participants viewed the space.
a pole trick. Immediate familial support was especially solidified through a parent’s responses to other family members’ negative reactions. For example, Taylor, a 24-year-old, recalls how her mother quickly responded to family friend’s perceptions of her during a phone call:

“This somebody I knew like growing up calls my mom and says, ‘what the hell has gotten into your daughter? Um, what does she think she is, a stripper?’ My mom, my mom is awesome. She says, ‘Are you really calling me asking about my grown daughter’s business?’

Taylor’s mother continued to express her disapproval of the person’s feelings of entitlement to condemn her daughter. Her mother’s reply reflected that she not only respected Taylor’s maturity and ability to make her own decisions, but also that she did not feel that outsiders should be able to criticize and impose their personal feelings and assumptions on her or her daughter. Even for other families, the parents felt and shared the importance of pole dancing for their daughters. For example, Bree, a 28-year-old pole dancer of over two years, explains her parents support of her pole dancing:

“They’re supportive of it. My mom, when we launched the blog [about pole dancing], was like crying and was like saying how like I really changed her perception of pole because she, yeah, she thought of it only one way as well. But like seeing all the work that we’ve done with the blog and like how much we love it. Like she’s like, it’s just amazing to her and she’s even come to like pole class with me and stuff and then she’ll come like if I have like a pole party, like she’ll come and then my dad has said, he was like, ‘Well I have no choice but to look at it different now cause my daughter is doing it.’ So I think even for him, he’s like, yeah, like kind of try to see it differently.”

Respondents’ participation in recreational pole dancing forced some families to change their ways of thinking and viewing pole dancing. As a result, many parents were able to see pole dancing as something more than the dominant image of stripping. This shift in understanding is significant to note among the respondents’ fathers because of the sexualized associations of pole dancing to stripping. Fathers, like Bree’s dad, negotiated previous beliefs of pole dancing, although many displayed signs of awkwardness
or discomfort over seeing their daughters do more exotic styles of pole dance.

Although a majority of the respondents’ family members were supportive, three respondents expressed mixed reactions from family members or stated that they had not told their family. Among the respondents who had not told their family or received mixed reactions, many pointed to religion and conservative values as the reason. Evelyn expressed that “pole dancing does not align with Christian values,” which accounted for some of the pushback from family. This reasoning coincides with the other two respondents’ decision to not share their activities with family members. Especially for Rhea, the role of religion from a West Indian context had created a more intense tension. Out of all respondents, Rhea’s family appeared to be the most closely tied to traditional religious values, although other respondents identified their family upbringing as somewhat similar in conservative values.

Even for respondents who do not identify with a religious background, they commented on the role of religion within the Black community. Bree, a non-religious respondent stated:

“Just tradition, culture, society. I mean if you see a Black woman being sexual in the media, it’s usually she’s in a strip club, she’s shaking her ass or she’s a hoe or she’s getting raped on TV or something like that. So you don’t really see a lot of images of like positive sexual representation of Black women expressing themselves, sexually embracing themselves sexually. Then you have culture that tells you pole dancing is devil worship, you know, having sex and demonic, you know, like it’s evil. So you have that like cultural side of things. Um, from a traditional standpoint.”

In this statement, Bree references Black religious culture. Bree highlights an important point that exists in religious contexts and within Black culture: controlling images of Black women’s sexuality within society and the Black community. Within both spheres, Black women’s sexuality has been routinely policed and scrutinized if they deviate from respectability politics (White 2001). Even though religion and Black culture continue to express the same sentiment, this cultural expectation did not permeate as deeply into how family members responded to and accepted these women doing pole dancing.

While my research questions were focused on discussions of race, roughly half of the respondents talked about body size and im-
age as being a defining aspect in their pole dance journey. Within the pole community, the presentation of body types doing pole dancing is limited to slender, white bodies. For “curvy girls,” a term expressed by Ebony Nitro, a 37-year-old pole dancer of eight years, very few curvy girls are well-known in the pole world and even fewer are instructors or students of pole classes. Both Lana, a 26-year-old pole dancer of two years, and Michelle posed the notion of body type as being a more pressing issue than race. For Michelle, like the other respondents who discussed body size, she found it more challenging to see her body type represented and accommodated for in the studio:

“Maybe even more than race, body type as an issue. Like, I did check before I went to the studio to see if they had any kind of big girls, ‘cause I would, I consider myself plus size, um, pretty solidly a size 14, sometimes 16. Um, and so, um, I wanted to know there were big women...but I do get frustrated sometimes because I feel like there isn’t an accommodation. I just do my own accommodations being a bigger person. But I sometimes feel like that’s not as taken into account... And the way I deal with it is my Instagram feed. Like the people I follow on Instagram, I’ve basically only follow plussize, women of color, um, and older polers. Those are probably, those are like my main criteria to follow you on it.”

Especially for building a sense of empowerment, seeing one’s body type represented in class and online is important. However, large women are largely underrepresented. Images of women in the pole industry typically promote young, slim, athletic/muscular white women. This marginalizes women of color and women of various body types from being represented in pole dancing, which many women contend is troubling. Despite this setback, women like Michelle have creatively made new ways to see themselves represented in the pole community by using social media filtering. Other respondents had also filtered their social media accounts so that only pole dancers that represented their body type, age, and race could be accessible. This filtering out process resists dominant images and, instead, creates an alternative vision of what pole dancing may look like for these women. Going further, Makeda, Bree, and Evelyn, have all taken agency and contributed to re-visioning pole dancing through hashtags, blogs, and Instagram pages that are meant for Black women. By moving beyond online spaces that are dominated by one image of pole dancers, these women have made new spaces for Black women and other
groups of pole dancers to feel empowered by building a community that represents and reflects them.

**Conclusion**

My results contradicted my original expectation that family receptions to pole dancing would be negative. Academic literature has supported views of the conservative Black family, especially in relation to the “politics of respectability”, a term coined in 1993 by Afro-American Studies Professor, Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, to talk about Black women’s occupation with preserving respectability within the race. Historian E. Frances White (2001) talks about Higginbotham’s analysis of the politics of respectability as an explanation for the notion that a “politically active woman was consonant with a respectable black woman; it was her duty to uplift the race” (p. 36).

Image 1: Here is a visual example of empowerment from pole dancing by Ebonynitro, one of this study’s participants.

With the Black family being intrinsically tied to the values expressed by Black churches, respectability politics hold Black women accountable to resist behaviors and actions that may perpetuate negative racial stereotypes. Other literature also assumes that the display and objectification of Black women’s bodies in strip clubs and rap videos means that “Black women [have] allowed the white women to be the opposite: Black ‘whores’ make white ‘virgin’” possible” (Collins 1990: 176). Since pole dancing is oftentimes seen as stripping, it becomes problematic for those who attempt do recreational pole dancing. Although some respondents had family members who held a “white gaze” over others within the
family to deter and oppose so-called deviant behavior that would hurt “the race,” many parents did not hold onto this view.

Furthermore, my findings support my expectation that women would discuss positive aspects of pole dancing around the enjoyment of sexualization theory. The positive aspects for the Black women in this study extend beyond the ones stated by Pellizzer et al. (2016). In fact, the benefits to self-sexualizing behaviors tap into what Black feminist Audre Lorde (1978) calls “the erotic” (p. 87). “The erotic” refers to a “resource within each of us that lies in a deeply female and spiritual plane, firmly rooted in the power of our unexpressed or unrecognized feelings” (Lorde 1978: 87). For Black female pole dancers, pole dancing has given women the opportunity to access “the erotic” and empower themselves from a strength held within.

As a result, participants gained not only confidence, but also the opportunity to mend the severed gap between their “erotic” and their body and begin the healing process of the body through pole dancing. My findings are significant to developing a more nuanced understanding of pole dancing and the potential benefits that it offers for Black women and other women of color. This study contributes to research on recreational pole dancing by extending it to include discussions of race and embodiment in relation to women’s experiences with pole dancing.

Future research should explore how pole dancing affects other women of color, queer people, and men. Since pole dancing has attachments to femininity, further research should explore how and queer people navigate masculinity and/or femininity in these spaces. Women of color, queer people, and men are all sexualized in different ways, which may influence their experience to pole dancing.

In conclusion, pole dancing is more than a “little dance” meant to entertain others. My research is important because of its contribution to race in discussions of sexuality and sexual liberation for women with pole dancing. The pole has previously symbolized Black women’s economic status, sexual aggression and objectification, and moral status. Today, pole dancing has become a reinvigoration for Black women to have sexual agency and to embrace their bodies. Throughout time, Black women’s bodies have been reduced to sexual objects for exploitation and consumption.

As a form of resistance to this controlling image of Black female sexuality and their bodies, Black women have reclaimed the pole to serve a new function. Pole dancing has become a way for Black bodies to be a representation of power, of confidence, and of healing. Black women have used pole dancing to create
a new image of the Black women—one of beauty, self-love and inner-strength.

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About the Author
Brianna Robinson is an undergraduate student at the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) majoring in Sociology with a minor in Feminist Studies. I will graduate in spring 2019 and plan on possibly pursuing a master’s degree in public policy or law. I have been doing pole dancing for over a year and hope that this research helps to dissipate stereotypes and presumptions of pole dancing. As a Black woman, I did this research because I had done a paper over summer on pole dancing and could only find research on Black strippers, but not Black pole dancers. This research serves to see myself and others like me represented in academic literature and expand perceptions of Black women being only strippers.
Works Cited


Investigating the Potential of Interactive Digital Learning Tools

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to compare the efficacy of two learning methods: the traditional slideshow method of disseminating information (control group) versus the usage of guided digital simulations (experimental group). Two hypotheses are proposed: interactivity hypothesis and distraction hypothesis. The distraction hypothesis predicts that the control group will learn better while the interactivity hypothesis predicts that the experimental group will learn better. The results showed no significant difference between the groups on transfer-scores, and the control group rated the learning activity as more enjoyable and easier than did the experimental group. The results partially support the distraction hypothesis.
Introduction

Objective and Rationale

Over the past 200 years, the education system and methods employed by institutions to train students have evolved concurrently with the technological revolution. As a result, many of the educational tools employed by schools and universities tend to rely heavily on the use of technology. One of the most common methods of teaching is the traditional lecture method, in which instructors often use digital media in the form of slideshow presentations. However, recent findings in the field of educational psychology demonstrate alternative methods of employing digital media to disseminate academic information to students, using methods such as games and digital simulations (Mayer & Moreno, 2001; Mayer, 2014a).

The purpose of this study is to investigate interactive methods of instruction, specifically the efficacy of hands-on, guided digital simulations, compared to traditional passive slideshow methods of instruction. According to the interactivity theory, the interactive nature of guided simulations, compared to the passive nature of slideshows, allows students to learn information more deeply and enjoyably. On the other hand, according to distraction theory, the hands-on approach could introduce distraction in the form of extraneous processing and cognitive load, which could take away from the learning experience. In this study, participants were given a lesson on electrical circuits and Ohm’s law. Two groups were randomly administered one of the two different methods of instruction compared in this study. Though both groups received the same information, the experimental group was administered the hands-on digital simulation, whereas the control group received a slideshow. In order to test for learning outcome, a transfer test was administered, containing questions pertaining to Ohm’s law.

Literature Review

The use of multimedia instruction has potential to help students better engage with academic material and learn new information (Honey & Hilton, 2011; Mayer, 2009, 2014b). For example, a study done by Moreno and Mayer (2001) showed that introduction of interactive pedagogical agents can promote meaningful learning in lessons using multimedia. In some ways, a guided digital simulation can function as an interactive pedagogical agent by inviting the learner to more actively participate. According to a meta-analysis done by Vogel and Vogel (2006) about computer games and interactive simulations for learning, “Across people and situations, games and interactive simulations are more dominant for cognitive gain outcomes.” Thus, research is needed to determine
whether digital simulations can be used in a similar way as games, resulting in similar cognitive and learning outcomes. However, using digital media without any guidance might not be an effective method of learning.

Results from a previous study done by Mayer and Moreno (2005) regarding the effects of guidance in a digital media learning study “support the appropriate use of guidance and reflection for interactive multimedia games.” This study also showed that interactivity with the proposed learning material is the factor that improves learning and retention rates. In addition, application of the self-explanation principle—asking students to explain the material to themselves—in the guided simulation also helped students better retain information (Johnson & Mayer, 2010).

The competing theory in this study is the distraction theory, which proposes that due to additional extraneous processing, a type of “cognitive processing that does not support the learning objective and is caused by poor instructional design” (Mayer, 2010), the guided simulation will detract from the learning objective. This negative effect on learning may occur because the guided simulation would require a higher cognitive cost, including using a new interface, that could distract the learner from the core material.

**Theory and Predictions**

Based on the literature review in the previous section, the interactivity hypothesis proposed in this study argues that due to an active and hands-on approach to learning, individuals who attempt to learn via guided digital simulations will retain more information, indicating a better learning experience, and enjoy the activity more than those who learn passively through a slideshow. On the other hand, the distraction hypothesis proposed in this study argues that due to an increase in extraneous processing and cognitive load, the participants who learn through the guided digital simulation will retain less information, indicating a worse learning experience, and provide less favorable ratings of the activity than those who learn passively through a slideshow. In order to test both hypotheses, participants were randomly assigned to one of two groups: the digital simulation group (experimental) or the slideshow presentation group (control). The subject material was Ohm’s law and the simple workings of electrical circuits. The digital simulation group was given a worksheet that not only acted as an instructional guide to direct the participants in building and measuring circuits, but also contained prompts for participants to predict what would happen to the flow of the circuit prior to creating it, measure the change in current, and reflect on why they think the flow changed. On the other hand, the control group was only given a slideshow presentation that contained pre-made screen-recorded videos of
the researcher constructing the circuits using the same instructional tools and process that the guided digital simulation would use, followed by slides summarizing the videos in words. After the learning activity, both groups were administered a transfer test to measure how well they had learned the information presented in the activities, along with a self-rating questionnaire.

**Method**

**Participants and Design**

The participants were 69 undergraduate students recruited from the psychology subject pool at the University of California, Santa Barbara. The students were between the ages of 18 and 25 (M = 18.5, SD = 1.12), studying in various majors, but the majority of participants were psychology, biopsychology, or psychological and brain sciences majors. There were 19 men and 50 women. On average, participants showed low prior knowledge about circuitry and physics based on a participant questionnaire (described below).

This study was conducted using a between-subjects design with two groups: a control group (n = 34, 11 men and 23 women) and an experimental group (n = 35, 8 men and 27 women).

**Materials and Apparatus**

**Paper materials**

The paper materials consisted of an informed consent form, a participant questionnaire, a transfer test, and a post-questionnaire. The participant questionnaire contained questions about the participant’s age, gender, major, and year in school, along with a prior-knowledge assessment. A prior-knowledge score was obtained by assigning values to each question and adding up the values. The sum of values obtained from questions 1–6 yielded a subjective prior-knowledge score, intended to create an indication of each participant’s prior knowledge of the learning material involved in this study.

The transfer test contained eight questions in the form of eight slides, each with two circuits displayed (see Figure 1). In order to judge the amount of information the participant learned, a transfer score (ranging from 0 to 8) was determined by adding up all of the correct answers in the transfer test. The set of eight test items is shown in Appendix A.

The post-questionnaire was used to solicit each participant’s opinions about their learning experience. It contained five questions in which participants were asked to give ratings on a 5-point scale for the following items: (1) How much did you enjoy this learning process (1 – not at all, 5 - loving it)? (2) Would you do a similar activity
again (1 - not at all, 5 - definitely)? (3) During the lessons, my mental effort was (1 - 0% mental effort, 5 - 100% mental effort) (4) How difficult was the lesson (1 - easy and 5 - impossible)? (5) How easy was it for you to learn the material (1 - easy and 5 - impossible)?

Instructional materials

The instructional materials used in this study consisted of a slide-show presentation (for the control group), a guided worksheet (for the experimental group), and a virtual Phet AC/DC Circuit Kit Lab Simulation created at the University of Colorado, Boulder (also for the experimental group; https://phet.colorado.edu/en/simulation/circuitconstruction-kit-dc-virtual-lab).

The experimental group subjects were given the digital simulation and a guided worksheet that contained instructions on how to construct five circuits using the Phet AC/DC Circuit Kit Lab Simulation (see Figure 2). The exercises were designed to teach participants how the flow of electricity in a circuit is affected when batteries and resistors are added to the circuit in series or parallel, based on Ohm’s Law. Each exercise also prompted the participant to measure the change in current (amps) using an ammeter. The virtual lab simulation and the experimental group worksheet administered simultaneously created a guided simulation. The set of worksheets is shown in Appendix B.

The control group subjects were given a PowerPoint presentation consisting of eight informational slides explaining how the flow of electricity in a circuit is affected when batteries and resistors are added to the circuit in series or parallel. Before each slide, a video was shown of the circuit being constructed in the PHET simulation (see Figure 3), which was followed by a slide explaining in words the concept covered in the video (see Figure 4). The videos were screen recordings (captured by the researcher) of the circuits being constructed on the lab simulation site, guided directly by the instructions in the experimental group worksheet. The screen-recording program “Movavi Screen Recorder Studio 10” was used to create the videos displayed in the slideshow. The set of eight slides is shown in Appendix C.

The purpose of the instructional material was to teach participants about eight different rules regarding circuits, based on Ohm’s Law: (1) When a battery is added in series, the flow of electrons (amps) increases. (2) When a battery is added in parallel, the flow of electrons (amps) stays the same. (3) When a resistor is added in series, the flow of electrons (amps) decreases. (4) When a resistor is added in parallel, the flow of electrons (amps) increases. (5) When a battery is removed from series, the flow of electrons (amps) decreases. (6) When a battery is removed from parallel, the flow of electrons (amps) stays the same. (7) When a resistor is removed...
from series, the flow of electrons (amps) increases. (8) When a resistor is removed from parallel, the flow of electrons (amps) decreases.

The apparatus consisted of three 21-inch iMac computers, each including a keyboard and mouse.

**Procedure**

Participants were tested in groups of three, with each participant seated in a separate cubicle consisting of two opaque walls on either side, with a 21-inch iMac computer, a keyboard, and mouse on the desk in front of them. Each group of participants was randomly assigned to either the control group or the experimental group. After participants signed the informed consent form, they were prompted to complete and turn in the participant questionnaire. Next, the slideshow was presented to the control group. Each participant viewed the slideshow independently on separate computers. Participants were asked to study the videos in the slides as well as the text explaining each video in subsequent slides. The experimental group was prompted to open the simulation and follow the instructions on the guided worksheet in order to construct the circuits. Although the groups were timed, they were instructed to take as much time as needed to learn the information and finish the activities.

After the slideshow or worksheet was completed, the activity materials were closed, and the participants were given the transfer test. Once participants completed the transfer test, they were administered the post-questionnaire. The control group took an average of 5 to 10 minutes to complete the slideshow, while the experimental group took an average of 15 to 25 minutes to complete the guided simulation and worksheet. It took the participants an average of 5 to 10 minutes to complete the transfer test. IRB approval was obtained and guidelines for treatment of human subjects were followed throughout the experiment.

**Results**

**Do the Groups Differ on Basic Characteristics?**

A preliminary step was to determine whether the groups were equivalent on basic characteristics. The mean ages of participants in the experimental group ($M = 18.86, SD = 1.38$) did not differ significantly from the mean ages of participants in the control group ($M = 18.68, SD = 0.88; t(67) = 0.65, p = 0.52$). The proportion of men and women in the experimental group (8 males, 27 females) was not significantly different than the proportion of men and women in the control group (11 males, 23 females) based on a Fisher’s exact test ($p = 0.43$). The mean prior-knowledge score for the exper-
imental group ($M = 5.83$, $SD = 2.96$) was significantly greater than the mean prior-knowledge score for the control group ($M = 7.76$, $SD = 4.62$; $t(67) = -2.08$, $p = 0.04$, $d = 0.37$). We concluded that the groups were equivalent on basic characteristics except for prior knowledge, so we included prior knowledge as a covariate in subsequent analyses.

**Do the Groups Differ on Learning Outcomes?**

According to the interactivity hypothesis, the experimental group should score higher on the transfer test than the control group; according to the distraction hypothesis, the control group should score higher on the transfer test than the experimental group. Table 1 shows the means and standard deviations for the two groups on the transfer test. A $t$-test showed that the groups did not differ significantly on transfer test scores ($t(67) = -1.03$, $p = 0.31$, $d = 0.25$). In order to compensate for pre-existing differences in prior-knowledge score, we conducted an analysis of covariance on transfer score with prior knowledge as a covariate and control or experimental group as the between-subjects factor. The ANCOVA statistical analysis (analysis of covariance) showed that the two groups did not differ significantly on transfer score ($F(66) = 0.36$, $p = 0.54$), indicating that the differences found in prior knowledge did not affect our results. We concluded that the predictions of the interactivity hypothesis were not supported.

**Did the Groups Differ on Self-Reported Measures?**

According to the interactivity hypothesis, the experimental group should produce more favorable ratings on the post-questionnaire than the control group, but according to the distraction hypothesis, the opposite should hold true. Table 2 shows the mean ratings and standard deviations for the two groups on each of the five post-questionnaire items. The first question asked the participant to rate how much they enjoyed learning from the activity. Results from a $t$-test showed that the control group enjoyed learning from the activity more than the experimental group ($t(67) = -2.02$, $p = 0.03$, $d = 0.53$). The second question asked the participant to rate how likely they would be to do similar activities in the future. Results from a $t$-test showed that the groups did not differ significantly in their likelihood to do similar activities in the future ($t(67) = -1.25$, $p = 0.22$, $d = 0.31$). The third question asked the participant to rate how well they thought the activity helped them learn. Results from a $t$-test showed that the groups did not differ significantly in how well they thought the activity helped them learn ($t(67) = -1.75$, $p = 0.09$, $d = 0.42$). The fourth question assessed the participant’s level of mental effort during the activity. Results from a $t$-test showed that the groups did not differ significantly in their level of mental effort during the activity ($t(67) = 0.83$, $p = 0.41$, $d = 0.20$). The fifth
question asked the participant to rate the difficulty of the activity. Results from a t-test showed that the control group thought that the learning activity was easier than did the experimental group ($t(67) = 2.98, p = 0.00, d = 0.72$). Overall, post-questionnaire test results showed that the control group perceived their lesson to be easier, while the experimental group perceived their lesson to be more difficult. Additionally, the control group enjoyed the lesson more than the experimental group did.

**Discussion**

**Empirical Contributions**

The results obtained do not provide statistically significant evidence that a guided digital learning simulation is a more effective learning tool than the traditional slideshow experience. In addition, results showed that the control group found the task to be easier and more enjoyable. One possible explanation for these results is that the control group is administered a passive learning experience that requires less time and effort than the experimental group’s activity, making it a more enjoyable and easier experience.

**Theoretical Implications**

The results provide partial support for the distraction hypothesis. Based on the predictions from the interactivity hypothesis, the experimental group should have performed better on the transfer test; however, the control group performed slightly better on the test than the experimental group did, albeit at a nonsignificant level. In turn, the results of the self-report ratings support the distraction hypothesis and suggest that the experimental group may have been distracted by the complexities of the media apparatus.

The argument can be made that the high level of initial cognitive cost in learning digital protocol prior to accessing the learning material may introduce cognitive load, possibly decreasing the efficacy of the digital learning activity (Sweller, Ayers, & Kalyuga, 2011). The cognitive load, which would be introduced by the hands-on digital simulation and guided activity, is absent in the traditional slideshow learning method, which could be the reason for the improved ratings and performance of the control group. The cognitive cost associated with learning the digital protocol during this experiment could have been mitigated with a digital pretraining session for the experimental group, so the participants would be familiar with the apparatus prior to learning the actual instructional material contained in the guided simulation.
Practical Implications

Although the results from this study are inconclusive, the use of multimedia and games in education could be impactful in making the learning experience more interesting and attractive to students. Due to the passive nature of learning from a slideshow presentation during a lecture, many students are often distracted by their own electronic devices, like mobile phones and computers. As a result, students may not engage with the information in this traditional manner of learning. By introducing effective hands-on multimedia learning strategies, the education system can optimize the educational experience for students by actively engaging them in learning. Research, however, is needed to determine how to design effective interactive simulations.

Limitations and Future Directions

Since the transfer test was administered immediately after the learning task was completed, it is possible that the control group invoked working memory, rather than long-term memory, to complete the transfer test, which would not be a true measure of retained learning. Administration of a ten-minute distraction task to both groups after completing the learning activity could prompt participants to clear the caches of their working memory, therefore making the transfer test a better measure of learning outcome. Due to time limitations, we were unable to implement these methods in this study. In addition, the time frame of this research project limited the number of subjects that were able to participate. Based on the results and explanations of this study, several relevant research ideas could be explored. One major concept that could be researched is the amount of cognitive load required to learn novel educational digital media protocols. For example, assessing how much cognitive effort is required to learn the digital protocols in this study prior to the lesson material itself might reveal complexities of the digital protocols that may be contributing to the distraction. Studying methods of optimizing guided lab simulations may allow students to learn a variety of topics in further depth.

Conclusion

While the results of this study did not prove the interactivity hypothesis, it could be due to the various limitations of the study; therefore, additional investigation into the field of hands-on multimedia learning is necessary to yield more conclusive results. Digital media has the potential to revolutionize the learning process by creating immersive learning experiences that could help students deeply learn information in a practical manner while truly enjoying the process, thus enabling students to excel in learning throughout their lives.
About the Author

Chinmay Surpur is a graduating senior with an honors degree in Biopsychology as well as departmental honors in the department of Psychology and Brain Sciences for the completion of his senior thesis project. Chinmay is extremely passionate about research, especially in the field of psychology. He is hoping to pursue a PhD degree in Clinical Psychology with an emphasis on Addiction. Aside from conducting research, Chinmay loves to listen to hip-hop, watch a good series on Netflix, or work on his various side projects.
Works Cited


Table 1  
Mean Transfer Scores (and Standard Deviations) for Experimental and Control Groups

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<th>Group</th>
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<th>SD</th>
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<tr>
<td>Control</td>
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Table 2  
Mean Ratings (and Standard Deviations) on Five Items for the Experimental and Control Groups

<table>
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<th>Control Group</th>
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</table>
Figure 1. Transfer-of-training test sample question.

Figure 2. Circuit construction exercise sample.
Connecting Batteries in Series – Video

Figure 3. Instructional video slide sample.

Connecting Batteries in Series – Summary

When you add a battery in series to an existing circuit, the current (amps) is doubled.

Figure 4. Text description slide sample.
Appendix A

The transfer test questions were displayed as eight separate pages in a packet, displayed in order below.

1.

2.

3.

4.
Appendix B

The experimental group worksheet contained five pages with instructions to construct the circuits in order to learn Ohm’s law, displayed in order below.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.
Appendix C

The control group slideshow contained nine slides with a video showing a circuit being constructed followed by a slide explaining the video, in order to teach Ohm's law. The slides are displayed in order below.
Connecting Batteries in Series – Summary

When you add a battery in series to an existing circuit, the current (amps) is doubled.
Connecting Batteries in Parallel – Summary

When you add a battery in parallel to an existing circuit, the current (amps) is unchanged.

Connecting Resistors in Series – Video

Connecting Resistors in Series – Summary

When you add a resistor (lightbulb) in series to an existing circuit, the current (amps) is reduced.
Connecting Resistors in Parallel – Summary

When you add a resistor (lightbulb) in parallel to an existing circuit, the current (amps) is increased.
Impact of Ethnic Studies Pedagogy on Latinx Student Achievement

Jose Tapia
Chicanx Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara

Abstract
Latinx students currently make up a large portion of the K-12 student population in the U.S. Because the Latinx population is the fastest-growing ethnic minority in the U.S., it is critical to address the persistent educational achievement gap between Latinx students and White students, or the future of the U.S. economy will suffer. Many scholars in the field of educational studies have suggested including more culturally relevant pedagogy in K-12 education. Culturally relevant ethnic studies have been shown to boost academic success and student engagement among K-12 Latinx students, but more research must be done. This study examines the impact of an ethnic studies course, Mexican-American Literature, on a Latinx student in a Southern California high school and compares this to the narrative of a student who has never taken an ethnic studies course. The results show that both students believe that ethnic studies pedagogy can effectively improve student classroom engagement in K-12 education. The student in Mexican-American Literature expressed feeling more engaged in this class than in most of the other classes in his K-12 experience, and the other student expressed that she would have wanted to learn about her history and culture.
Introduction
Latinx students currently make up 26% of the K-12 student population in the U.S. (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). In California, 54% of the student population is Latinx (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). Perez et al. (2015) report that the Latinx population continues to be the fastest growing ethnic minority group in the US. Unfortunately, the growth in baccalaureate attainment among Latinx students is not keeping pace with this statistic. The level of educational attainment among Latinx students continues to lag behind that of White students and other ethnic groups. For instance, in 2014, 75% of White people 25 years or older obtained a bachelor’s degree, compared to only 6% of Latinxs. That same year, 80% of White students graduated from high school, compared to only 54% of Latinx students (Perez, et al., 2015). There will be serious consequences to the U.S. economy if the Latinx population does not receive adequate academic preparation and career training. In California alone, nearly 2 million jobs will be unfilled by 2030 if Latinx educational underachievement persists (Excelencia Report, 2018).

Researchers have suggested the need for culturally relevant pedagogy in U.S. K-12 schools as a way to help close the achievement gap (De los Rios, et. al, 2014). Scholars argue that ethnic studies courses can boost classroom engagement and encourage positive attitudes toward school among K-12 Latinx students. In turn, better engagement will boost academic success. Ethnic studies is defined as curricula that centers around the socio-historical perspectives of ethnic minorities by emphasizing multiculturalism, community activism, social justice, intersectionality, personal narratives, and Critical Race Theory (Perez et al., 2015). The purpose of this interview study is to examine the impact of an ethnic studies course on student engagement. Therefore, two in-depth semi-structured narrative interviews with local Latinx high school students were conducted. The first interviewee participated in an ethnic studies course and the second did not.

Literature Review
Impact of Ethnic Studies on K-12 Latinx Students
Multiple researchers have shown that ethnic studies pedagogy can help Latinx high school students significantly increase their school attendance and their grades. For example, researchers from Stanford University partnered with the San Francisco Unified School District, which has a 26% Latinx student pop-
ulation, to launch an ethnic studies pilot program in four high schools (SFUSD School Site List and Summary, 2015). The researchers tracked 1,400 ninth graders enrolled in the ethnic studies program for the entire school year and found that the participants increased their attendance by 21% and improved their GPAs by an average of 1.4 points (Dee & Penner, 2017).

Furthermore, Altschul, Oyserman, and Bybee (2006) tracked 41 Latinx students in three Detroit middle schools over the span of two years. The researchers interviewed the students about their ethnic identity and monitored their academic outcomes. On average, the students’ grades dropped as they moved from middle school to high school, but the grades of students with strong self-reported ethnic-identity pride dropped the least. This is critical because ethnic studies courses have been shown to instill ethnic pride in K-12 Latinx students (Perez et al., 2015).

Additionally, ethnic studies courses have been found to boost Latinx students’ performance on standardized tests. Cammarota and Romero (2009) demonstrated that Chicanx students enrolled in the Social Justice Education Project, an ethnic studies program at Cerro High School in Tucson, Arizona, significantly outscored White students on state standardized tests. Among the participants, 34 out of 36 students passed the reading exam, 35 out of 36 passed the writing exam, and 27 out of 36 passed the math exam. In personal interviews, the students consistently credited the ethnic studies program for their academic success. Also, Cabrera, Millem, and Marx (2014) sampled 26,022 Tucson Unified School District (TUSD) high school students, 80% of which were Latinx. The researchers determined that students enrolled in TUSD’s Mexican-American Studies program were more likely to pass the standardized tests than students who were not in the program.

Furthermore, Latinx students in ethnic studies programs are more likely to graduate from high school. Chicanx students in the Social Justice Education Program at Cerros High School attained graduation rates exceeding those of their White peers: 95% compared to 84% (Camarota & Romero, 2009). Cabrera et al. (2014) also found that Chicanx students were much more likely to graduate high school if they were enrolled in Mexican-American Studies classes.

Ethnic studies can also enhance literacy skills among Latinx students. Gay (2010) examined the effects of the Multicultural Literacy Program, which emphasized diverse authors, on students in grades K–8 in Ypsilanti, Michigan. The student population in this area is largely non-White and includes a 4% Latinx population. Through classroom observations and analyzing students’ work, the researcher found that students showed improvements in knowledge of various writing forms and structures, vocabulary, reading
comprehension, reading fluency, and writing proficiency. Similarly, Morrell, Duenas, Garcia, and Lopez (2013) showed that students at Wilson High School in Los Angeles, where 92% of students are Latinx, improved their writing skills when their teachers approached their English classes using ethnic studies pedagogy (U.S. News & World Report, 2016).

Morell et al. (2013) revealed that students in classes that implemented ethnic studies pedagogy developed more positive student-teacher relationships and felt more engaged in the classroom. One Wilson High School teacher indicated that this style of teaching allowed her to “better understand her students and create a classroom environment that is welcoming.” In fact, students feel more welcome and engaged in the classroom if the material is culturally relevant in terms of themes and content (Gay, 2010).

De los Rios (2013) offers a case study of 35 Latinx students of different backgrounds enrolled in her Chicano/a-Latino/a studies program at Pomona High School. After analyzing weekly written reflections, recording class discussions, and conducting interviews, De los Rios concludes that the course gave students a stronger sense of belonging and solidarity within their school and their communities.

Lastly, Latinx students enrolled in ethnic studies programs feel more motivated to pursue higher education. Cabrera et al. (2014) found that students enrolled in Mexican-American studies classes conveyed intention to enroll in college at a higher rate than their peers. Ten of seventeen Latinx Cerros High School students enrolled in college after two years in their high school’s ethnic studies program (Cammarota, 2007). Students overwhelmingly reported that the Social Justice Education ethnic studies program influenced them to consider attending college.

Impact of Ethnic Studies on White and Non-Latinx Students

Hurtado, Engberg, Ponjuan, and Landreman (2002) sampled 8,051 incoming first-year college students from three major universities about their K-12 education experiences. The sample primarily consisted of 70.8% White students, 22.5% students of color, and 4.2% Latinx students. The researchers concluded that students who had significant interactions with peers of different ethnic backgrounds in their K-12 schooling were more likely to acknowledge the importance of social justice and displayed better critical thinking skills. This is similar to Social Contact Theory (Valencia, 2010), which posits that exposure to students of different racial backgrounds can reduce the prevalence of racial discrimination and prejudice within student populations.
Vasquez (2005) examined the responses of 18 college students who were interviewed about their experience in a Chicano literature course. Eleven out of the eighteen students were Latinx, who all said the texts helped them develop a sense of community and empowerment; however, all seven of the non-Latinx students reported positive experiences as well. They found shared human issues in the texts that they could relate to while learning to sympathize with the struggles of Latinx people.

The Present Study

Overall, the literature indicates that ethnic studies can enhance multiple achievement factors among K-12 Latinx students, including improved attendance, grades, standardized test scores, high school graduation rates, literacy skills, classroom engagement, sense of belonging at school, and interest in attending college. While the benefits of ethnic studies on quantitative student outcomes (grades, attendance, etc.) are clear, more research needs to be done on how ethnic studies can impact student engagement. Therefore, the research question for this study is, How does taking an ethnic studies course influence classroom engagement and views on education?

Method

In order to examine the impact of ethnic studies pedagogy on student engagement and attitudes towards school, the researcher conducted two in-depth, semi-structured narrative interviews of Latinx high school students to get a full understanding of their K-12 educational experience. Both students, who are high school seniors and 18 years old, were recruited using a convenience sample from a local high school in Southern California in which the student population is 56% Latinx, 3% Asian, 1% American Indian, 38% White, and 1% African American (Santa Barbara High School, 2018). Their identities will be kept confidential throughout the study and pseudonyms will be employed: “Cas” for the student who has taken an ethnic studies course and “Iris” for the student who has not taken one. In the interviews, the researcher analyzed (1) family background, (2) K-12 educational experiences, and (3) future educational goals. After transcribing both interviews, thoroughly analyzing each transcript, developing codes, and searching for emerging themes in the data, three major themes emerged: student frustration at the lack of accurate historical interpretation, the general importance of ethnic studies, and student differences in future education goals.
Results

Lack of Accurate Historical Representation

The interviews revealed that both of these students have noticed a lack of accurate historical analysis and representation of Natives and Mexicans in K-12 education. Iris repeatedly said that she has not learned about the history and culture of Mexicans in the U.S. in school. For instance, she expressed that she did not learn about the history of Santa Barbara as Chumash land or as one of the first Mexican pueblos of California. When I mentioned this historical background briefly, she seemed to believe that this lack of representation in K-12 education is tied to larger societal discrimination against Mexican people. For example, when the researcher asked her, “Why do you think they don’t teach Mexican-American history in school?” She said, “They just want to hide it, or maybe not let us know...they don’t want Mexicans here.” Iris feels that ignoring the history of Mexicans in the U.S. within mainstream curricula is driven by a racist political agenda.

Similarly, Cas explains that he has experienced continual dissatisfaction with the emphasis on Eurocentric, colonial historical perspectives in mainstream curricula throughout his K-12 education:

[Studying history in high school] is about, like, understanding a certain narrative and memorizing key aspects of a certain narrative and regurgitating that on a multiple choice test, and that’s not really historical analysis. It’s sort of frustrating and boring.

In fact, Cas believes that most subjects in school are “tainted by colonial narratives and Whiteness”. He reports strongly disliking English classes in high school: “My traditional English experience has been—it was very much like White—really boring.” Cas is also highly critical of the standardization of pedagogy in the K-12 public schooling, as shown by the excerpt below:

Pedagogically, a lot of the teachers are very much entrenched in the traditional Western style of teaching of top-down hierarchy within the class—and that’s just reinforced by the bureaucratic system where teachers who try to innovate and stuff are restricted by the standardized and rules set over everything.

Cas is clearly critical of standardized pedagogy, which he has experienced in most of K-12 education.
Importance of Ethnic Studies in K-12 Education

However, Cas posits that the ethnic studies class he is currently taking, Mexican American Literature, deviates from the norm in terms of pedagogy:

This class, coming from not only a literary perspective, but its context within conversations about race and borders and putting in that context gives a different value to what you’re reading, you know. It’s less obscure to some conversation about Shakespeare and Europe. This [Mexican-American Lit] class more relates to the conditions, you know, happening in Santa Barbara.

Cas emphasizes the idea that the Mexican-American Literature class has presented narratives that are relevant to the social issues he sees in his community, especially immigration: “Chumash people have to work with the immigrants affected by neocolonialism in Latin America and so the circles are very much interwoven.”

In addition to challenging hegemonic historical narratives, Cas attributes his positive experience in the Mexican-American Literature class to his relationship with the teacher. He relays:

Yeah, I think there are teachers that really try to base their practice in like a creative and student-driven approach, and I think that, definitely, Mr. V approaches it from that angle...like right now we’re incorporating theater into it—El Teatro Campesino [United Farm Workers theatre troupe] and their work in the classroom is for me just much more engaging.

Cas reports feeling much more engaged by the content and teaching style within Mr. V’s class than by the content and teaching styles within other classes. For example, Cas explains that he really enjoyed reading culturally relevant texts like the Popol Vuh [Maya creation stories].

Both students establish the fact that they have not learned much about their own cultural backgrounds in K-12 education, but they both assert that it is important to shape education in a way that represents the diversity of students in their school. Iris has not had any exposure to Mexican-American history or any other type of ethnic studies in school; however, when asked, “Why is it important for Latin-American people to know their history?” she explains how she thinks this type of education would be beneficial:

To know about what has happened to us, I think it’s important to know their history... to know each
person’s history and understand how they are and how they feel.

She believes that students from different backgrounds can relate to each other better if they understand each other’s history and culture. Similarly, Cas thinks that high school curricula should offer more critical analyses of history, which would include “indigenous people, Black history, etc.” Cas conveys the idea that ethnic studies pedagogy is necessary to give marginalized students better representation in the social sciences.

**Future Education Goals**

The two students had different perspectives on higher education and college. When asked what her goals were after high school, Iris expressed some interest in going to college, but she was unsure of what she wanted to study:

[I applied] to SBCC [Santa Barbara City College].
[Interviewer: What are you interested in studying?] I don’t know.

She did not express in concrete terms whether or not she would pursue a college degree. On the other hand, Cas stated that he will surely attend college: “I applied to a few different colleges and I’m seeing where I’m getting in. I see the importance of higher education, so that’s sort of the path that I’m going to take.”

However, Cas stated that he will only stay in college and finish a degree if he feels a sense of belonging in the community and finds a fulfilling area of study. He said he is “skeptical” as to whether he will really enjoy the college academic experience, due to the fact that he has been so disillusioned by his K-12 educational experience. Cas describes feeling “jaded and angry”, but he hopes that college will offer a more wholesome experience.

**Discussion**

Ultimately, both students claimed they were proud of their ethnic identity. This is important because research has shown that students with a positive ethnic identity are more likely to achieve better academic outcomes (Altschul et al., 2006), which is why ethnic studies pedagogy tries to promote this (Perez et al., 2015). Cas says that he would have wanted to study Native history more in school to better understand his background and to feel more engaged. Iris is not able to discuss her indigenous roots in Mexico. Through centuries of colonization, many Mexicans have had their Native identities and histories erased. Reclaiming Native identity, history, and knowledge—the process of “decolonization”—is a central tenet of Chicano/a/x studies ideology, which Iris has not been
exposed to in her K-12 education. Due to the lack of this type of ethnic studies pedagogy, she has missed out on the opportunity to study her roots, as many Chicanx/Latinx students in college ethnic studies courses do.

Cas’s positive relationship with his Mexican-American Literature teacher, Mr. V, is evidence that ethnic studies courses are often spaces that allow for more positive student-teacher relationships than traditional classes do (Morell et al., 2013). Also, as a Latino teacher with Mexican roots himself, Mr. V could serve as a positive role model, since Chicano teachers who share a similar background with their students can enhance the students’ learning more effectively (Valencia, 2010). Furthermore, Cas’s satisfaction with the class reading material is a testament to the fact that multicultural reading material can increase students’ enjoyment of reading (Gay, 2010). However, he states that he would have developed a better sense of belonging if he had encountered ethnic studies before high school, an idea that is supported by the literature (De Los Ríos, 2013). Cas clearly emphasizes that he would have felt much more engaged in his classes throughout his K-12 education if he were exposed to more multicultural perspectives on language, history, natural sciences, and social sciences. On the other hand, Iris feels like she missed out on learning more about her own history and culture entirely.

Both students clearly state that they believe K-12 education in the U.S. should include ethnic studies courses so students can better relate to each other. This is crucial, because students who learn about different ethnic backgrounds can develop broader social perspectives, better critical thinking skills, and increased social justice values (Hurtado et al., 2002). Students can also identify shared human issues and similar social conditions between ethnic groups, which allows them to build intergroup solidarity (Vasquez, 2005).

Lastly, the literature indicates that ethnic studies courses can encourage students to pursue a college education. However, in this study, family influences had the greatest effect on shaping the participants’ future education goals. Although Iris is not sure about attending college, she is adamant about finishing high school because her parents did not have that opportunity. Likewise, Cas wants to attend college largely because family members who struggled in education have encouraged him to do so. Although it was not the ethnic studies course that inspired Cas to pursue higher education, he explains that his family and community members have exposed him to ethnic studies pedagogy in the way they critically analyze the history of colonization in Santa Barbara and in the books his father has shared with him at home. Conclusion
Overall, the literature supports many of the findings of this study. For instance, the literature reveals that ethnic studies courses can enhance K-12 student classroom engagement and attitudes. The researcher found that the student enrolled in the Mexican-American Literature ethnic studies course felt much more engaged by the course content and teaching style of this class than that of his other classes. The literature also shows that ethnic studies courses can create a better sense of belonging at school among Latinx students. In fact, the student enrolled in Mexican-American Literature reported that he would have felt a better sense of engagement and belonging in elementary and middle school if he had been exposed to ethnic studies. Instead, he experienced constant disengagement due to the lack of diversity and culturally relevant pedagogy, and he felt like an outsider in predominantly White schools. This experience also makes him skeptical of finding meaningful diversity in college-level academia.

While Iris had not taken an ethnic studies course, she stated that she would have felt more engaged in her K-12 history classes if the curriculum included opportunities to study her own cultural background. The literature demonstrates that non-Latinx and White students can gain critical thinking skills and democratic justice values through ethnic studies pedagogy. Both students agree that it is beneficial for all students to learn about the historical/cultural background of other students to better understand their struggles. Even though the literature indicates that students in ethnic studies courses are more likely to graduate from high school and pursue a college education, this study found that both students were primarily influenced by their families to succeed in school. Clearly, ethnic studies can improve classroom engagement among K-12 Latinx students. Better engagement will lead to better academic outcomes, which is necessary to address the achievement gap between White and Latinx students in our increasingly diverse society. K-12 public school educators and administrators must implement ethnic studies courses in order to help reduce this persistent academic disparity. Closing the achievement gap will ensure proper education and job training to fuel the vitality of the future U.S. economy.
About the Author

Jose Tapia is a 5th year, Chicano/a Studies and History double-major with a minor in Educational Studies. Jose was born and raised in a low-income, immigrant community in Ventura County, California. Throughout his K-12 education, Jose saw the lack of culturally-relevant pedagogy and diversity in the mainstream curricula. Jose often felt disengaged from school when the material did not teach about his own history and culture. As a college student, Jose learned about the tremendous achievement gap between Latinx students and other ethnic groups in the U.S. Because of this, Jose became passionate about education and began searching for ways to address this disparity, which led him to embrace Ethnic Studies. He eventually chose the career path of becoming a public-school teacher and becoming a role model for other Latinx students in K-12 education.
Works Cited


