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Identifying What Hinders Effective Interactions Between Correctional Staff and Transgender Juvenile Offenders

Tawanda Walker
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Tawanda Walker

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Walden University
2020

Abstract

Identifying What Hinders Effective Interactions Between Correctional Staff and

Transgender Juvenile Offenders

by

Tawanda Walker

MS, University of Phoenix, 2011

BS, Jackson State University, 2008

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Criminal Justice

Walden University

August 2020

Abstract

Communication serves as an avenue for individuals to introduce themselves to others and the world, but communication for individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning/queer, or intersex (LGBTQI) creates an opportunity for discrimination, bias, and mistreatment. Research has been conducted to address the issues of discrimination, bias, and mistreatment among LGBTQI youth in juvenile detention centers; however, a gap exists in the literature exploring correctional staff members' beliefs, attitudes, and understandings of transgender juvenile offenders. The purpose of this action research, quasi-experimental, mixed-method study was to explore if correctional staff members' religious beliefs, lack of LGBTQI training, and inadequate policies and procedures hinder effective interactions with transgender juvenile offenders. The theoretical framework came from Berger and Calabrese's uncertainty reduction theory. A purposive sampling of 80 correctional staff from a detention center in Maryland was conducted. The instruments used in this study were an electronic survey, the Harvard implicit bias test, to measure attitudes and beliefs of correctional staff members toward the LGBTQI community. Following the surveys, participants took a pretest, participated in an intervention training, completed a paper posttest, and were given the option to participate in a focus group to answer sub questions developed from this study. Results indicated a positive effect for higher education and professional occupations. The findings may be used by correctional staff members to learn how to communicate with transgender juvenile offenders.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my mentor and second father, Mr. Reginald “Hats” Adams. I am the woman, mother, minister, and now, doctor because of his unwavering love for me. It is that same love that saw things in me what I did not see in myself. A man of honor and valor. The saddest part of receiving this degree is that he is not here to see it and say, “Well done, Fat Baby,” as he affectionately called me. But, know that the world will know his name. In every speech, presentation, dedication, and acknowledgement I will speak or write, I will honor him. For the Bible speaks of giving honor where honor is due. 1 Timothy 5:17 states: Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine. I love you always, Dr. Tawanda “Fat Baby” Walker. Rest peacefully.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Communication can be both an opportunity and barrier, depending on the individuals engaging in the exchange of information. Communication can be the most important part of effective interactions among individuals. Communication is the gateway to establishing relationships and sharing insight about life. Through communication, individuals express who they are, their desires, hopes, and dreams, but if an individual does not receive acceptance, the flow of communication can be hindered. Research suggests this is true for individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, and intersex (LGBTQI). Kreiss and Patterson (1997) stated that the lack of communication and acceptance among lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth places them at risk for a multitude of physical, emotional, and social health problems.

LGBTQI youth have higher-than-average rates of depression, suicide attempts, substance abuse, sexually transmitted diseases, school failure, family rejection, and homelessness (Truman, 2018). Among the LGBTQI community, transgender individuals suffer more than their peers because of lack of knowledge and understanding and challenges to societal conventions (Truman, 2018). Connolly, Zervos, Barone II, Johnson, & Joseph (2016) stated that transgender individuals are predisposed to an array of psychological challenges, including depressive episodes, suicidal ideation and attempts, and self-harming eating disorders (i.e., anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, avoidant/restrictive food intake disorder, and orthorexia nervosa).

The challenges of LGBTQI juvenile's crossover from family issues and school disruptions to the juvenile justice system, where breakdowns in communication have caused discrimination and ill-treatment of the LGBTQI community, specifically, transgender juvenile offenders. Merrett (2017) explained that the theoretical viewpoint of the juvenile justice system has sought to protect the juvenile offender and society, so rehabilitation is a common theme. But the same compassion has not been afforded to members of the LGBTQI community. In fact, Merrett (2017) insisted that treatment of LGBTQI individuals in the juvenile justice system has been punitive. LGBTQI youth are criminalized more than their heterosexual counterparts for nonviolent offenses, and their detainment in the juvenile justice system produces unique threats because of the lack of knowledge, respect, and support available to LGBTQI juvenile offenders (Merrett, 2017).

A multitude of failed policies and procedures have perpetuated discrimination and harmful treatment of transgender juvenile offenders (Merrett, 2017). Researchers have suggested that transgender juvenile offenders are subjected to more discrimination and other harmful treatment because of uncertainty and biases of societal gender roles. Majid, Marksamer, and Reyes (2016) stated that the juvenile justice system struggles with understanding LGBTQI individuals, and because of personally held misconceptions by correctional center personnel, LGBTQI community members are disproportionately mistreated. Inadequacies in staff training have allowed correctional staff to interject personal beliefs and biases when dealing with this segment of the inmate population. This leads to mistreatment and frequent poor interactions with LGBTQI youth in the juvenile

justice system. Subsequently, this has resulted in violations of LGBTQI juvenile individuals' civil and basic rights (Majid et al, 2016).

Even within the LGBTQI community, transgender individuals endure disparities and unequal treatment more than other LGBTQI individuals (Grossman & D'augelli, 2006). *Transgender* refers to individuals who express themselves as a different gender than the biological sex they were assigned at birth, often a result of gender dysphoria. *Psychology Today* (n.d.) defines gender dysphoria as the distress an individual experiences because of sex and gender. When sex and gender fail to align and support an individual's gender identity, the person may express themselves as transgender. Some correctional professionals have deemed this gender expression as rebellious, which has caused transgender juvenile offenders to experience harsh mistreatment within the justice system (Majid et al., 2016).

In Chapter 1, I explain the scope of the study and its background to establish the foundation for the problem statement, purpose of the study, the identified research questions, the theoretical framework, and the nature of the study

Background of the Study

The U.S. juvenile justice has been slow to respond to the need of specialized services for LGBTQI individuals as it relates to programming and the influence of gender on criminal activity. When the first juvenile center opened in 1899, in Cook County, Illinois, it was to house delinquent boys. At that time, young women were not considered deviant or likely to display deviant behavior; transgender juvenile offenders were not factored into the equation of juvenile justice.. The criminal justice system's first attempt

at setting standards came in 1974 with the Juvenile Justice Delinquency and Prevention Act (JJDP). This act specified certain regulations for juvenile justice that included the removal of status offenses, the elimination of juveniles and adults being housed together, confinement regulation and special provision for a Native American justice system. The act did not specifically address the needs of the LGBTQI community, including transgender individuals.

In 1992 there was follow up to the JJDP, and in 2002 the JJDP was revised to broaden the scope of the Disproportionate Minority Contact core requirement from disproportionate minority confinement to disproportionate minority contact; reauthorize Title V; and revise the juvenile accountability incentive block grants program. None of these changes spoke to the needs or effectiveness of gender-specific policies and programs at the juvenile justice level. The juvenile justice system's failure to develop guidelines for the transgender population entering juvenile detention centers throughout the United States is evident in the lack of literature on the subject.. Majid et al (2009) noted the absence of research addressing the specialized care necessary for LGBTQI juvenile offenders.

Problem Statement

The alarming rate of LGBTQI youth arrested and detained has been crippled by the juvenile justice system's lack of resources to properly care for them. This lack of resources has impacted both the juvenile justice system and the educational system. The LGBTQI advocates have accused correctional staff of causing more harm than good have been leveled against the juvenile justice system since the influx of LGBTQI juvenile

offenders' presence in detention centers has increased. Mills and Gilbert (2014) identified that LGBTQI youth are likely to have higher levels of contact with authorities because of both criminal and social factors. Mill and Gilbert (2014) acknowledged that some social factors are out of a youth's control, including rejection from family, friends, and religious communities; harassment and bullying; and lack of support groups. Truman (2018) stated that 63.5% of LGBTQI youth felt unsafe because of their sexual orientation, 81.9% of LGBTQI youth were verbally abused, 36.3% were physically abused, and 55.2% were electronically harassed.

Transgender juveniles are a part of a larger community, which is the LGBTQ community and their presence in the criminal justice system is constantly rising. Truman (2018) stated that estimated 2.1 million youth from age 12 to 18 enter the juvenile justice system each year. Of that number, Mills and Gilbert (2014) stated that an estimated 300,000 LGBTQI youth are arrested and/or detained each year. The criminal justice system's response to this growing population has been stagnant and plagued with incidents of unjust experiences and poor conditions (Mills & Gilbert, 2014). Marksamer (2008) explained that because bias and discrimination are so prevalent against transgender individuals, it must stem from society's lack of understanding of the difference between gender and sexuality and society's lack of acceptance when societal norms are challenged. A better understanding of transgender juvenile offenders is needed; for some transgender juvenile offenders, the problems they encounter resulting from bias and discrimination are the reasons behind their involvement in the juvenile justice system. (Marksamer, 2008). Mills & Gilbert (2014) stated that the current policies and

procedures that govern juvenile detention centers are not equipped with the resources to handle the complexity of transgender juvenile offenders. Marksamer (2008) stated the lack of resources creates conditions that are unsafe for LGBTQI juvenile offenders. These conditions are not only harmful and maladaptive in the person to person interactions between correctional staff and LGBTQI juvenile offenders, but these discriminatory practices are embedded into the very foundation of juvenile justice. The recidivism rate among LGBTQI juvenile offenders is disproportionate compared to heterosexual juvenile offenders (Act 4 Juvenile Justice, n.d.).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to strengthen the relationship between correctional staff and transgender juvenile offenders through adequate training and inclusive policies and procedures. To address the gap in the literature, I used a mixed-methods quasi-experimental design for this study. The correctional staff members were provided with a pretest, training, and a posttest; a focus group allowed knowledgeable insight about transgender juvenile offenders, assisted in equal interpretation and formation of policies and procedures, and decreased uncertainty around relationship building between correctional staff and transgender juvenile offenders.

Research Questions

RQ1: Do policies and procedures for transgender juvenile offenders foster effective interactions between correctional staff and transgender juvenile offenders?

*H*₀1: Policies and procedures for transgender juvenile offenders do not foster effective interactions between correctional staff and transgender.

H₁1: : Policies and procedures for transgender juvenile offenders do foster effective interactions between correctional staff and transgender.

RQ2: Do correctional staff hold biases against LGBTQI youth?

H₀2: Prior to the training, correctional staff will hold biases against LGBT youth and after the intervention these biases will decrease.

H₁2: Prior to the training, correctional staff will not hold biases against LGBT youth and after the intervention these biases will decrease.

RQ3: Do the personal beliefs and backgrounds of correctional staff members affect their ability to interact with transgender juvenile offenders?

H₀3: The personal beliefs of the correctional staff do affect their ability to engage in effective interactions with transgender juvenile offenders.

H₁3: The personal beliefs of the correctional staff do not affect their ability to engage in effective interactions with transgender juvenile offenders.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical lens used in this study was Berger and Calabrese's (1975) uncertainty reduction theory. Uncertainty reduction theory was grounded in communication, but by 1982, Berger had expanded the reach of the theory to include the formulation of relationships by decreasing uncertainty through an exchange of information between two parties. For a relationship to survive, an exchange of information must be present, and its goal is to decrease uncertainty among the individuals involved (Berger,1988). This theory is rooted in obtaining relationships via

communication and exchanging of information. The exchange of information decreases the uncertainty of both parties because it allows individuals to express their truth and be accepted. The byproducts of effective communication lead to effective interactions that are expressed both cognitively and behaviorally.

Many transgender juvenile offenders are subjected to unequal treatment and unfair practices because the lines of communication are either blurred or not established (Almeida, Johnson, Corliss, Molnar, & Azreal, 2009). The discomfort of not being understood or accepted is real for transgender juvenile offenders coming into a system that is not designed to meet their basic needs; this often increases depression, suicidal ideation, and suicide attempts (Almeida et al., 2009). These individuals experience the uncertainty of being unsafe, misjudged, and misunderstood.

Nature of the Study

The nature of this study was a mixed-method quasi-experimental design. Quasi-experimental research seeks to answer how two variables are related or connected. Quasi-experimental research is used to see if an intervention has an impact on independent variables. Applying mix methods via short sub questions in a focus group to this quasi-experimental design allowed me to gain in-depth information by asking open-ended questions and allowing participants to share their views on the subject matter. The primary focus of this study was to improve correctional staff members' knowledge of the LGBTQI community through proper training to create effective interactions between correctional staff members and transgender juvenile offenders. These effective interactions can influence equality-driven policies and procedures. There is a lack of

respect and support for youths' gender identities, expression, and definitions and there is no list of resources and model policy and practice guidelines for providing nondiscriminatory services to transgender and gender nonconforming youth in detention centers and group homes (Marksamer, Spade, & Arkles, 2017).

The approach of this study aligned with the problem statement formulated; an array of sources highlighted the complex challenges transgender juvenile offenders face when entering the juvenile justice system. The methods used in this mixed-method quasi-experimental approach were surveys that examined correctional staff attitudes toward transgender individuals. Following the surveys, participants were given a pretest to examine their current knowledge on how to communicate and engage with juvenile transgender offenders. Then, the intervention was given via a PowerPoint presentation that modeled the appropriate terms and interactions for engaging and communicating with juvenile transgender offenders.

Next, a posttest was given to see if there had been a change in knowledge on behalf of the correctional staff and a better understanding of appropriate care for transgender juvenile offenders. Finally, participants answered the sub questions informed by the primary research questions in this study in a focus group. This mixed-method quasi-experimental design collected data based on the attitudes and behaviors of correctional staff who were the sample population from a youth center located on the East Coast of the United States. The information obtained through this research provided evidence of the unequal treatment transgender juvenile offenders are exposed to because of biases, inadequate policies, and lack of training.

Definitions of Terms

Adjudication: A guilty finding in a juvenile delinquency case; the equivalent of a conviction for an adult accused of a crime (The Equity Project, 2015).

Ally: An individual who is not LGBTQI but is supportive of the LGBTQI community (The Equity Project, 2015).

Assessment tools: In-depth information gathering, and diagnostic instruments used by trained professionals to determine needs, diagnoses, and strengths (The Equity Project, 2015).

Birth sex: The sex, male or female, noted on an individual's birth certificate (The Equity Project, 2015).

Bisexual: A person who is emotionally, romantically, and sexually attracted to both men and women (The Equity Project, 2015).

Coming out: The process of disclosing one's sexual orientation or gender identity to others. Because most people are presumed heterosexual, *coming out* is typically not a discrete event, but a lifelong process (The Equity Project, 2015).

Gay: A person whose emotional, romantic, and sexual attractions are primarily for individuals of the same sex, typically in reference to men and boys, although in some contexts, still used as a general term for gay men and lesbians (The Equity Project, 2015).

Gender expression: A person's expression of their gender identity, including characteristics and behaviors such as appearance, dress, mannerisms, speech patterns, and social interactions (The Equity Project, 2015).

Gender fluid: Shifting naturally in gender identity and/or gender expression. The term may be used to refer to a specific gender identity or the fluidity between identities. Other similar terms include *gender creative*, *gender nonconforming*, *gender queer*, *gender variant*, and *pangender* (The Equity Project, 2015).

Gender identity: A person's internal, deeply felt sense of being male or female.

Gender identity disorder: A diagnosable medical condition in which an individual has a strong and persistent cross-gender identification, the desire to be or the insistence that one is of the opposite sex, as well as a persistent discomfort about assigned birth sex or a sense of inappropriateness in the gender role of that sex. In addition, the individual must be evidencing clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning (The Equity Project, 2015).

Gender nonconforming: Having or being perceived to have gender characteristics and/or behaviors that do not conform to traditional or societal expectations. Gender-nonconforming people may or may not identify as LGBTQI (The Equity Project, 2015).

Gender roles: Social and cultural beliefs about appropriate male or female behavior, which children usually internalize between ages 3 and 7 (The Equity Project, 2015).

Genderqueer: A term of self-identification for people who do not identify with the restrictive and binary terms that have traditionally described gender identity (for instance, male or female only). Also see gender-nonconforming, queer, and transgender.

Homophobia: Literally "fear of homosexuals," but in recent decades broadened as a term for prejudice against LGBTQI people (The Equity Project, 2015).

LGBT: Common acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender—persons who despite their differences are often discriminated against in similar ways. Sometimes written to include “Q” for *questioning* and/or *queer*, “I” for *intersex*, and/or “A” for *ally*. May also be written as LGBTQI (The Equity Project, 2015).

Queer: A historically derogatory term for a gay man, lesbian, or gender-nonconforming person. The term has been widely reclaimed, especially by younger LGBTQI people, as a positive social and political identity. It is sometimes used as an inclusive term for all LGBTQI people; more recently, *queer* has become common as a term of self-identification for people who do not identify with the restrictive and binary terms that have traditionally described sexual orientation (for instance, gay, lesbian, or bisexual only). Some LGBTQI community members still find *queer* an offensive or problematic term (The Equity Project, 2015).

Questioning: An active process in which a person explores their own sexual orientation and/or gender identity and questions the cultural assumptions that they are heterosexual and/or gender conforming. Many LGBTQI people go through this process before *coming out*. Not all people who question their identities end up self-identifying as LGBT (The Equity Project, 2015).

Self-identification: One’s own identification of gender identity or sexual orientation. Increasingly, LGBTQI youth are self-identifying during preadolescence or early adolescence (The Equity Project, 2015).

Sexual orientation: A term describing a person’s emotional, romantic, and sexual attraction. More appropriate than *sexual preference* (The Equity Project, 2015).

SOGIE: An acronym for sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. Everyone has a sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression (The Equity Project, 2015).

Transgender: A person whose gender identity (their understanding of themselves) does not correspond with their anatomical sex. A transgender woman is a woman whose birth sex was male but who understands herself to be female. A transgender man is a man whose birth sex was female but who understands himself to be male (The Equity Project, 2015).

Transition: The period when a transgender person starts living as the gender they identify as. Often includes a change in style of dress, selection of a new name, a request that people use the correct pronouns, and possibly hormone therapy and/or surgery (The Equity Project, 2015).

Transsexual: A term for someone who transitions from one physical sex to another, to bring their body more in line with their innate sense of gender identity. It includes those who were born male but whose gender identity is female and those who were born female but whose gender identity is male. Transsexual people have the same range of gender identities and expressions as others. Many transsexual people refer to themselves as transgender (The Equity Project, 2015).

Assumptions

The focus of this study will center on juvenile correctional staff members. These individuals provide direct service to transgender juvenile offenders who are in custody in a secure facility. The insight provided by these individuals is imperative to

understanding, developing, and implementing change to policies and procedures that affect transgender juvenile offenders. The participants answered surveys so that I could gather data on their feelings and attitudes toward transgender juvenile offenders. Following the surveys, the participants engaged in a pretest, intervention (training), and posttest; they were able to discuss whether their knowledge of transgender juvenile offender care and appropriate communication had improved from this training. The final step in this mixed-method quasi-experimental study was a focus group guided by the sub questions using open-ended questions where the participants gave an in-depth understanding of their experiences working with transgender juvenile offenders. My assumption was that the information gained through this research would be useful in developing policies and procedures to address biases and discrimination toward transgender juvenile offenders.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of the study focused on correctional staff members who have direct contact with transgender juvenile offenders. The participants included correctional officers, mental health staff, recreation staff, medical staff, and supervisors. All participants completed the survey, pretest, intervention (training), and posttest analysis. The posttest included a voluntary invite to participate in a focus group. There were $n = 20$ volunteer participants represented in four groups of five. I assessed the current policies and procedures designated to address transgender juvenile offenders. Individual religious beliefs and gender fluidity among the participating correctional staff members in this study could have been a delimitation.

Limitations

The limitation of this study was demographical because I focused on a single detention center located on the East Coast of the United States. This leaves the Midwest, West, and Southern regions of the country uncounted for in this research. Another, limitation was that I sought to survey correctional staff members with at least a year of experience working in a juvenile detention center. The possibility of the participants altering their responses to avoid being labeled as biased or having a prejudice against transgender juvenile offenders might exist, but I kept all information confidential and used a coding system to identify each participant to protect their anonymity.

Significance of the Study

The research conducted in this study fills the gap in understanding how biases and discriminatory policies and procedures, personal religious beliefs, and inadequate training create a level of uncertainty in correctional staff that directly affects effective interactions with transgender juvenile offenders. Reviewing current policies and procedures helped assess if the detention center is using best practices related to LGBTQI standards. LGBTQI youth face threats to their health, including sexual, physical, and emotional harassment, isolation, and lack of medical care. This is especially impactful on transgender youth; a lack of training and awareness exists on how to help this population (Marrett, 2017). The findings from this study can enable policy makers and correctional staff to make informed decisions about creating policies and procedures that foster positive and effective interactions with transgender juvenile offenders. Equality is a constitutional right and sexual identity, orientation, or preference should not affect these

rights. Personal beliefs, biases, discriminatory policies and procedures, and undertrained staff should not interfere with transgender juvenile offenders being treated fairly.

The social implications of this study affect social change around the policies and procedures that address the LGBTQI community at large, but more specifically transgender offenders in custody in juvenile detention centers. The findings from this research may influence a national response to reexamine policies and procedures across the U.S. Department of Juvenile Justice for policies and procedures adjustments or modifications, applying evidence-based innovations and resolutions to a vulnerable population largely represented but underserved in juvenile justice.

Summary

In recent years, there have been advancements made in juvenile justice policies and procedures. The Prison Rape Elimination Act and the Obama Administration's ruling on juvenile confinement have all be beneficial in correcting flaws inside the juvenile justice system. Yet, the LGBTQI community has been largely overlooked and underrepresented when it comes to equality and treatment. Based on the results of this study, I can provide recommendations for policy changes and future training for correctional staff members. Examining existing policies and procedures can help identify areas that need improvement and create policies and procedures that present a holistic approach for caring for transgender juvenile offenders and improving correctional staff member interactions with the LGBTQI juvenile population by removing biases and discriminatory practices and beliefs.

In Chapter 2, I explore an overview of the establishment of the juvenile justice system along with policies and procedures. I performed an in-depth, literature review of the theories presented in this study and an examination of current policies in relation to their inclusivity of transgender juvenile offenders. In Chapter 3, I present an introduction of a mixed method quasi-experimental design to make future recommendations for policies, procedures, and training to effectively interact and provide services to transgender juvenile offenders.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Equality is the centralized theme of the LGBTQI community's fight because equality speaks to every facet of life—in the workplace, in the union of marriage, and other areas that the LGBTQI community advocates for. The fight for equality for transgender juvenile offenders is ever present in juvenile detention centers. The idea of equal protection under the law applies to the freedom of expression of gender without facing discrimination or bias. *Equal protection under the law* is the idea that a governmental body may not deny people equal protection of its governing laws (Cornell Law, n.d.). Governing bodies must treat all individuals in the same manner as others in similar conditions and circumstances..

Civil rights violations are at the forefront of the LGBTQI community's strive for justice. Civil rights speak to the centralized theme of equality, the opportunity to be who you are without experiencing discrimination. Civil rights are enforceable rights or privileges, which if interfered with by another, give rise to an action for injury (Cornell Law, n.d.). Discrimination occurs when an individual's civil rights are denied or interfered with because they belong to a group or class. Various jurisdictions have enacted statutes to prevent discrimination based on a person's race, sex, religion, age, previous condition of servitude, physical limitation, national origin, and in some instances, sexual orientation. Mills and Gilbert (2014) suggested that the matriculation of LGBTQI youth through the juvenile justice system is plagued with higher levels of discrimination and biases than that experienced by other juvenile offenders who are not

part of the LGBTQI community. These biases, treatment, and discrimination are evident in unsafe detention centers, absent or inadequate medical and mental health resources, and blatant disrespect and disregard for sexual orientation and/or gender identity (Mills & Gilbert, 2014).

This chapter covers the literature review, which encompasses current literature on violations suffered by transgender juvenile offenders, policy recommendations for LGBTQI in juvenile detention centers, and implementations of Prison Rape Elimination Act. The foundation of this chapter is an overview of the first juvenile justice system developed in Cook County, Illinois. The following sections include the theoretical framework, uncertainty reduction theory, along with cognitive and behavioral elements. The final component of this chapter is a summation of the relevance of this study to the justice field and how it will influence social change in a positive way.

In 2017, recommendations were being researched and shared with youth group-care facilities (including detention centers) on how to better serve youth offenders in the LGBTQI community. Marksamer et al. (2017) provided a guide to address some core areas of improvement in group-care facilities related to transgender juvenile offenders. Marksamer et al (2017) explained that many problems plague the juvenile justice system related to transgender juvenile offenders, and the number-one problem was the lack of respect and support given to transgender juvenile offenders. Next was inappropriate housing placement based on sex rather than gender identity and harassment, both verbal and physical. The final issue Marksamer et al addressed was discriminatory labeling of LGBTQI youth as “sexual predators.” An estimated 300,000 LGBTQ youth are arrested

and/or detained each year, but there has been a proposal to roll back data collection on crime victimization for the LGBTQI community (Department of Justice, 2018; Mills & Gilbert, 2014). A roll back of this data collection would be dangerous because it provides policymakers with statistical information to assist with policy recommendations and implementations.

The framework for establishing policies and procedures that are fair and consistent for transgender juvenile offenders has taken root in juvenile detention centers across the United States because of Prison Rape Elimination Act (2012, 2003) laws and the Obama administration (2016) addressing issues of confinement. However, researchers have failed to address a holistic approach to the treatment and rehabilitation of transgender offenders. Mills and Gilbert (2014) highlighted 11 guiding principles to achieve fair and consistent treatment of transgender youth offenders in custody. At the forefront, of these principles is respectful communication. Mills and Gilbert (2014) acknowledged that appropriate communication with respect is important when communicating with anyone but becomes more important when trying to establish trust among LGBTQI youth. These youth become guarded and untrusting when they interpret red flags. These red flags could be perceived homophobia speech or attitudes, disrespectful mislabeling, and assumptions that invite discrimination and biases into the conversation.

The findings from this study will enable policy makers and correctional staff the opportunity and knowledge to make informed decisions when creating policies and procedures that foster positive and effective interactions with transgender juvenile

offenders. Equality is a constitutional right, and sexual identity, orientation, or preference should not affect those rights, and neither should personal beliefs, biases, discriminatory policies, procedures, nor undertrained staff.

Literature Review Strategy

This literature review was formulated by navigating databases via the Internet and searching scholarly articles and materials. In my search, I sought information published in the last 5 years. For the foundation of this research, I used older reference points to establish theories and schools of thoughts. Another resource I used to find useful information was Walden University's online library, where I located peer-reviewed articles on topics such as *transgender equality*, *juvenile justice principles and policy recommendations*. Databases I used included Journal of Juvenile Justice, ProQuest, SAGE Premier, and Journal of Criminal Justice. An outside resource that was helpful was Google Scholar, and I filtered for a certain timeframe and article selection. I conducted a major keyword search to locate information and articles, using the following keywords: *juvenile justice*, *transgender*, *juvenile offenders*, *rights*, *discrimination*, *uncertainty reduction theory*, *Maslow's hierarchy of needs*, *LGBT*, and *policy recommendations*.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical lens for this study was Berger and Calabrese's (1975) uncertainty reduction theory. Early uncertainty reduction theory was grounded in communication, but by 1982 Berger, had expanded the reach of the theory to include the formulation of relationships by decreasing uncertainty through an exchange of information between two parties. This theory is rooted in obtaining relationships via communication and

exchanging of information. The exchange of information decreases the uncertainty of both parties because it allows individuals to express their truth and be accepted.

This exchange of information is important to transgender juvenile offenders and correctional staff because it is a basic line of establishing relationships and effective interactions. Transgender youth might be reluctant to share and communicate with staff they feel are being biased or disrespectful toward them. Correctional staff must be mindful of their interactions and be selective in their communication style when seeking to extract information from LGBTQI juvenile offenders (Mills & Gilbert, 2014).

Communication acts as a gateway to establish relationships and exchange information. The exchange of information between transgender juvenile offenders and the correctional staff is of great importance because this is where rehabilitation and programming start. Through effective interactions, the challenges that plague transgender juvenile offenders can be addressed and modifications can be made to ensure fair and equal treatment while inside juvenile detention centers. In 1975, Berger and Calabrese identified seven qualities or variables associated with uncertainty in an initial interaction, these seven qualities or variables are:

1. Amount of verbal communication: Essentially, the number of words that are exchanged during an interaction.
2. Nonverbal affiliative expressiveness: A specific form of nonverbal communication in which people display positive feelings toward another person (for example, pleasant facial expressions, head nods, and hand and arm gestures).

3. Information-seeking behavior: The number of questions that an individual might ask of another;
4. Intimacy level of communication content: The degree to which personal information is low risk, such as demographics, versus high risk, such as beliefs, attitudes, and opinions;
5. Reciprocity: A relative equal sharing of information back and forth between two people;
6. Similarity: Degree to which two people share similar attitudes and engage in communication that reflects agreement; and
7. Liking: A positive feeling or regard for another person.

The motivation for these interactions between transgender juvenile offenders and the correctional staff is to figure each other out. To draw commonalities between each other and understand the differences. How motivation is expressed is where discrimination and biases enter the occupied space and can corrupt communication and future interactions. Berger and Calabrese (1975) outlined four principle motivations for decreasing uncertainty, these principles are as follows:

- Principle 1: Efforts to reduce uncertainty are linked to the likelihood of future interactions and reward potential (Importance) of the other person.
- Principle 2: Uncertainty in initial interactions with strangers increases if they violate social norms.
- Principle 3: Uncertainty is increased when people we know violate the expectations, we have for them.

- Principle 4: Uncertainty can be reduced by knowledge acquisition.

These principles are then expressed in two very distinct ways, cognitively and behaviorally. These two aspects are important because they govern how individuals interact in a set environment and how much of themselves, they disclose in the information exchange.

Cognitive Understanding of Uncertainty Theory

Uncertainty reduction theory suggests that cognitive uncertainty is defined as the uncertainty around what someone else is thinking or the uncertainty about one's own thoughts about self. (Redmond, 2015). To further explain that perceived thoughts of others and unclear thoughts of one's self perpetuate this cycle of uncertainty Berger and Calabrese (1975) developed seven axioms that relate to the seven qualities or variables. These axioms express a more detail count and the expression on the uncertainty being felt. These seven axioms are:

- Axiom 1: Given the high level of uncertainty present at the onset of the entry phase, as the amount of verbal communication between strangers increases, the level of uncertainty for each interactant in the relationship will decrease. As uncertainty is further reduced, the amount of verbal communication will increase.
- Axiom 2: As nonverbal affiliative expressiveness increases, uncertainty levels will decrease in an initial interaction situation. In addition, decreases in uncertainty level will cause increases in nonverbal affiliative expressiveness.
- Axiom 3: High levels of uncertainty cause increases in information seeking behavior. As uncertainty levels decline, information seeking behavior decreases.

- Axiom 4: High levels of uncertainty in a relationship cause decreases in the intimacy level of communication content. Low levels of uncertainty produce high levels of intimacy.
- Axiom 5: High levels of uncertainty produce high rates of reciprocity. Low levels of uncertainty produce low reciprocity rates.
- Axiom 6: Similarities between persons reduce uncertainty, while dissimilarities produce increases in uncertainty.
- Axiom 7: Increases in uncertainty level produce decreases in liking; decreases in uncertainty level produce increases in liking.

Axioms are statements or propositions of a relationship between variables that are assumed to be true (Blalock, 1969). This addresses the biases and discrimination expressed by transgender juvenile offenders. This also addresses the internal battle of gender identity in transgender individuals. Coming to terms that their biological body does not align with their mental bodies.

Behavioral Understanding of Uncertainty Theory

The second component to the expression of uncertainty is the behaviorally. Because uncertainty is unpleasant it provides motivation to reduce it through behavior. Now, this behavior can be maladaptive and not represent the individual's true self. Emmers and Canary (1996) suggested that individuals will manipulate their true selves if the environment is deemed unsafe or unwelcoming, this is called self-monitoring. These behaviors are plan out and presented in different stages. Redmond (2015) explained the following stages as the entry, personal and exit. During the entry stage, the information

regarding an individual's age, SES, and other demographic details are discussed. This stage focuses on societal norms and rules. If, both communicators are satisfied with this stage the progression to the next stage which is personal occurs. In the personal stage, this is where the exchange of information about beliefs, values, and attitudes are exposed. The communicators are less restricted at this point because the trust was established in the entry stage. In the personal stage though, is where discrimination and biases are introduced because this is an in-depth exchanged of information. The final stage is the exit stage, here a determination about future interactions is made. These decisions are usually determined by the connection made in the personal stage. If there was conflict on the personal stage the likelihood of future interactions decreases drastically.

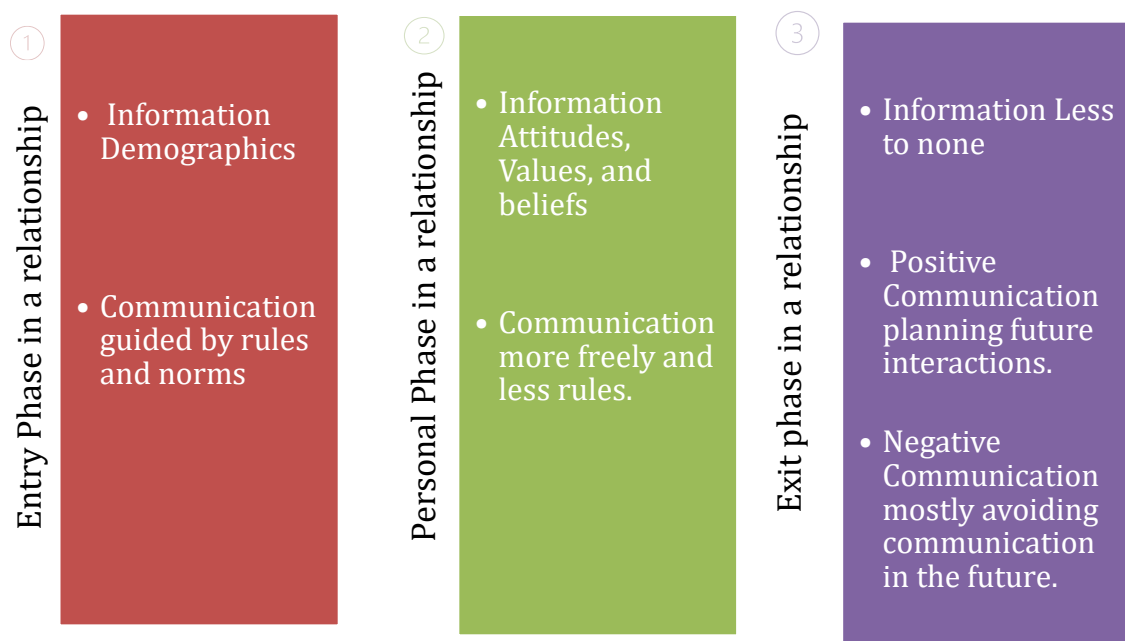


Figure 1. Heath and Bryant's (1999) stages of the uncertainty reduction model.

Literature Review

The Origin of Juvenile Justice

The juvenile justice system that exists today is far more advanced than the juvenile justice system that was first established. Since the creation of the Juvenile Justice System, there have been an array of governing principles that drove policies and procedures. These governing principles have sought to find a way to preserve the innocence of juvenile offenders and, hold juvenile offenders accountable for their actions. The cycle of rehabilitation, punishment, restorative justice, and others have had their turn to influence policies and procedures in and around juvenile justice. Just as the governing principles have changed, so has the population. The original purpose of juvenile justice was an effort to reform “troubled” males, who had committed unlawful acts. The American Bar Association (n.d.) compiled a timeline that shows the progression of juvenile justice and from the beginning, the focus has been masculine.

American Bar Association (n.d.) identified the first juvenile justice reform was the New York House of Refugees establish for juvenile delinquents in 1825. The follow up to this reform house was the Chicago Reform School established in 1855. In 1899, the first juvenile court was established in Cook County, Illinois. Notably, absent from the early establishment of the juvenile justice system were female offenders, just in the same way LGBTQI juvenile offenders are unrepresented in the current juvenile justice system policies and procedures.

Prison Rape Elimination Act

In 2003, the national Prison Rape Elimination Act was signed. This is a bill that seeks to eliminate the high rates of sexual misconduct inside of the justice system. These standards applied to both juvenile and adult corrections. PREA standards (2003) state guidelines specific to the LGBTQI community.

Screening and classification. Facilities must screen all individuals at admission and upon transfer to assess their risk of experiencing or perpetrating abuse, including identifying those who may be at risk because of their transgender status, gender nonconformity, sexual orientation, or intersex condition. The individual's own perception of their vulnerability must also be considered. Individuals may not be disciplined for any refusal or nondisclosure during screening regarding gender identity, sexual orientation, intersex condition, disability status, or prior sexual victimization. Facilities must use this information to make appropriate, individualized decisions about an individual's security classification and housing placement.

Housing transgender people. Decisions about where a transgender person, or a person with an intersex condition, is housed must be made on a case-by-case basis; they cannot be made solely based on a person's anatomy or gender assigned at birth. This means that, for example, every transgender woman must be assessed individually to determine whether she would be best housed with other women instead of in a men's facility. An individual's views regarding their personal safety must be seriously considered. These decisions must be reassessed at least twice per year to consider changed circumstances such as incidents of abuse or changes in an individual's

appearance or medical treatment. All transgender people and people with intersex conditions must be given the opportunity to shower separately from other inmates if they wish, regardless of where they are housed.

Segregated LGBTQI pods or units. In some facilities, gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender individuals are housed in separate units. Some people may prefer to be housed in this way because they may feel they are safer from being abused by other inmates. However, these units can also pose some risk of further stigmatizing individuals and making them more vulnerable to harassment and abuse by staff. Individuals in such segregated units may also be restricted in their access to education, jobs, and other programs and opportunities. The Standards place some limits on separate housing for LGBTQI people. LGBTQI people may be housed in separate, dedicated housing units only if such placement is voluntary or is based on a case-by-case assessment that includes other factors; if the unit also houses other groups of vulnerable individuals; or if the unit was established as part of the resolution of a lawsuit to protect LGBTQI people.

Staff training. All facilities must train staff on a variety of issues related to sexual abuse prevention, including interacting professionally with LGBTQI and gender nonconforming people and those with intersex conditions.

Constitutional Violations of Transgender Youth in Juvenile Justice System

There are several Constitutional violations the LGBTQI juvenile offender, particularly transgender juvenile offender face inside juvenile detention centers. Two of the leading violations are due process and confinement. Due process and confinement have been used as

punishment for some transgender juvenile offenders. Rush judgment on the part of correctional staff because of their biases and lack of training have violated the due process of transgender juvenile offenders and use confinement as a punitive method of discipline. Research suggests that conditions of confinement have compounded the violation of civil rights. Merrett (2017) the argument of using the due process clause for transgender juvenile offenders speaks more to the rehabilitation of the criminal behavior displayed during the assignment of confinement versus a punitive response to the transgender juvenile offender gender identity as punishment.

Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act Recommendations

In recent years, the laws and rights guaranteed to the LGBTQI community have seen new legislation and recommendations in almost every facet of life. Seeking equality from healthcare, marriage, and equal protection under the law. These recommendations and legislation eventually, made their way to the criminal justice system both the juvenile and adult corrections have benefited from the new adaptation of policies and procedures tailored to the LGBTQI community. Act 4 Juvenile Justice (2014) made the following recommendations for Congress as well as recommendations to the Juvenile Justice Delinquent Prevention Act.

Congress should protect the interests and rights of LGBTQI youth in the juvenile justice system by:

- Amending the findings sections of the JJDP A to include the existing data on the disproportionate representation of LGBTQI youth in the juvenile justice system.

- Amending the JJDP Act to eliminate the Valid Court Order exception for Status Offenders
- Amending the JJDP Act to include a provision stating that no funding will be allotted to any programs that discriminate based on race, sex, gender, religion, national origin, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression
- Amending the JJDP Act to require that JJDP Act State Advisory Groups include experts on LGBTQI youth
- Amending the JJDP Act by adding an additional core requirement that each state must plan to assess to what extent, if any, LGBTQI youth are disproportionately represented in the juvenile delinquency system, and, if they are, to develop a plan to address such disproportionate representation
- Passing federal protections against discrimination in all settings based on actual or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity and creating incentives for States to appropriately and effectively respond to LGBTQI youth involved in the justice system.
- Creating incentives for States to reduce the inappropriate detention of LGBTQI youth and address decision-makers' lack of understanding of this population.

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act

OJJDP should protect the interests and rights of LGBTQI youth in the juvenile justice system by:

- Requiring all programs funded under JJDP and other OJJDP incentive grants to adopt policies prohibiting discrimination based on actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.
- Not providing funding to any system or program engaged in reparative therapy or any efforts to attempt to change a youth's sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Including prohibitions on discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression in any new RFPs issued.
- Issuing an RFP to make training and technical assistance on the experiences of this population available for any juvenile justice system.

Summary

In summary, there have been and will continue to be recommendations and legislation introduced to ensure that the LGBTQI community is equally represented and accounted for in mainstream America. As the juvenile justice system cycles through another round of governing principles, policies, and procedures the representation of the LGBTQI juvenile offender will be at the forefront of discussion. LGBTQI advocates will continue to make recommendations that will aid in closing the gap in services, treatment, rights, policies, and procedures.

Furthermore, this mixed-method quasi-experimental study has examined what hinders effective interactions between transgender juvenile offenders and correctional staff. This study will serve as a point of reference for policy recommendations as well as training material. This study seeks to lend a voice to a population who are

overrepresented in numbers but underrepresented in the laws, policies and procedures, and governing principles that control their living situations at the present time.

Chapter 3 is an in-depth discussion of the mixed method that was be used to answer the outlined research questions. This section includes sample participants, specific instruments, and data collection.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

This research study (09-11-19-0340802) was conducted using action research to examine the attitudes of correctional staff members and their beliefs toward transgender juvenile offenders. Through the theoretical lens of uncertainty reduction theory, I examined how uncertainty hinders communication and relationship building among correctional staff members and transgender juvenile offenders. In this study I also examined the negative connotations associated with being transgender, along with the shortcomings of the policies and procedures that address the LGBTQI population and correctional staff members' religious beliefs.

Research Design and Rationale

This research project took place at a detention center located on the East Coast of the United States. A total of 80 correctional staff were targeted for this study due to their experience working with transgender juvenile offenders and providing services to these youth. Data collection included an electronic survey, the Harvard Implicit Bias Test, followed by a pretest, a training, and a posttest survey and a focus group. The primary research questions for this action research study are:

RQ1: Do policies and procedures for transgender juvenile offenders foster effective interactions between correctional staff and transgender juvenile offenders?

RQ2: Do correctional staff hold biases for or against LGBTQI youth?

RQ3: Do the personal beliefs and backgrounds of correctional staff affect their ability to interact with transgender juvenile offenders?

The findings from this study can be used to improve interactions between transgender juvenile offenders and correctional staff members. Effective communication was chosen as an area of study after reviewing the research about the lived experiences of transgender juvenile offenders. One of the reoccurring themes throughout the literature was how transgender juveniles were mistreated through communication from correctional staff. When LGBTQI advocates make recommendations, they always include respectful communication as a running theme. Irvine and Canfield (2017) suggested the following recommendations to reduce discrimination and mistreatment:

1. Respectful communication with and about LGBTQI/GNCT youth;
2. Meaningful and accessible grievance procedures for youth to confidentially report abuse, harassment, or discrimination without risk of retaliation;
3. Use of preferred names and pronouns;
4. Housing and placement decisions on a case-by-case basis that consider youths' current gender identities rather than the sex assigned at birth. This is particularly important for transgender youth who have transitioned to a gender other than their birth sex;
5. Pat downs and searches of transgender and gender-nonconforming youth by staff members that are of the youths' same gender identity;
6. Accommodations that ensure the privacy and safety of transgender youth in showers, changing clothes, etc.; and
7. Provision of transition-related medical needs of transgender youth.

In Chapter 3, I discuss the research methods including the selection of participants and research design along with data collection and analysis. This chapter will offer a summation of the proposed purpose of this study and show how the research questions are relevant and aligned with the study.

Measures

The purpose of this study was to strengthen the relationships between correctional staff members and transgender juvenile offenders through adequate training and inclusive policies and procedures. To address the gap in the literature, the research approach was an action research study used a mixed-method quasi-experimental design. I provided correctional staff members with an implicit bias test, training with a pretest and a posttest, and the opportunity to participate in a focus group interview; these methods provided insight into the correctional experience for transgender juvenile offenders, assisted in a comprehensive interpretation and formation of policies and procedures, and helped to develop a more knowledgeable understanding of transgender juvenile offenders to provide adequate care.

Action Research

Lewin (1946) first described *action research* as a radical approach in social research by combining theories with changing the social constructs or systems by a researcher who is engaged in the social environment (Elliott, 1991). Action research is achieved by enacting change and generating new knowledge about the identified system. In 1946, Lewin defined action research as “a comparative research on the conditions and effects of various forms of social action and research leading to social actions.” (Elliott,

1991). The researcher applies social actions to the identified social constructs or system to change a set of social actions that have individuals constricted or marginalized. Craig (2009) stated that the goal of action research is to focus on the betterment of future practices rather than dwell on past mishaps that lack sound theoretical evidence. One of the leading characteristics of action research is recognizing a need for change. In 2010, Mertens suggested that a researcher involved in action research seeks to improve interactions among individuals as well as practices within social situations. This research also seeks to reshape belief systems through a thorough research process (Mertens, 2010). The basis of this research is to identify, investigate, explore, and ultimately, challenge the perceptions of individuals who work with juvenile offenders who identify as LGBTQI, more specifically, transgender juvenile offenders.

Philosophical Assumption

The philosophical assumption of this mixed-methods quasi-experimental research sided with the advocacy/participatory approach. Creswell (2007) posited that the advocacy/participatory approach concerns itself with sociopolitical issues, it is orientated in empowerment, it is collaborative in a way to stop marginalization of the participants, and it is change oriented. The worldview of the advocacy/participatory approach is to establish equality and fairness in a way that individuals are constrained because they belong to a certain group. Moreover, the connection between advocacy/participatory approach and action research is that both seek to bring change. The use of action research from an advocacy/participatory approach supports the correctional staff at the participating youth center in developing new skills to effectively communicate with

transgender juvenile offenders and others who identify as LGBTQI. This research seeks to empower both the correctional staff and transgender juvenile offenders in a way that encourages effective interactions.

Methodology

A mixed-methods quasi-experimental design was implemented to understand how lack of knowledge and personal beliefs can hinder effective interactions between correctional staff members and transgender juvenile offenders. The mixed-methods design is appropriate for this study because using a single method, such as quantitative or qualitative, would not give an adequate in-depth account of the lived experiences of the chosen participants in this study or the discovered phenomenon (Creswell, 2011, pp. 12–13). To effectively elaborate on a subject matter, a mixed-methods design can be used to clarify and explain experiences using multiple methods in a single research model (Jang et al., 2008). The main reason for applying mixed methods to this research was to ensure the integrity of the treatment being provided and to establish the trustworthiness of the intervention being provided (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2006). This method was chosen for its alignment with the research questions and simple methodological strategy.

First, the participants took the Harvard Implicit Bias Test. This test was a series of questions and pictures that helped to identify if the participant had a bias against or for individuals who identified as LGBTQI. Upon completion of this survey, the participant was identified as having an automatic preference to straight or gay people. Gay in this survey covered the LGBTQI community as a general identifier. Descriptive variables were added to the Harvard Implicit Bias Test to capture age, education, gender, race,

ethnicity, religion, and occupation. Next, a pretest designed by McRae (2016, p. 116) for “Interrupting the silence: an action research study to transform a juvenile justice culture for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTQI) youth” was administered. The pretest consists of 20 questions that evaluate the knowledge of correctional staff about the LGBTQI community and, included qualitative questions 12-15, that gave a more in-depth response for the participant. Then, the participants engaged in sensitivity training by the Equity Project (2015). This training consists of videos, PowerPoints, and questions. At the end of the training, a posttest survey was administered that consists of the same 20 questions as the pretest with an additional question added that asked participants if they would like to participate in a focus group where they will be interviewed as a group with four other colleagues on their thoughts about the training and the policies and procedures used within the institution. Those who volunteered completed the focus group right after the training was complete.

Participants

In this study, the targeted population were eighty correctional staff ($N= 80$) who had experience working with transgender juvenile offenders including corrections officers, detention counselors, mental health staff, caseworkers, recreational staff, and supervisors. This group was targeted because of their unique knowledge of policies and procedures and daily interactions with transgender juvenile offenders. The only criteria for the participants in this study is a year of experience working in a juvenile setting with transgender juvenile offenders. Wiersma and Jars (2005) explained that non-probability sampling does not need randomization techniques to select members because the research

has a selective group that they want to sample in mind. Therefore, purposive sampling was used where members of a specified group are sought after because these participants will be able to shed insight on their interactions with transgender juvenile offenders as well as interpret the policies and procedures, they implement daily (Wiersma & Jurs, 2005).

Population

The participants for this research study came from a youth center on the East Coast of the United States. The center provided a facilitator who administered the Implicit Bias test, pretest, intervention, and posttest as part of an annual professional development training for 200 employees. The targeted population ($N= 80$) was sampled from this number (200 employees) based on meeting the criteria of one year of service working directly with transgender juvenile offenders. The population consisted of ($N = 80$) correctional staff from a variety of job descriptions and duties. All the research material was electronic and was completed via a computer.

Data Collection

A mixed-methods approach was used in this action research study. The selection of this method of inquiry was based on philosophical assumption of advocacy/participatory approach which is geared towards change. Understanding that to move toward change an intervention of some kind must occur. But prior to the intervention, a basis on inference must be established. Then, after the basis of inference has been established and the intervention applied, an evaluation of growth or lack of, can be performed. These elements are represented in the study in the form of a pretest and post-

test analysis and training followed by a focus group. This data collection is a holistic and in-depth interpretation of correctional staff perceptions and beliefs about LGBTQI youth, but more specifically, transgender juvenile offenders. The mixed-methods quasi-experimental design for this study used the Implicit Bias test to determine one's bias regarding sexuality followed by a one group pretest and posttest design, which includes an intervention in between testing followed by a focus group to answer the sub questions that are informed by the primary research questions of this study (Creswell, 2017). The Equity Project Curriculum was chosen because the material presented in the training translated well with the preexisting test that served as the pre and post-test.

The data collection for this action research mixed method quasi-experimental design consisted of 80 correctional staff which includes correctional officers, recreation workers, social workers, managers, clinicians, and therapists. These participants were broken into four groups of 20 to complete the Harvard Implicit Bias Test, training, and the pre/posttest. This process provided the quantitative section of this research design. In order to collect the qualitative portion of this research design, there was a question added to the posttest that asked if anyone would like to partake in a focus group after they have completed the other parts of the research. Participants were aware that this was on a volunteer basis and that their responses are being recorded. The pre and posttest also includes four open-ended questions that were analyzed as well.

This focus group allowed the participants to elaborate on their thought process when working with transgender youth as well as on the Harvard Implicit Bias Test and the sensitivity training, they just received. The targeted number for the Focus Group is n

=20. These 20 participants were separated into 4 groups of 5 people at a time. To ensure that the information represented in this focus group is conducive to the alignment of this study the research applied the sampling strategy that is appropriate for the number participants that are generated. For example, if there are more than 20 volunteers, the researcher would have applied stratified random sampling ensuring that diversity is represented in areas like education level, race, gender, and ethnicity. If the generation of volunteers is less than 20 then, the researcher would apply the convenience sampling by selecting the participants who volunteered. The focus group lasted, until all participants who had volunteered were interviewed or when the themes of the interviews begins to be repeated and saturation happens. The focus group interviews were recorded using a cell phone app. The participants were aware that they were being recorded and the researcher gained permission by the organization to use a cell phone to record the interviews.

Focus Group Questions

The following questions were asked in the Focus Group interview:

1. Can you elaborate on your feelings about the training on LGBTQI youth that you just received? Was it helpful, if so in what way? What did you learn?

What did you think of your score on the Implicit Bias Test? Did you feel it was accurate? If yes, why? If no, why not?

2. What are some of the policies and procedures that are in place for working with transgender youth?

a. For example, how are pat downs and searches conducted with transgender youth?

- b. Are transgender and nonconforming youth pat down by staff that are of the youths' same gender identity?
 - c. What are the policies regarding transgender youth in the shower?
 - d. What are the policies regarding housing transgender youth?
3. How do other staff feel about working with transgender youth?
- a. Do other staff refer to transgender youth by their preferred names and pronouns?
 - b. How are transgender youth treated when they report abuse, harassment, or discrimination?

Data Analysis Plan

The first step in data analysis was to interpret the findings from the Harvard Implicit Bias Test. To analyze the findings from the Harvard Implicit Bias Test, the preference levels must be categorized. Therefore, the following categorizations was used to identify the participants preference for Straight or Gay people (the Harvard Implicit Bias Test used the term Gay to include the entire LGBTQI community). The Harvard Implicit Bias Test will be analyzed by using a Likert Scale measuring ordinal variables for this data set. The preference codes were labeled as follows; where strong preference for straight was coded as 0, moderate preference for straight was coded as 1, slight preference for straight was coded as 2, no preference will be coded as 3, slight preference for gay was coded as 4, moderate preference for gay is coded was 5, and strong preference for gay is coded was 6. After this data was collected, descriptive statistics such as the percentage of participants who fall into each category was examined along with

one's age, race, religion, gender, education level. Bivariate correlations and chi square were used to examine if there were any relationships between the variables and their preference score on the Harvard Implicit Bias Test. The data collected from the Harvard Implicit Bias Test along with the bivariate correlations and chi square helped to answer research question 2 - Do correctional staff hold biases for or against LGBTQI youth.

The pre and post-test data were analyzed using change scores where the total posttest score was subtracted from the total pre-test score. A cross tabulation (also known as bivariate correlation) was used to examine one's score from the Implicit Bias test and the pre and post-test scores. The cross tabulation consisted of crossing one's implicit bias score preference with one's pre-test score, post-test score, and overall change score. Next, a Kruskal-Wallis H test (sometimes called the one-way ANOVA on ranks) was used to identify if the pre-test, post-test, and overall change scores were significant. The data collected from the pre and post-test along with the Harvard Implicit Bias test, cross tabulations, and Kruskal-Wallis H test were used to address research question 2 - Do correctional staff hold biases for or against LGBTQI youth and research question

Demographic variables also were crossed with the total pre-test score, total post-test score, and overall change score to better understand the impact of demographic categories on test scores. Next, a Kruskal-Wallis H test was used to examine whether the differences observed within the cross tabulations were significant. This information was used to address research question 3 - Do the personal beliefs of the correctional staff effect their ability to engage in effective interactions with transgender juvenile offenders.

The open-ended questions (12-15) from the pre and post-test along with the focus group interviews were transcribed and uploaded to NVivo, a software program that assists in finding themes in qualitative data. The data collected from the focus group interviews was used to address research question 1 - Do policies and procedures for transgender juvenile offenders foster effective interactions between correctional staff and transgender juvenile offenders; and research question 2 - Do correctional staff hold biases for or against LGBTQI youth. The data collected from the open-ended questions was used to address research question 1 - Do policies and procedures for transgender juvenile offenders foster effective interactions between correctional staff and transgender juvenile offenders.

The data collection used for this research design was a holistic approach that examined the use of training to reduce bias when working with transgender juvenile offenders in the juvenile justice system from both a quantitative as well as qualitative perspective. The data collected from the Harvard Implicit Bias test along with the Pre/Posttest, and the Focus Group interviews would provide an in-depth look into the lived experiences of the correctional staff that interact with transgender juvenile offenders daily.

Role of the Researcher

My role as the researcher was to ensure confidentiality, credibility, reliability, and validity. The first step is confidentiality, which is protected by a coding system that consisted of a numerical code assigned to each participant to eliminate personal identifiers. Only the participant's numerical code was used when entering and working

with data from the implicit bias test, pre-test, post-test, and focus group interviews. The list of names linked to the numerical identifiers will be stored in the researcher's office under lock and key. Five years after data collection, the list of names with numerical identifiers will be shredded by the researcher. To decrease ethical issues, the researcher chose to focus on adult correctional staff as participants rather than the transgender youth themselves.

Summary

This research study was conducted to help address the gap in juvenile justice research that addresses the treatment and care of transgender juvenile offenders inside juvenile centers. This research focused on examining a training that is attempted to improve interactions between correctional staff and transgender youth and how one's personal bias may hinder effective interactions between these two groups. This Action Research Advocacy/Participatory study was geared towards changing attitudes, understanding, communication, policies, and procedures that specifically address transgender youth in the correctional setting.

Chapter 4 consists of a comprehensive synopsis of the data analyses, as well as a determination whether statically significance existed among the independent and dependent variables specified for this mixed method study. Furthermore, the conclusion, of this mixed method study is presented in Chapter 5, it contains interpretations of the findings, recommendations of future changes or amendments to policies, laws, and actions, the social change implications, the study's limitations, possible future research and conclusions.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to better understand if correctional staff hold biases for or against the LGBTQI community, if their personal beliefs affect how they engage with transgender juvenile offenders, and if policies and procedures within the institution foster effective interactions between staff and transgender juveniles. Since attitudes and beliefs can cover a wide spectrum of themes, this research focused on corrections officers' religious beliefs and attitudes expressed via communication. Effective communication was chosen as an area of study after reviewing the research about the lived experiences of transgender juvenile offenders. One of the reoccurring themes throughout the literature was how transgender juveniles are mistreated through communication from correctional staff (Mills & Gilbert, 2014). The following research questions were examined:

RQ1: Do policies and procedures for transgender juvenile offenders foster effective interactions between correctional staff and transgender juvenile offenders?

RQ2: Do correctional staff hold biases against LGBTQI youth?

RQ3: Do the personal beliefs and backgrounds of correctional staff members affect their ability to interact with transgender juvenile offenders?

In this chapter, I explored the quantitative results of this study and examined the impact of correctional staff members' implicit bias and personal beliefs regarding the LGBTQI community before and after a training on the LGBTQI community. Qualitative data was also gathered from open-ended questions on the pretest and posttest that

examined personal beliefs, support systems in place for the LGBTQI population, and inclusion. Focus group interviews were used to better understand correctional staff members' implicit bias, personal beliefs, and interactions with transgender youth as well as policies and procedures within the institution. The Themes from Questions 12–15 from the pretest and posttest along with the focus group interviews also were examined.

Data Collection

The population for this study consisted of 80 staff members from the participating youth center who participated in a training on the LGBTQI community and completed a pretest and a posttest of their knowledge and an implicit bias test that focused on the LGBTQI community. The pretest also captured demographic data, such as gender, age, occupation, race, religious preference, and education.

This study focused on four training sessions that occurred over two days. Two training sessions were held each day with twenty participants in each session for a total of eighty participants. Each training session was two hours in length and began with the participants completing the Harvard implicit bias test electronically on a computer, printing their results, and submitting them to the training facilitator. Next, participants completed a pretest with 21 questions, followed by a training guided by a trainer on the LGBTQI population. At the completion of the training, participants completed the posttest that contained the same 21 questions as the pretest. Finally, the data from the Harvard implicit bias test along with the information collected from the pretest and posttest were entered into SPSS for analysis; each participant was given a code identifier to protect their identity.

On the pretest questionnaire, participants were asked if they would be willing to participate in a focus group interview with others who had completed the training session. Out of eighty total participants, twenty volunteered to participate in a focus group. After each training session, those who volunteered were led to a training room. The training room was a private room that allowed the participants to answer questions openly and honestly. The room was well lit and equipped with a smartboard and a microphone. Four total focus groups were conducted with each group consisting of five participants who had completed the training session together. The focus group interviews began immediately after all the training for the day was done. The focus group interviews lasted about 1.5 hours. Participants in each of the focus groups were asked the same open-ended questions. I used a cellphone with a recording app to record the interviews for later transcription. I used NVivo to analyze the transcriptions to determine the overarching themes from the focus group interviews.

Demographics Statistics

The population for this study consisted of eighty staff members from the participating youth center. The following demographic variables were examined: gender, age, race, religious preference, education, and occupation. Of the eighty participants, 51.3% ($n = 41$) were female and 48.8% ($n = 39$) were male. The majority were between the ages of 31 and 40 (48.8%), followed by those who were between 41 and 50 (25.0%). Those who were between 21 and 30 years of age were the third largest group (16.3%), and the smallest age group was between 51 and 60 (10.0%). More than half of the participants reported their race as Black (53.8%), followed by White (20.0%),

Hispanic/Latino (12.5%), Biracial (7.5%), Native American (5.0%), and Asian (1.3%).

The most reported religious preference was Catholic (31.3%), followed by Baptist (17.5%), and Christian (15.0%). Several participants identified as spiritual (10.0%) or as nonbelievers (10.0%). Others reported their religious preference as Protestant (6.3%), Methodist (3.8%), Jewish (3.8%), Muslim (1.3%), or Jehovah's witness (1.3%). Over half of the participants had obtained a college degree (57.5%) with several reporting some college (17.5%) or their highest level of education as graduating from high school (15.0%). A few had completed some postgraduate work (6.3%) or had completed their postgraduate degree (3.8%). Most participants reported their occupation as direct service providers or Youth Development Representatives (63.8%), followed by those who reported their occupation as professionals (33.8%), and administrators (2.5%). (See Table 1.)

Table 1 Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Variable	%	<i>n</i>
Gender		
Male	48.8	39
Female	51.3	41
Age		
21–30	16.3	13
31–40	48.8	39
41–50	25.0	20
51–60	10.0	8
Race		
Black	53.8	43
White	20.0	16
Native American	5.0	4
Hispanic/Latino	12.5	10
Asian	1.3	1
Biracial	8.5	6
Education		
High school graduate	15.0	12
Some college	17.5	14
College graduate	57.5	46
Some postgraduate work	6.3	5
Postgraduate degree	3.8	3
Occupation		
Administrator	2.5	2
Professional	33.8	27
Direct service	63.8	51
Religion		
Baptist	17.5	14
Catholic	31.3	25
Christian	15.0	12
Protestant	5.3	5
Methodist	3.8	3
Jewish	3.8	3
Muslim	1.3	1
Spiritual	10.0	8
Jehovah's witness	1.3	1
Nonbelievers/other	10.0	8
Total	100	80

Harvard Implicit Bias Test Results

The Harvard implicit bias test was used to better understand one's preference for straight or gay. Over half of the participants scored as strong preference for straight (57.5%), while several were categorized as moderate preference for straight (16.3%). The next largest category was no preference (11.3%), followed by slight preference for straight (7.5%), moderate preference for gay (5.0%), slight preference for gay (1.3%), and strong preference for gay (1.3%). (See Table 2).

Table 2

Harvard Implicit Bias Test Results

Preference	%	<i>n</i>
Strong preference for straight	57.5	46
Moderate preference for straight	16.3	13
Slight preference for straight	7.5	6
No preference for gay/straight	11.3	9
Slight preference for gay	1.3	1
Moderate preference for gay	5.0	4
Strong preference for gay	1.3	1
Total	100	80

Central Tendency

Measures of central tendency along with the standard deviation for the total pretest score, total posttest score, and total change score were examined to better understand the results of the tests. The pre and posttest consisted of eleven questions where one received a 0 if they answered the question incorrectly and a 1 if they answered the question correctly. These scores were then added together to determine one's total score on the pre-test as well as the post-test, while one's total change score was determined by subtracting one's total post-test score from one's total pre-test score. The

average score on the pre-test was a 7.32 with the most common score being a 9, while the average score on the post-test was a 10.39 with the most common score being an 11. The total change score average was 3.07 with 2 being the most common score. Therefore, we can see there was improvement in the test scores where on average one's score increased by 3.07 from pre to posttest. Even when taking into consideration the standard deviation of 1.767 for the total change score, we can still see there were improvements in one's overall posttest score after completion of the training. (See Table 3).

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations for Pretest, Posttest, and Overall Change Scores

	M	SD
Pretest score	7.32	2.137
Posttest score	10.39	.765
Overall change score	3.07	1.767

Results

Gender Quantitative Results

Quantitative results from the demographic variables along with one's score on the Implicit Bias test were used to examine research question 2 "do correctional staff hold biases for or against LGBTQI youth?". To understand the relationship between these categorical variables, one's score on the implicit bias test was crossed with each of the demographic variable. When crossing the variables implicit bias and gender, males ($n=7$) were a little more likely to score as moderate preference for straight than females ($n=4$) and females ($n=6$) were somewhat more likely to score as no preference than males ($n=3$). Otherwise, there were few differences between males and females.

Age Quantitative Results

When examining age crossed with one's implicit bias score, 62.5% of those between 51 and 60 ($n=5$) scored strong preference for straight, followed by 60.0% of those between 31 and 40 ($n=21$), 54.5% of those between 21 and 30 ($n=6$), and 52.9% of those between 41 and 50 ($n=9$). The next most common score was moderate preference for straight with 25.0% of those between 51 and 60 ($n=2$) receiving this score, followed by 17.6% of those 41 to 50 ($n=3$), 14.3% of those 31 to 40 ($n=5$), and 9.1% of those 21 to 30 ($n=1$).

Race Quantitative Results

There also were few differences between groups when examining implicit bias and race. For instance, the most common implicit bias score for all races was strong preference for straight ($n=41$, 57.7%) with 66.7% of Native Americans ($n=2$), 66.7% of Biracial ($n=4$), 60.5% of Blacks ($n=23$), 50.0% of Whites ($n=7$), and 50.0% of Hispanic/Latinos ($n=5$) receiving this score. The next most common implicit bias score for all races was moderate preference for straight ($n=11$; 15.5%) with 33.3% of Native Americans ($n=1$), 18.4% of all Blacks ($n=7$), 14.3% of all Whites ($n=2$), and 10.0% of all Hispanics/Latinos ($n=1$) receiving this score.

Occupation Quantitative Results

There were few differences when examining education and occupation as well. The majority of respondents scored strong preference for straight with 80% of those with postgraduate ($n=1$) and some post graduate work ($n=4$) receiving this score followed by 63.6% of high school graduates ($n=7$), 56.1% of college graduates ($n=23$), and 50.0% of

those with some college ($n=7$). Slight differences were noticed when examining implicit bias score and occupation between professionals and direct service providers. However, there were many more direct services providers ($n=45$) than professionals ($n=24$) in the study, which makes these differences negligible.

Religious Preference Quantitative Results

Religious preference was spread over several religions with many categories having anywhere between 1 and 7 participants. This made it difficult to analyze the data, so this variable was broken down into Baptist ($n=13$), Catholic ($n=22$), and Christian which includes the categories Christian, Protestant, and Methodist ($n=18$). The other religious preference categories were not examined due to the low number of participants. However, there were very few differences between religious preferences on the implicit bias test and strong preference for straight was the most common response for all three religious' groups.

Chi-Square Test of Independence Results

A chi square test of independence was used to better understand if there were associations between the categorical variables. However, the chi square tests showed there was not a significant difference between each of the demographic variable when crossed with the Harvard Implicit Bias Test.

Harvard Implicit Bias Test results and one's total score for the pre-test, post-test, and change scores were examined to better understand if there were significant differences between the groups regarding implicit bias. Nine participants were determined to be outliers because they scored a perfect score on the pretest and a perfect

score on the posttest. This suggests that the training did not affect these nine participants as they demonstrated they already knew the material. Therefore, they were removed from this analysis leaving a total of 71 participants.

Kruskal-Wallis H Test Results

A Kruskal-Wallis H test was conducted to examine if there were significant differences between two or more groups of an independent variable on an ordinal dependent variable. (Laerd Statistics, n.d.). The independent variable for this test was implicit bias and the following dependent variables were examined: total pre-test score, total post-test score, and overall change score. The results showed there was not a significant difference when examining implicit bias results with total pre-test score, total post-test score, and overall change scores.

Kruskal-Wallis H Test Crossed with Demographics Results

Demographic variables along with one's score on the total pre-test, total post-test, and overall change score were used to examine research question 3 "do the personal beliefs and backgrounds of correctional staff effect their ability to interact with transgender juvenile offenders?". To understand the relationship between one's score on the total pre-test, total post-test, and overall change score were crossed with each of the demographic variables. Nine participants were determined to be outliers because they scored a perfect score on the pretest and a perfect score on the posttest. This suggests that the training did not affect these nine participants as they demonstrated they already knew the material. Therefore, they were removed from this analysis leaving a total of 71 participants.

Kruskal-Wallis H Test Gender Results

There were very few differences between males and females when examining total pretest scores. For instance, only the total pretest score of 10 and 3 had a difference of two between males and females, while the remaining six response categories saw differences of only one between males and females. Women ($n=34$) were more likely to score an 11 or a 10 than men ($n=25$), while men ($n=10$) were more likely to score a 9 than women ($n=2$). There also were very few differences between males and females for overall change score. An overall change score of 4 was more common for males ($n=8$) than females ($n=3$). However, women ($n=12$) were more likely to receive a change score of 3 or 5 than men ($n=6$).

Kruskal-Wallis H Test Age and Pretest Score

There does appear to be differences between the groups when examining age. For example, those 40 and under tended to score higher on the pretest than those 41 and older. The total pretest results showed 80% of those between 31-40 and 55% of those between 21-30 scored between 8-10 on the pretest, while only 29% of those between 41-50 and 13% of those between 51-60 scored between an 8-10 on the pretest.

Kruskal-Wallis H Test Age Posttest Score

There were few differences between the age groups when examining total posttest scores. For example, the most common score for all age groups was an 11 with 55% of those between 21-30, 60% of those between 31-40, 53% of those between 41-50, and 50% of those between 51-60 scoring an 11 on the posttest.

Kruskal-Wallis H Test Age and Overall Change Scores

However, there also were differences when examining overall change scores by age groups, where the most common overall change score for those between 21-30 was 1 (36%) and the most common overall change score for those between 31-40 was 2 (49%). Those between the ages of 41-50 were most likely to have an overall change score of 4 (29%) and the most common overall change score for those between 51-60 was 5 (38%). Therefore, those 41 and older tended to see the biggest growth between total pretest and posttest scores.

Race and Pretest Score Results

There were some differences between groups when examining race and one's score on the pretest. For instance, those who reported their race as White tended to score the lowest with the most common score on the pretest being a 3 ($n=4$, 28.6%) followed by Hispanics with the most common score being 4 ($n=4$, 40%). In comparison, the most common pretest score for those who were Black/African American was a 9 ($n=9$, 23.7%) followed by an 8 ($n=8$, 21.1%). Those who were Native American ($n=3$) scored between 5-8, while those who were Biracial ($n=6$) scored between 5 and 9. However, there were very few people in both categories.

Kruskal-Wallis H Test Posttest Scores and Race

However, there were very few differences when examining posttest scores and race. The most common posttest score for Blacks ($n=26$, 68.4%), Hispanics ($n=6$, 60%), and Whites ($n=6$, 42.9%) was an 11. Native Americans ($n=3$) and those who are Biracial were evenly spread across posttest scores of 10 and 11. Those who were White tended to

see the biggest gains when examining posttest scores. For instance, Whites were the most likely to see a change score of 4 ($n=3$, 21.4%) and 6 ($n=3$, 21.4%). The most common change score for those who were Black ($n=12$, 31.6%) and Hispanic ($n=4$, 40%) was a 2. Native American saw change scores ranging from 1-5, while those who were Biracial had change scores ranging from 1-4.

Kruskal-Wallis H Test Religious Preference and Pretest Scores

Religious preference was spread over several religions with many categories having anywhere between 1 and 7 participants. This made it difficult to analyze the data, so this variable was broken down into Baptist ($n=13$), Catholic ($n=22$), and Christian which includes the categories Christian, Protestant, and Methodist ($n=18$). The other religious preference categories were not examined due to the low number of participants. Christians tended to score the highest on the pretest with the most common pretest score being 9 ($n=7$, 38.8%). The most common pretest score for Catholics was 9 ($n=6$, 27.3%) followed by 5 ($n=5$, 22.7%). Baptists had pretest scores that ranged from 5-10 with anywhere from 1-3 participants for each of these scores.

Kruskal-Wallis H Test Religious Preference and Posttest Scores

However, there were very few differences noticed in the posttest by religious preference. The most common posttest score was an 11 with most Baptists ($n=10$, 76.9%), Christians ($n=13$, 72.2%), and Catholics ($n=9$, 40.9%) receiving this posttest score. There were some differences in change scores for religious preference. The most common change score for Christians was a 2 ($n=8$, 44.4%), while the most common change scores for Baptists and Catholics were more spread out. For instance, the most

common change score for Baptists was a 2 ($n=4$, 30.8%) followed by a 5 ($n=3$, 23.1%), while for Catholics the most common change scores were 1 ($n=5$, 22.7%) and 4 ($n=5$, 22.7%).

Kruskal-Wallis H Test Education Level and Pretest Scores

There were some differences when examining education and pretest scores. High school graduates tended to score the lowest on the pretest with the most common score being a 3 ($n=3$, 27.3%) or a 5 ($n=3$, 27.3%). Those with some college scored higher with the most common pretest score being 8 ($n=6$, 42.9%), while those who have graduated from college tended to score a 9 ($n=12$, 29.3%) followed by a 10 ($n=8$, 19.5%). The categories of some postgraduate and postgraduate were combined due to the small numbers in these categories ($n=5$). The most common score was 9 ($n=2$, 40%), but the remaining participants in this category ranged from 3-8.

Kruskal-Wallis H Test Educational Level and Posttest Scores

There also were some differences noted when examining education and posttest scores. For instance, the most common score for those with a high school diploma was a 9 ($n=5$, 45.5%), while the most common score for those who had some college ($n=10$, 71.4%) and who were college graduates ($n=25$, 61%) was an 11. Those who had some postgraduate work and those who had completed their postgraduate work were evenly divided between a posttest score of 9 ($n=2$, 40%) and 11 ($n=2$, 40%). High school graduates also saw the biggest gains when examining overall change scores, where the most common change scores were 4 ($n=3$, 27.3%) and 5 ($n=3$, 27.3%).

Kruskal-Wallis H Test Occupation and Pretest Scores

There were some differences noted when examining pre-test scores and occupation. There were only 2 participants who served in the administration role, so they were left out of this analysis to protect their confidentiality. Those who were categorized as professional received a 9 ($n=7$, 29.2%) for the most common pretest score. However, this was closely followed by a pre-test score of 8 ($n=6$, 25%) and 10 ($n=5$, 20.8%). Those who were categorized as direct services received a 5 ($n=11$, 24.4%) as their most common score, but this was closely followed by a pre-test score of 9 ($n=9$, 20%).

Kruskal-Wallis H Test Occupation and Posttest Scores

There were very few differences between professionals and direct service providers when examining posttest scores. The most common score for professionals ($n=19$, 79.2%) and direct service providers ($n=19$, 42.2%) was an 11.

Kruskal-Wallis H Test Occupation and Change Scores

However, there were differences between professionals and direct service providers when examining change scores. For instance, the most common change score for professionals was a 1 ($n=7$, 29.2%) and a 2 ($n=7$, 29.2%). However, direct service providers saw a greater range within their change scores with a range of change scores from 1-8. The most common change score for direct service providers was 2 ($n=13$, 28.9%) followed by 4 ($n=8$, 17.8%) and 5 ($n=8$, 17.8%).

Significant Findings

A Kruskal-Wallis H test was conducted to examine if there were significant differences between two or more groups of an independent variable on a continuous

dependent variable. (Laerd Statistics, n.d.). The demographic variables were the independent variable for this test and the following dependent variables were examined: total pre-test score, total post-test score, and overall change score. Nine participants were determined to be outliers because they scored a perfect score on the pretest and a perfect score on the posttest. This suggests that the training did not affect these nine participants as they demonstrated they already knew the material. Therefore, they were removed from this analysis leaving a total of 71 participants. Some significant differences between the groups were found for the demographic variables age, education, and occupation.

Age Significant Finding

For instance, age was significant when examining pre-test and overall change score. A Kruskal-Wallis H test showed that there was a statistically significant difference in pre-test scores between the different categories for age. $X^2(3) = 14.778, p = .002$, with a mean rank score of 37.73 for age group (21-30), 43.77 for age group (31-40), 27.68 for age group (41-50), and 17.31 for age group (51-60). A Kruskal-Wallis H test also found a statistically significant difference in overall change scores between the different categories for age. $X^2(3) = 16.034, p = .0021$, with a mean rank score of 34.73 for age group (21-30), 27.93 for age group (31-40), 44.15 for age group (41-50), and 55.75 for age group (51-60). (See Table 4).

Table 4

Means, Standard Deviations, and Overall Change Scores for Participants on Age

Age group scores	Pretest		Posttest		Overall change	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
21–30 (n=11)	7.45*	2.382	10.45*	.688	3.00	1.897
31–40 (n=35)	8.23*	1.330	10.51*	.658	2.29	1.045
41–50 (n=17)	6.41*	2.320	10.18*	.951	3.76	1.821
51–60 (n=8)	5.13*	2.232	10.25*	.886	5.13	2.031

Note. * Kruskal-Wallis H test significant at $p = .002$

Education Significant Finding

Education was significant when examining pretest, posttest, and overall change scores. A Kruskal-Wallis H test showed that there was a statistically significant difference in pre-test scores between the different categories for education. $X^2(4) = 16.796$, $p = .002$, with a mean rank score of 14.41 for high school graduates, 40.29 for some college, 40.80 for college graduates, 26.88 for some post graduate work, and 53.00 for postgraduate. A Kruskal-Wallis H test also found a statistically significant difference in post-test scores between the different categories for education. $X^2(4) = 10.820$, $p = .029$, with a mean rank score of 23.00 for high school graduates, 41.96 for some college, 38.48 for college graduates, 21.63 for some post graduate work, and 51.50 for postgraduate. A Kruskal-Wallis H test also showed that there was a statistically significant difference in overall change scores between the different categories for education. $X^2(4) = 13.428$, $p = .009$, with a mean rank score of 55.68 for high school graduates, 32.86 for some college, 31.50 for college graduates, 41.75 for some post graduate work, and 25.00 for postgraduate. (See Table 5).

Table 5

Means, Standard Deviations, and Overall Change Scores for Participants on Education

Education scores	Pretest		Posttest		Overall change	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
High school (n = 11)	4.73*	2.054	9.82**	.874	5.09***	1.973
Some college (n = 14)	8.00*	1.240	10.64**	.633	2.64***	1.151
College graduate (n = 41)	7.85*	1.838	10.51**	.675	2.66***	1.543
Some postgraduate (n = 5)	6.80*	2.683	10.00**	.957	3.20***	1.789

Note. Kruskal-Wallis H test significant at * $p = .002$; ** $p = .029$; *** $p = .009$

Occupation Significant Finding

Occupation also was found to be significant when examining pretest and posttest.

A Kruskal-Wallis H test showed that there was a statistically significant difference in pretest scores between the different categories for occupation. $X^2(2) = 7.164$, $p = .028$, with a mean rank score of 45.50 for administrative staff, 44.42 for professional staff, and 31.09 for direct supervisors. A Kruskal-Wallis H test also found a statistically significant difference in posttest scores between the different categories for occupation. $X^2(2) = 9.305$, $p = .010$, with a mean rank score of 51.50 for administrative staff, 44.06 for professional staff, and 31.01 for direct supervisors. (See Table 6).

Table 6

Means, Standard Deviations, and Overall Change Scores for Participants on Occupation

Occupation scores	Pretest		Posttest		Overall change	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Professional staff (n = 24)	8.25*	1.595	10.71**	.624	2.46	1.382
Direct service/YDR(n=45)	6.78*	2.255	10.20**	.786	3.42	1.901

Note. Kruskal-Wallis H test significant at * $p = .028$; ** $p = .010$

Qualitative Results

The second part of this quasi-experimental mixed method study was the qualitative portion, which included an analysis of open-ended questions 12-15 from the pre and posttests (See Table A) along with focus group interviews. To analyze the qualitative data from the pretest, posttest, and focus group interviews, participants' responses were entered into NVivo. NVivo is a software program that takes transcribed data and finds themes and codes to indicate the areas most covered by the participants' in their responses. The analysis below will begin with examining themes from questions 12-15 from the pre and posttests completed by all 80 participants followed by the focus group interviews.

Professionalism Theme Questions 12-15

Professionalism was identified as a theme when examining questions 12 and 13, which focused on personal beliefs regarding the LGBTQI population. Staff across the board stressed how important it was and is to remain professional no matter your job title and no matter whom you are providing services to within the facility. Participants elaborate on professionalism in the following direct quotes:

Participant 8000 said,

Professionalism is at the core of everything we do. It entails confidential, self-control, proper reporting, acceptance, cultural competencies, awareness, and so many other things. The lack of respect to any one of these, is a sign of unprofessionalism. So, I do not have any personal beliefs about LGBTQI besides, they are human like everybody else.

Participant 1200 said,

As an Administrator, I set the tone of what professionalism looks like here at this youth center. And it is the simplest things we do to be and remain professional. Speaking when entering a room, acknowledging others, check- ins, follow ups, following proper protocols, knowing policy and procedures. Team building, accountability of self and others. With my personal feeling about LGBTQI don't matter if I am representing this youth center.

Participant 300 said,

The organization's Codes of Conduct is a guiding principle on how we as workers are supposed to act. I must check my personal feelings at the door. Do, I have personal feelings that are contrary to what the agency says about LGBTQI individuals, Yes. But, do they matter inside the walls of this youth center, Absolutely not.

Participant 6500 said,

I personally am affected by alternative lifestyle living. I have a brother who identifies as LGBTQI. I have witness firsthand how people can be unprofessional and not know it or just do not care. I try to be neutral when in situations where individuals are being unprofessional, but then I have a responsibility to myself, my brother, and my job to correct my workers. My feelings about LGBTQI is that love is love.

Participant 200 said,

The culture here at this youth center is to be respectful and open to everybody no matter what. We are trained on how to handle different situations and how important it is to not overreact or become emotional when handling certain situations. They stress the importance of confidentiality and I believe all of this goes with Professionalism.

Participant 5500 said,

We are family here and we hold each other accountable for our words and actions. We are always trained to remain professional. We are not to discuss our personal business on the milieu. We are trained to de-escalate tense situations. It is important not to let my outside convictions interfere with my work. This is what is called not being biased and being able to work with anybody.

Participant 3300 said,

I can work with anybody without involving my personal feelings. I understand this is a job and I am here to service a need. There are guiding principles that help me stay on task and professional. I believe by following these principles it eliminates bias and unprofessional conduct on the staff's part.

Professionalism was identified as a Theme when examining questions 14 and 15.

The participants stated that there was a lot of information on the LGBTQI population that they were unaware of and they felt more trainings on this population would be beneficial

and are needed. Some of the participants expressed the need for professional development in the following direct quotes:

Participant 3400 said,

“I was unaware of any mechanism available here for LGBTQI upon housing and pat downs. I was unaware of the definitions and pronouns that individuals who identify as LGBTQI use. Therefore, Professional development or training is important to stay abreast of what is going on and changing.”

Participant 3200 said,

“I knew some of the mechanisms in place here like housing, pat searches, the PREA coordinator, but the training helped me understand the emotional toll juveniles go through and how I as a worker should not add to it. I believe that more training should be added to provide the highest standard of care and services.”

Participant 500 said,

“I believe having ongoing training on this matter would help a lot. I knew some of the things we have here to aid the LGBTQI juvenile offenders when they come in but, there was a lot of knowledge gained today through the training. Developing staff is the only way to ensure that offenders get treated fairly. Set guidelines and boundaries for staff because adults need boundaries and help too.”

Participant 4200 said,

“Inclusion is important and today it’s a necessity. But, the only way to properly include everyone is to be trained how to do it. When I look at LGBTQI juvenile offenders, I see a complex problem. I see a youth in trouble. First, there is the alleged criminal activity and then an identified crisis or expression. We need to know how to treat the whole individual not just one part. This is where professional development and training comes in. The training today was insightful, and more trainings are needed to stay abreast of the standards and best practice when dealing with juvenile offenders, LGBTQI offenders included.”

Participant 600 said,

“I believe that we are trained plenty often here but gaining more knowledge can only be a plus. I am learning more and more about the LGBTQI community and everyday it is changing so having updated training on this is very much needed and appreciated.”

Participant 100 said,

“There is no harm in empowering your staff to make the better decisions possible when they are dealing with a vulnerable population such as the LGBTQI community. So, train often.”

Focus Group

Focus group interviews also were conducted with 20 participants who volunteered from the larger sample population of eighty. Focus group interviews were used to ask questions specifically about transgender juvenile offenders within the facility because the

quantitative data focused on the LGBTQI population overall and not specifically on transgender youth.

Seidman (2006) suggested that interviewing is a highly efficient way to collect data, it requires open-ended questions to better understand the reason for the activity. The purpose of a semi-structured interview is to elicit the interviewees' personal outlook of the subject of interest, versus leading the interviewee to conform to preconceived options (Seidman, 2006). These questions were generated in such a way to achieve the most in-depth responses from the participants to evaluate their perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes as it relates to LGBTQI youth at the participating youth center. To help ensure the most in-depth responses were given the facilitator used responsive interviewing techniques to provide the most details and help clarify the exchange of information from the participants (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

Participants

This qualitative sample consisted of an equal number of 10 male and 10 female participants. The participants varied in age, ethnicity, and occupation. Most participants reported their race as Black ($n=16$), followed by White ($n=2$), Native American ($n=1$) Asian ($n=1$). Most of those who participated in the focus group interview were Youth Development Representatives ($n=10$) followed by Administrators ($n=5$), and Professional Staff ($n=5$). All the participants had ten or more years of professional experience in the field of juvenile justice.

Data Analysis

The next step was to analyze the qualitative data to see what themes would emerge after asking open-ended questions to gain an in-depth knowledge about each participant's beliefs and attitudes toward LGBTQI juvenile offenders, but more specifically transgender juvenile offenders. Onwuegbuzie & Teddlie (2003) used the term quantifying qualitative data to illustrate the frequencies of themes represented in a sample. By applying quantified qualitative methods, I was able to recognize patterns and find frequencies for the themes of this study. The software program NVivo was used to help the researcher find the themes after the focus group transcriptions were entered into the program. The following themes emerged: Professional Development, Inclusion, and Respectful Interactions.

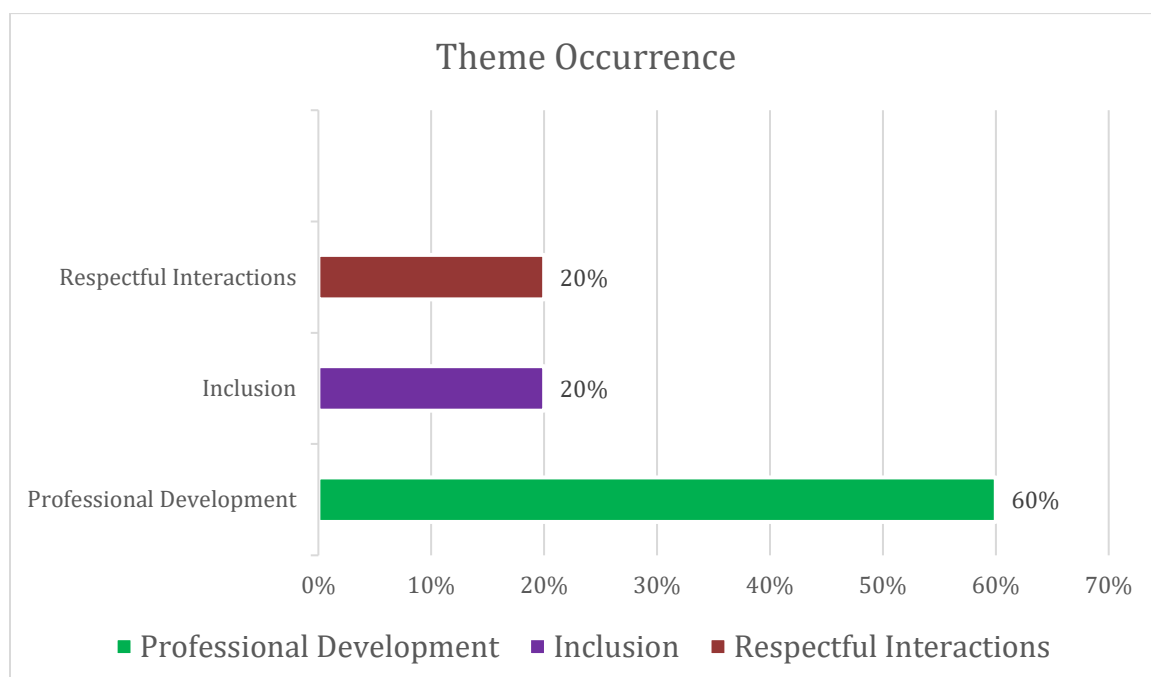


Figure 2. Three most talked about themes during the focus group.

The first open-ended question that was asked of the participants was “Can you elaborate on your feelings about the training on LGBTQI youth that you just received? Was it helpful, if so in what way? What did you learn?”. Followed up with the probing question “What did you think of your score on the Implicit Bias Test? Did you feel it was accurate? If yes, why? If no, why not?”

Professionalism Theme

These questions allowed the participants to discuss the training they just received along with their score on the implicit bias test. A theme of professional development or collective understanding emerged when examining the data from these questions. Participants had expressed a need for more detailed trainings around LGBTQI, policy and procedures, updates and confusion, preference, and work ethic.

Participant 600 said,

“For me, I knew most of the information except some of the definitions and other terms. So, I appreciate gaining some more knowledge.”

Participant 1600 said,

“Overall, I found the training to be insightful and intriguing. There are a lot of terms that I was not familiar with and have never heard of. So, it was good to learn those. I am not surprise by my score. I grew up in a military household so being a “man” was required.”

Participant 2200 said,

“There is so much information concerning individual who identify inside of the LGBTQI community and different ways in which you must address them. More training on their pronouns and the SOGIE diagram. The definitions are useful as well. Preparing your staff to handle any juvenile no matter their gender expression is, is a plus and a safer environment for everybody.”

Participant 1900 said,

“Defining the policy out more would be helpful. Addressing all of the gender expressions in the policy and any special services rendered would be nice to make sure everybody id treated fairly and with respect.” Participant 7200 said,

“More understanding around checking our own biases so that it does not interfere work or understand why I have the preference that I have. What are the new updates pertaining to the laws for the LGBTQI community?”

The next open-ended question was, what are some of the policies and procedures that are in place for working with transgender youth? Followed with the probing questions of:

- a. For example, how are pat downs and searches conducted with transgender youth?
- b. Are transgender and nonconforming youth pat down by staff that are of the youths’ same gender identity?
- b. What are the policies regarding transgender youth in the shower?

c. What are the policies regarding housing transgender youth?

These questions allowed the participants to discuss the current policies and procedures in place and to address their concerns and confusion about rights and safety.

Inclusion Theme

A theme of inclusion emerged when examining the data from these questions. Participants discussed respect, awareness, policy enforcement, Prison Rape Elimination Act, discrimination, and equality.

Participant 3200 said,

“Yeah, out of everything in the policy, the housing is an issue for me. I am open to you expressing yourself but, we still must consider safety and security first.”

Participant 1800 said,

“Its 007 and Participant 3100 you are right the it is included, it’s the LGBTQI Policy. It outlines the does and don’ts when caring for LGBTQI youth. And I know there is specific items for transgender youth because they present a different type of security risk.”

Participant 6600 said,

“Policy number 007 refers to the LGBTQI community and addresses all of these concerns. There are specific steps to determine housing. No youth is ever required to shower nude in front of another youth no matter their sexual preference and identity. Youth can ask for a gender specific staff for pat downs.”

Participant 6500 said,

“The PREA coordinator was a great addition to the staff because, she makes sure that everyone is included and that we are up to date on all the policies and procedures that affect the LGBTQI community.” Participant 200 said,

I believe when addressing the LGBTQI community, the idea of separate, but equal is the only time it might work. The separation is to provide the upmost level of confidentiality and the equal is they are not hindered from enjoying all the other freedoms like anybody else. It is a delicate balancing act to navigate, but with the right training and support staff can be successful.

Participant 7000 said,

“I don’t mean to bring race into the picture, but when you think about all of the minority youth that we encounter here on a daily basis that already faced discrimination, biases and sometimes abandonment from family and friends because of the preference. To now enter, a system that reinforces all that negativity, must be hard and make them feel hopeless. I believe that as a correctional professional it is our job to restore some of that hope each day. Have effective interactions every time we have contact with a youth in custody.

The final question “How do other staff feel about working with transgender youth?”. Followed with the probes:

- a. Do other staff refer to transgender youth by their preferred names and pronouns?
- b. How are transgender youth treated when they report abuse, harassment, or discrimination?

This focus group question was the most personal because it asked the correctional staff to evaluate their core beliefs and the actions of their co-workers.

Respectful Interactions Theme

A theme of respectful interactions emerged when examining the data from these questions. Participants discussed fairness, work ethic, beliefs, religion, self-regulation, ignorance, responsibility, code of conduct, and empathy.

Participant 5900 said,

“Absolutely, I am very neutral when it comes to this because I just believe people should just be happy and love whoever they want to love. This subject seems so complex when you go pass people loving who they want to love and presenting themselves the way they want to present themselves. For me, and again I do not know about anybody else it boils down to love and respect. That’s how you treat everybody.”

Participant 900 said,

“Right like our Big Boss always say Led with Love. We are already dealing with youth who are in trouble or who have lost their way. We are the adults here and helping them is our job. Yes, sometimes I am

confused when calling 1 person them or they but, that is what the respond to, so be it.”

Participant 1000 said,

“For me, it is like being blind to any other issues except what providing safety and security. What I mean by that is, I do not focus on any other element of the youth besides providing safety and security. I do not concern myself with why they are in here or gender or sexual preference unless it interferes with safety and security. We have protocol for report abuse, neglect, harassment and discrimination so our basis is covered because we are dealing with a vulnerable population.”

Participant 700 said,

“But what is sticking with me is the “Coming Out “Star Activity. This really put you in the shoes of a juvenile coming out and to see how different stars, had difference realities because they chose to be truthful with themselves. Some people were left alone and as an adult doing this activity, I felt so sad for juveniles who have lived these realities.”

Participant 2800 said,

“Here’s the funny but, not so funny thing about me taking this training. My little brother just came out about 3 months ago and doing the “Coming Out” Stars made me emotional because I believe my brother was a “red” star. Our family really disowned him and isolated ourselves. But

this training has opened the lines of communication for me and my bother because I don't want him to feel alone.”

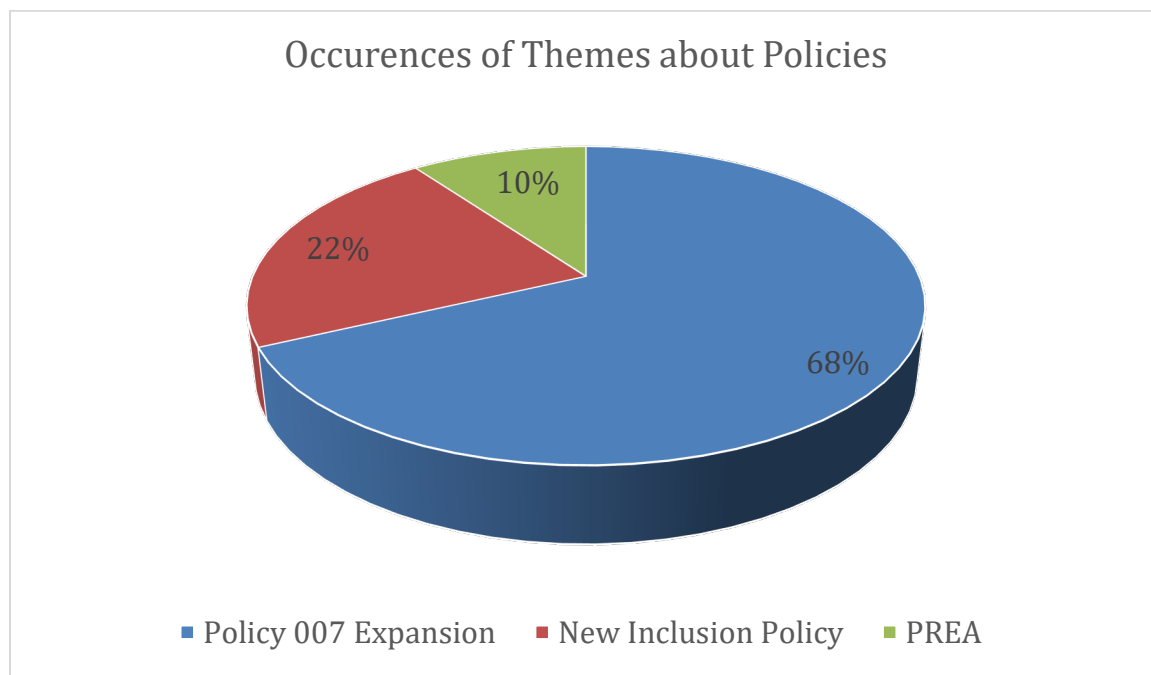


Figure 3. Occurrence of themes surrounding policies currently in place and policies recommendations per staff.

Summary

RQ1: Do policies and procedures for transgender juvenile offenders foster effective interactions between correctional staff and transgender juvenile offenders?

Qualitative data from focus group interviews found a theme of inclusion when asking questions about specific policies related to transgender juvenile offenders.

Participants discussed the need for policies specifically addressing transgender juveniles and were able to describe how these policies should be applied. Their main concerns centered around making sure transgender juveniles within the facility were safe and included. Qualitative data from the focus groups also found a theme of respectful interactions where participants discussed the importance of being respectful when

working with all juvenile offenders. Others noted that the training helped them to better understand the needs and experiences of LGBTQI youth and how this has led to them feeling more empathetic when working with this population.

It does appear that policies and procedures for transgender juvenile offenders foster effective interactions between correctional staff and transgender juvenile offenders based on the data collected from the focus group interviews. This is evident in the answers given to the questions during the focus group. The correctional staff spoke of the presence and involvement of the PREA coordinator, who oversees and stays abreast of national standards and best practices for individuals who identify with the LGBTQI community. Other staff referenced the policy # 007, which is the participating center's LGBTQI policy that includes a special section for transgender juvenile offenders. There also was mention of how well trained the staff were and the ongoing initiative to be ahead of the curve when accessing the newest knowledge that concerns the LGBTQI community. The null hypothesis is rejected for research question 1.

RQ 2: Do correctional staff hold biases for or against LGBTQI youth?

Quantitative results from the demographic variables along with one's score on the Implicit Bias test were used to examine research question 2 "do correctional staff hold biases for or against LGBTQI youth?". To understand the relationship between these categorical variables, one's score on the implicit bias test was crossed with each of the demographic variables. Little to no differences were found when crossing the demographic variables with one's score on the implicit bias test. A chi square test of independence also confirmed there was not a significant difference between each of the

demographic variable when crossed with the Harvard Implicit Bias Test. Implicit bias test results and one's total score for the pre-test, post-test, and change scores also were examined to better understand if there were significant differences between the groups regarding implicit bias. The results showed there was not a significant difference when examining implicit bias results with total pre-test score, total post-test score, and overall change scores.

Qualitative data from the focus group interview also found the theme of need for more professional development on the topic of LGBTQI as well as policies and procedures for this population. Participants discussed how there was a need for more training to help them better understand the needs and experiences of LGBTQI youth as well as what policies were in place and how they should be implemented.

Quantitative data did not find there to be any significant differences when examining implicit bias test scores and demographic variables or when examining implicit bias test scores and overall pre and posttest scores as well as overall change scores. Qualitative data from focus group interviews found participants wanted to be more informed about LGBTQI population and be up to date on policies and procedures pertaining to this group. A few participants noted they held biases about LGBTQI population based on how they were raised, but stated the trainings were helping them to become more aware of this group and their needs. This appears to suggest that correctional staff do not hold biases for or against LGBTQI youth. The null hypothesis is rejected for research question 2.

RQ 3: Do the personal beliefs and backgrounds of correctional staff effect their ability to interact with transgender juvenile offenders?

To understand the relationship between demographic variables and one's scores on the pre and posttest, total pre-test, total post-test, and overall change score were crossed with each of the demographic variables. Age was found to be significant when examining pre-test and overall change score. Those 40 and under tended to score higher on the pretest than those 41 and older, while those 41 and older tended to see the biggest growth between total pretest and posttest scores. There was a statistically significant difference found for total pre-test scores, total posttest scores, and overall change scores between the different categories for education. High school graduates tended to score the lowest on the pretest with the most common score being a 3 and saw lower posttest scores than others with the most likely score being a 9. High school graduates also saw the biggest gains when examining overall change scores, where the most common change scores were 4 and 5. There was a statistically significant difference in pretest and posttest scores between the different categories for occupation. Those who were categorized as professional mostly scored a 9 or an 8 on the pretest, while direct service providers saw a greater range on their pretest scores with the most common pretest score being a 5 followed closely by a 9. The most common posttest score for both groups was an 11, but direct service providers saw a greater range in posttest scores than professionals.

The qualitative data collected from the open-ended questions from the pre and posttest found that when examining one's personal beliefs about the LGBTQI population that the most important thing for participants was to remain professional no matter one's

position or whom you are providing services to within the facility. Participants also felt they needed more professional development on the LGBTQI population to help them better understand the needs and experiences of the LGBTQI youth within the facility.

There were some differences noted between groups and how they scored on the pretest and posttest when examining age, education, and occupation. Those who were older, a high school graduate, and direct service providers tended to score lower on the pretest and see the greatest gains on the post-test. Qualitative data from the open ended questions on the pre and posttest suggests that participants were concerned about being professional and receiving regular training on the LGBTQI population in order to keep up to date with the needs of this population as well as updates in policies and procedures. Therefore, it does not appear that the personal beliefs and backgrounds of correctional staff effect their ability to interact with transgender juvenile offenders. The null hypothesis is rejected for research question 3.

Table 7

Where significance was found among the variables Age, Education, and Occupation

Significance Identified	Pretest	Posttest	Overall change	Total Pretest	Total Posttest
Age	X		X		
Education			X	X	X
Occupation	X	X			

Note. The X represents where significance was identified according to the data collected.

Chapter 5: Summary, Recommendations, and Conclusion

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore what hinders effective interactions between correctional staff members and transgender juvenile offenders and identify ways to strengthen this relationship through adequate training and inclusive policies and procedures. To address the gap in the literature, I used a mixed-methods quasi-experimental design. The 80 participants were provided a survey, a pretest, training, a posttest, and an option to participate in a volunteer focus group. The research method allowed knowledgeable insight about transgender juvenile offenders to be shared, assisted in equal interpretation and formation of policies and procedures and, decreased uncertainty around relationship building between correctional staff members and transgender juvenile offenders. Prior researchers, such as Kreiss and Patterson (1997), have suggested that communication is an area where correctional staff and transgender juvenile offenders suffer and struggle to build a relationship, thus hindering effective interaction between the two. In this research, I focused on strengthening the communication between correctional staff members and transgender juvenile offenders. Uncertainty reduction theory was the theoretical lens used to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: Do policies and procedures for transgender juvenile offenders foster effective interactions between correctional staff and transgender juvenile offenders?

RQ2: Do correctional staff hold biases against LGBTQI youth?

RQ3: Do the personal beliefs and backgrounds of correctional staff members affect their ability to interact with transgender juvenile offenders?

In my summation of the research findings, I illustrate how the research questions were answered and show the linkage between this study's findings and other current research that explains what hinders effective interactions between transgender (LGBTQI) juvenile offenders and correctional staff.

The uncertainty reduction theory was the theoretical lens implemented in this study. Through the lens of uncertainty reduction theory, paired with the Equity Project Training, I facilitated the understanding for correctional staff on how important it is to self-regulate their own personal beliefs and biases while performing their professional duties and caring for transgender youth offenders and others who belong to the LGBTQI community. To achieve this, correctional staff must be mindful of their actions and decisions, ensuring they are in line with the organization's policies and procedures and best practice standards. Throughout the training sessions, participants engaged in activities that taught them how to effectively communicate with transgender offenders and other individuals who belong in the LGBTQI community as well as key terminology used in the LGBTQI community. They were instructed to recognize and stop the psychological harm of labeling, isolating, segregating, victimizing, and criminalizing LGBTQI youth offenders. The participants learned that they must be inclusive in using effective communication and creating a conducive environment where sexuality and gender identity are accepted and embraced.

Interpretation of the Findings

The first research question asked, “Do policies and procedures for transgender juvenile offenders foster effective interactions between correctional staff members and transgender juvenile offenders?” Qualitative data from focus group interviews indicated a theme of inclusion when the participants were asked questions about specific policies related to transgender juvenile offenders. Participants discussed the need for policies specifically addressing transgender juveniles and were able to describe how these policies should be applied. Their main concerns centered around making sure transgender juveniles in the facility were safe and included. The idea of inclusion is supported by PREA (2012, 2003), which has an entire section dedicated to the LGBTQI community but more specifically, transgender individuals.

PREA (2012, 2003) has specific guidelines about separating LGBTQI individuals, especially transgender individuals. PREA (2012, 2003) stated that separation must be on a case-by-case decision and if other factors exist. Also, Act 4 Juvenile Justice (2014) made recommendations to the JJDP and the OJJDP to adopt policies that eliminate or prohibit discrimination based on actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. There were monetary restrictions for juvenile detention centers who were not inclusive and tried to suppress juveniles’ sexual preference or identity. Finally, Act 4 Juvenile Justice (2014) supports staff training around being aware of the changing world of LGBTQI laws and standards.

Next, the idea of respectful interactions (i.e. communication) is included in policies and procedures that are specific for transgender and other LGBTQI youth

offenders. Qualitative data from the focus groups also found a theme of respectful interactions where participants discussed the importance of being respectful when working with all juvenile offenders. Others noted that the training helped them to better understand the needs and experiences of LGBTQI youth and how this has led to them feeling more empathetic when working with this population. It does appear that policies and procedures for transgender juvenile offenders foster effective interactions between correctional staff and transgender juvenile offenders based on the data collected from the focus group interviews.

The Uncertainty Reduction Theory (1975) expressed the communication is important because it establishes the basis of the relationship and if there is actual or perceived judgement, discrimination or biases the communication and relationship is affected. Communication was labeled as the top area of concern for LGBTQI advocates and allies. The formation of PREA (2012, 2003) and The Obama Administration (2016) addressing issues of confinement has led to detention centers like the participating youth center develop effective training to address the needs and concerns of the LGBTQI individuals who enter their doors. These trainings include definitions, pronouns, and sensitivity training. The juvenile justice system is starting to recognize that old policies and procedures do not incorporate the needs and concerns of transgender youth offenders or other LGBTQI offenders. Williams & Rucker (2000) stated that discrimination on a systematic level as seen in juvenile justice, that is supported by institutional policies and paired with unconscious bias hinders correctional staff effectiveness when providing services and care. Through the amendment of policies and procedures and specific

trainings dedicated to addressing the needs and care of transgender youth offenders and the LGBTQI community, the juvenile justice system can go forward in establishing a system that embraces equality for all.

As much support as the LGBTQI movement has gained, there has been recent policies at the national level that threatens the movement process. Under the Obama Administration the LGBTQI community saw advancement in their rights to marry, healthcare, and other legislation passed. The juvenile justice system was impacted by the elimination of confinement and the introduction of the Prison Rape Elimination Act. But, under the Trump Administration, LGBTQI community has fallen victim to the retraction of these rights and privileges once afforded to them by the Obama Administration. In an article, published by The Hill (2018, May 22) listed several policies that embrace the negativity of discrimination targeting the LGBTQI community. The first, of these policies was the Department of Education stating that rights of transgender students are not protected under the Title IX's prohibition against sex discrimination. Next, was the Department of Justice stating that the LGBTQI community is not protected or covered under the Title VII of the Civil Rights Act. The discrimination showed up in recent policies of the Department of Health and Human Services with plans to allow healthcare providers the right to deny services to LGBTQI individuals if it goes against their religious or conscience beliefs. Finally, discrimination being upheld at the highest level of government with the White House threatening to eliminate a Department of Defense policy that allows transgender Americans to serve in our Armed Forces.

The second research question asked, “Do correctional staff hold biases for or against LGBTQI youth?” Well, there is little to no differences found when crossing the demographic variables with one’s score on the implicit bias test. The results showed there was not a significant difference when examining implicit bias results with total pre-test score, total post-test score, and overall change scores. The Harvard Implicit Bias Test identified the participant’s preference for either “Straight” or “Gay” individuals (“gay” was used as an umbrella term to include the entire LGBTQI community in this study). The participants were honest about their preference assignment on the Harvard Implicit Bias Test and explained that they might have personal feelings about LGBTQI individuals but because of the environment and standard of care at the participating youth center they have learned to put personal feelings aside and focus on the care being rendered. Mills and Gilbert (2014) spoke to correctional staff being mindful of their interactions and selective in their communication style when engaging with LGBTQI youth.

In this study, the results from the Harvard Implicit Bias Test identified that correctional staff members did have biases for or against LGBTQI individuals, but both the quantitative and qualitative subsequent research prove that with proper training and inclusive and detailed policies and procedures these biases can be eliminated. DiFulvio (2011) suggested that the attitudes of juvenile justice workers providing care or services to the LGBTQI youth offenders must be one of acceptance and unbiased or else youth development is hindered. The unified understanding that acceptance and unbiased environments are essential for youth development regardless of their sexual orientation or

gender identity serves has the foundation upon which legislation, policies and procedures, staff trainings and other elements that directly affect the lived experiences of LGBTQI youth offenders can be improved on.

Moreover, the qualitative data from the focus group interview also found the theme of needing more professional development on the topic of LGBTQI as well as policies and procedures for this population. Participants discussed how there was a need for more training to help them better understand the needs and experiences of LGBTQI youth as well as what policies were in place and how they should be implemented. Also, the quantitative data did not find there to be any significant differences when examining implicit bias test scores and demographic variables or when examining implicit bias test scores and overall pre and posttest scores as well as overall change scores. Qualitative data from focus group interviews found participants wanted to be more informed about LGBTQI population and be up to date on policies and procedures pertaining to this group. The forward thinking of the correctional staff to want to be abreast of the everchanging laws and guidelines for how to effectively interact and engage with LGBTQI youth offenders is spot on because according to Mills and Gilbert (2014) there is an estimated 300,000 LGBTQI youth arrested and/or detained each year. This research and training like the Equity Project, that focuses of sensitivity and cultural competency aid in the elimination of correctional staff who consciously or unconsciously express their biases for or against LGBTQI youth offenders while performing their professional duties. PREA and LGBTQI specific policies and procedures, like policy #007 at the participating

youth center assist in bridging the gap between discrimination and equality in the juvenile justice system.

Recent, research has supported the concerns about staff discrimination and biases and how the organization's policies and procedures are implicit in embracing systematic discrimination towards transgender youth offenders as well as the LGBTQI collectively. Majid et al (2016) stated that the juvenile justice system struggles with understanding LGBTQI individuals and because of personally held misconceptions by correctional center personnel, LGBTQI community members are disproportionately mistreated. Prior to the acknowledgement of the rights of LGBTQI individuals guaranteed by the law, the criminal justice failed to address the needs of the individuals in the LGBTQI community. Transgender juvenile offenders have experienced violations of their civil rights because they belong to a group of people who do not fit into societal norms. Mills and Gilbert (2014) suggested that the matriculation of LGBTQI youth through the juvenile justice system is plagued with higher levels of discrimination and biases than that experienced by other juvenile offenders who do not identify as part of the LGBTQI community.

These biases, ill-treatment, and discrimination are evident in areas such as unsafe detention centers, absent or inadequate medical and mental health resources, and blatant disrespect and disregard for their sexual orientation and /or gender identity. (Mills and Gilbert, 2014). The framework for establishing policies and procedures that are fair and consistent for transgender juvenile offenders have taken root in juvenile detention centers across America because of PREA (2012, 2003) laws and the Obama Administration (2016) addressing issues of confinement. With the understanding, that PREA and the

elimination of confinement did not solely focus on LGBTQI individuals, just acted as the first time in recent policy generation that gender-specific care was addressed. As time progresses, so should the laws and rights for the LGBTQI community across all areas of life.

The final research question asked, “Do the personal beliefs and backgrounds of correctional staff effect their ability to interact with transgender juvenile offenders?” There were some differences noted between groups and how they scored on the pretest and posttest when examining age, education, and occupation. Those who were older, a high school graduate, and direct service providers tended to score lower on the pretest and see the greatest gains on the post-test. Qualitative data from the open ended questions on the pre and posttest suggests that participants were concerned about being professional and receiving regular training on the LGBTQI population in order to keep up to date with the needs of this population as well as updates in policies and procedures. Therefore, it does not appear that the personal beliefs and backgrounds of correctional staff effect their ability to interact with transgender juvenile offenders or other members of the LGBTQI community. The qualitative data collected from the open-ended questions from the pre and posttest found that when examining one’s personal beliefs about the LGBTQI population that the most important thing for participants was to remain professional no matter one’s position or whom you are providing services to within the facility.

When examining the age demographic, age was found to be significant when examining pre-test and overall change score. Those 40 and under tended to score higher on the pretest than those 41 and older, while those 41 and older tended to see the biggest

growth between total pretest and posttest scores. McRae (2016) “Interrupting the silence: an action research study to transform a juvenile justice culture for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTQI) youth” found that age played a factor in the scoring on the same test when given. She explained that they older participants in the study responses were influenced by the events of the past like wars, discrimination, racism, civil rights movement, segregation, and other social stigmas that did not embrace LGBTQI way of life. This is a sharp contrast to the young people presented in both studies who are more open, and their openness is attributed to the society they grew up in and the more mainstream acceptance of the LGBTQI community.

Gates (2017, January 11) noted that the population of individuals identifying as “Millennials” born between 1980-1998 are the highest represented individuals who self-identify as LGBTQI. The portion of the “Millennial” generation that identifies as LGBTQI saw an increase in individuals self-identifying as LGBTQI go from 5.8% in 2012 to 7.3% in 2016. This increase is credited to LGBTQI acceptance on a national level, new laws being in place, the advancement of social media and the LGBTQI agenda being supported by White House and other noted celebrities. While, there was increase among the “Millennials”, other LGBTQI age communities remained relatively stable over the five-year period, for example the generation “X” stayed at 3.2% of self-identified LGBTQI individuals. But, surprisingly, there was a decline slightly for the baby boomer (2.7% to 2.4%) and the traditionalists (1.8% to 1.4%). These declines, were attributed to their values system, family conflict over “coming out”, Parental conflict with children, and marital convenience.

Secondly, educational level did play a factor in how knowledgeable the participants were about the LGBTQI community. There was a statistically significant difference found for total pre-test scores, total posttest scores, and overall change scores between the different categories for education. High school graduates tended to score the lowest on the pretest with the most common score being a 3 and saw lower posttest scores than others with the most likely score being a 9. High school graduates also saw the biggest gains when examining overall change scores, where the most common change scores were 4 and 5. McRae (2016) explained that education is factored in when introducing complex subjects like gender identity and gender expression. She noted that individuals with higher education that have been exposed to the LGBTQI community and the laws that govern their equal treatment under the law score higher on test when answering questions that relate to the LGBTQI community.

Now, research has two schools of thought when examining education and its role in the acceptance and understanding of the LGBTQI community. The first school thought is an LGBTQI- inclusive curriculum that is distributed as early kindergarten. The Century Foundation (2016, June 16) asserted that teaching students at a young age will foster in acceptance and understanding of the LGBTQI community early. This will then decrease the stereotypes and discrimination that LGBTQI individuals face in schools and on a larger scale in society.

Moreover, when addressing the educational level of individuals and their acceptance and understanding of the LGBTQI community there are several different opinions about it. Ousley (2006) suggested that research found that underclassmen or

high schoolers just entering college tend to carry over their parental value system and beliefs. Lacking the opportunity and maturity to experience the world on their own terms and create or make amendments to their own value systems and beliefs. Braungart & Braubgart (1989) suggested that college years are the years where ideologies and beliefs are challenged, explored, altered, or even abandoned. Suggesting that as individuals mature and expand their value and belief systems the acceptance and understanding of the LGBTQI community is present.

Finally, the findings of this study found that different occupations score differently of their pre and posttest scores. There was a statistically significant difference in pretest and posttest scores between the different categories for occupation. Those who were categorized as professional mostly scored a 9 or an 8 on the pretest, while direct service providers saw a greater range on their pretest scores with the most common pretest score being a 5 followed closely by a 9. The most common posttest score for both groups was an 11, but direct service providers saw a greater range in posttest scores than professionals. McRae (2016) explained that direct service providers have the most insight on the policies and procedures that pertains to the LGBTQI juvenile offenders than any other groups. These individuals are the ones applying the policies and procedures daily. Direct service providers are “ground zero” when implementing the standards of care.

The National Partners of Juvenile Services (NPJS) considers juvenile direct service workers as the “gatekeepers” of equality for all juvenile offenders, but especially those who identify as LGBTQI. These individuals are the introduction into the juvenile justice system and must be free of discrimination and biases when caring for juvenile

offenders no matter their sexual preference or gender identity. To ensure this type of non-discriminatory and unbiased introduction to the juvenile justice system, NPJS has developed a Code of Ethics that includes the following principles: “(1) advocate for policies that ensure the legal and human rights of justice-involved youth; (2) educate justice-involved youth, professionals and others about policies and practices that either promote or violate these rights; (3) refuse to remain silent when these rights are violated, and they speak on behalf of the affected youths; and (4) support the rights of justice-involved youth to be served in a psychologically and physically safe and secure environment.” These principles are in place to safeguard against discrimination and bias treatment for all youth offenders which includes the LGBTQI community as well.

Limitations of the Study

When research is conducted, there will be limitations and areas that are uncharted in the subject matter. I was fully aware of this and worked tirelessly with my committee to make sure that we minimized that effect of certain limitations and reduce the effect it had on the quality of this study. Through a thorough process with my research committee, we make sure the alignment was achieved across both the quantitative and qualitative portions of this study. Some of the limitations found in this study was demographical because the study focuses on a detention center located on the East Coast, of the United States. This left the Midwest, West, and Southern states uncounted for in this research. Another, limitation is this researcher seeks to survey correctional staff with at least of experience working in a juvenile detention center. Race was a limitation was the lack of racial diversity in the focus group. Most of the participants in the Focus group were

Black. The possibility of the participants altering their responses to avoid being labeled as bias or having a prejudice against transgender juvenile offenders might exist. This study provided useful and important information about correctional staff ability to engage in effective interactions with transgender juvenile offenders, it has several limitations that could be rectified by simply changing the research design or questions.

Validity and Reliability

Next, as with any research, examining the study to identify if there are any threats to the validity and reliability of the study. The understanding of the validity of this study shows up in the expected outcomes that were produced by the respondent's answers to the research questions, trainings, tests, and focus group. These were the respondents' factual accounts and beliefs about working with and their beliefs about transgender youth offenders and other members of the LGBTQI community. The responses were absent of the researcher's biases and input (Toma, 2006). Whereas, the reliability of this study is achieved by the connectiveness of this study's outcomes with outcomes from similar studies evaluating similar variables and demographics. Having prior research that examines similar subject matter helps to establish this study's validity and reliability and reduced the threats as well.

Credibility and Trustworthiness

The credibility and trustworthiness of this study was the next step to be examined, but these two components explored the honesty and trust of your study. Credibility and trustworthiness are the delimitation of this study. To address this delimitation in this study, there were particular guidelines that were followed to ensure credibility and

trustworthiness. First, the targeted population was occupational specific. The study targeted individuals or professionals who had at least one year of experience working with transgender youth offenders and other experience working in the juvenile justice system. This is called purposive sampling, this research only wanted to explore the attitudes and beliefs of professionals who had been working with members of the LGBTQI community while in a secure facility. The participants' responses to all parts of the research was essential to the data collection process and well as the focus group which provided insightful knowledge about the lived experiences of correctional staff and their interactions with LGBTQI youth offenders in custody. There was also, insightful knowledge gained about the organizational culture and support of an equality-driven approach when serving and caring for LGBTQI youth offenders which were inclusive of transgender youth offenders specifically. Continuous data collection and analysis was performed until saturation was evident.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study contributed to the gap in the research as it relates to programming and services provided to transgender juvenile offenders. Communication was the focal point of this research and sought to increase effective communication to decrease biases and discrimination. Future research should change the focal point of the research study to gain more insight on other issues that affect transgender juvenile offenders while in custody. Another, area of consideration for future research surrounding the topic of transgender juvenile offenders could focus on life after criminal justice contact to investigate whether rehabilitation has occurred and if the services rendered was

successful. Furthermore, the limitation of location could be addressed in future research by widening the sample population and including multiple sites across the United States. Finally, a recommendation to change the research design from a correlational study to another research design that might yield statistical significance of the variables being tested.

Implications for Social Change

While conducting this research, it was obvious that the participating youth center is a leader among juvenile justice detention centers when addressing the needs and concerns of the LGBTQI community but, more specifically, the transgender juvenile offenders who enter their door for services. The first, social change implication of this study is that LGBTQI youth exist and are entering the juvenile justice system at an alarming rate. Thus, the need for policies and procedures are needed and they need to be inclusive and tailored to address all the individual who identify in the LGBTQI community. This is not just limited to Lesbians, Gay, Bisexuals, Transgender, and Questioning, but should be inclusive of Asexual, Pansexual, Gender Fluid, Non-Conforming Individuals, and many more identities.

Secondly, the result of this study shows the important of understanding one's biases and learning to be open and accepting of individuals for who they are. Moreover, the study results advocate for trainings that exposes staff to the evolving terminology of the LGBTQI community and scenarios that replicates the lived experience of LGBTQI individuals. Finally, this study and future study involving the same subject matter will be

instrumental in ensuring the LGBTQI equality driven legislation is passed and represented at a national level.

As seen, in this study the organizational policies and procedures are the foundation that establishes the culture of the environment that LGBTQI youth offenders enter. The organizational acceptance and support of all youth offenders no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity is important and helps to eliminate discrimination and biases from employees providing care and services. “A supportive climate characterized by policies granting equal rights and prohibiting discrimination reduces stigma and stress, serving a protective role for mental and physical health.” (The Hill, 2018, May 22). The organization’s attitude towards LGBTQI individuals shapes and supports the attitudes of its employees whether they are good or bad.

Taking what was learned from these findings and applying them at a local level will solely rest on the organizational openness to be a leader in the fight for equality for all individuals. To tailor and cultivate a culture of acceptance for LGBTQI juvenile offenders the detention center environment must be conducive in advocating for equality. Equality must be present in the organization’s policies and procedures. These policies and procedures include and are not limited to, admission practices, housing policies, gender presentation policies, mental health services, medical procedures and policies, search procedures, and others.

The importance of staff trainings and professional development are other social implications from this study. The more knowledgeable and trained individuals are in the complexity of the LGBTQI experience and lifestyle, the more equipped they are to serve

and care efficiently. This is not an implication only at a local level, but nationally the called for more in-depth training and a development for individuals who care for youth offenders regardless of their sexual preference or gender identity. Discrimination, biases, prejudice are all learned behaviors. They are normally fillers for inadequate knowledge or training gaps. Rudman, Ashmore, and Gary (2001) suggested that training can enable the unlearning of both implicit and explicit biases if it promotes an appreciation for diversity. The recommendation of more interactive trainings to convey the lived experiences of LGBTQI individuals, which would include:

- Trainings lead by LGBTQI trainer about LGBTQI life.
- Seminars and focus groups lead by self-identified members of the LGBTQI community.
- Sensitivity Training that include role playing of the organizational staff to personally experience the plight of LGBTQI juvenile offenders.
- LGBTQI staff in leadership roles who can facilitate the advancement of the LGBTQI agenda throughout the organization's culture.

The final implication of this study is that on legislation that effects the rights of LGBTQI individuals of a national level. The further expansion of the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) that goes into detail about the specialized care for transgender youth offenders. Along with, an expansion of rights, services, and areas of care for LGBTQI youth offenders which, is missing in the original version on PREA. There are current legislations that is being lobbied for and needs support through studies like this to move their agenda forward. Legislation like the Equality Act. The Equality seeks to

amend the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to include sexual orientation and gender identity. (The Hill, 2018, May 22). Next, is the LGBT Data Act, which would establish a uniform way to collect data about LGBTQI individuals in federal surveys, surveillance systems, and research. (The Hill, 2018, May 22). These legislations when supported by studies like this are passed the effects are felt on a national level and impacts social change for a vulnerable population that has been gravely mistreated and unrepresented.

Conclusion

The purpose of this mixed method quasi-experimental research design was to identify what hinders correctional staff and transgender juvenile offender from engaging in effective interactions and how do we strengthen the bond between the two? The theoretical lens as the Uncertainty Reduction theory, which is a communication based theory that states if the exchange of information flows without biases being perceived or present then the relationship can develop, but if biases is perceived or present than the flow of communication stops, thus, hindering effective interactions and relationship building. This research provided in-depth knowledge about the correctional staff working with LGBTQI juvenile offenders. The results of this study supported the need for inclusive policies and procedures for LGBTQI juvenile offenders as well as highlighted the need for the expansion of the existing policies and procedures that are in place.

Also, provided insight on how important an organization's work environment and culture can override personal beliefs and preference of its employees to eliminate prejudice and discrimination. This was evident in the interviews were correctional staff admitted their preference/biases whether it was for straight or gay and was able to explain

how the work environment and co-workers help them to be neutral when dealing with LGBTQI individuals. Furthermore, the results of this study address the gap in the literature as it relates to the need for gender-specific policies and procedures throughout the juvenile justice system in order to provide a holistic approach to the rehabilitation of youth who identify as LGBTQI individuals.

This Action Research (AR) called for changes on a national level in areas like legislation, policies and procedures, training and staff development, and organizational responsibility for culture setting. Through this study, the understanding that change is needed on a complexity level that is inclusive of multiple entities to achieve equality. Changing the way society looks at and treat individuals that identify as LGBTQI is important to ensure equality across of faucets of life. These changes will be impacted by studies like this one and ones that follow that explores the lived experiences of individuals to provide direct care to members of the LGBTQI community.

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Appendix A: Focus Group Interview

Interviewer: Good Afternoon and thank you for participating in this Focus Group to further discuss your knowledge and the agency cultural competencies to successful communicate, treat, and house LGBTQ offenders, but more specifically Transgender Juvenile Offenders. Once again, everything you say is strictly confidential and protected by your code identifier given to you during the training. Let us begin.

Interview Begins

Interviewer: I will like you to elaborate on your feelings about the training on LGBTQ youth

Interviewer: How about you? What are your feelings?

Interviewer: Thanks for everybody. Now, what about the Implicit Bias Test? Did you feel it was accurate or represented you true feeling? Tell me why or why not?

Interviewer: Ok, let us move on to question number 2. Are you familiar with the policies or procedure here when working with Transgender youth? What are some of the policies and procedures that are in place for working with transgender youth? Can you please comment on Pat downs and searches being conducted on transgender youth? For example, are transgender and nonconforming youth pat down by staff that are of the youths' same gender identity?

Interviewer: How would you categorize your co-worker's response to work with transgender youth. Again, you do not have to say names, just an overall opinion about staff you have witness working with transgender offender. Are they comfortable? Are they using proper pronouns? If there is an allegation of abuse, harassment or discrimination how is it handled?

Interviewer: Well that concludes this Focus Group. Thanks so much for being involved.

Appendix B: Consent to Use Research

□

Dawn McRae [REDACTED]
Wed 3/6/2019 11:16 AM
Hello Ms. Walker,

Absolutely! Permission granted, feel free to use whatever you need from my dissertation to complete your dissertation.

I wish you the best in your future educational endeavors.

Dr. Dawn McRae