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Social Networks and Self-Efficacy Among Hawaiian Homeless

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This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

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has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
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Walden University
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Abstract

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

Homelessness affects over half a million people in the United States and millions worldwide. While permanent supportive housing initiatives like Housing First have successfully improved homeless wellbeing, recent research has shown that housing alone is not a solution; it requires add-on programming to assist in mitigating the causal factors. The purpose of this study was to explore and describe the social networking and self-efficacy of currently homeless and those who have successfully transitioned to supportive housing in the unique social and geographical environment of O'ahu, Hawai'i. A phenomenological study design using criterion sampling for semi structured interviews of four houseless and three housed participants was used. Thematic analysis and interpretation of the lived experiences of these individuals were guided by social cognitive theory and the reaffiliation motive. Emergent themes revealed obstacles to socially connecting, which included lack of education and tools, mistrust of others' motivations, fear of physical/emotional harm from or to others, substance use, and psychological disorders. A second theme revealed promoters of socially connecting, which included the desire to join group activities, learn new things, be useful, and self-preservation. The findings can inform positive social change through identifying practice and policy needs for intervention and additional programming to develop self-efficacy and social skills building to increase inclusion and reduce recidivism currently experienced by permanent supportive housing initiatives.

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to those without a roof who struggle through inconceivable hardship every day.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my committee members, my chair Dr. Medha Talpade and my second member Dr. Jay Greiner, for their mentorship and inspiration throughout this research journey. I want to thank Walden University for being a loadstar for positive social change and for never letting us forget our mission. I would also like to thank the nongovernmental organizations assisting the homeless on O'ahu. You are on the front lines, thanklessly making a difference in people's well-being daily. Without you, all would be lost.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Homelessness in the United States has a long history, as do the various research themes associated with recognizing, understanding, and attempting to mitigate its reach through informing practice and policy. Still, the problem persists despite overall economic conditions, aggressive social programs such as Housing First, and the widespread societal recognition that it is not only a public health but also a moral imperative to end it. Based on historical evidence, the problem of overcoming the homeless trajectory is likely more complex than any single remedy, including housing, job availably, or even societal acceptance. Overall, studies in the current literature have not identified the definitions, weighted importance, or sources of the critical skills of healthy social networking not only for good mental and physical health but also for successfully sustaining housing and job placement once obtained. Also, few studies have been conducted that shed light on the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors in the cloistered social reality of this historically marginalized group, and fewer still conducted in the unique geographic and cultural environment of Hawai'i.

In the present study, I explored the lived experiences and gave voice to both currently homeless and successfully transitioned formerly homeless individuals regarding their social networks and self-efficacy in the unique environment of O'ahu, Hawai'i. Once understood, filling this gap can provide information that can be used to inform the discipline, policy, and programming in regards to a phenomenon that has both meaning and consequence to the vulnerable individuals' wellbeing in terms of assisting future

studies and interventions for building self-efficacy, healthy social networks, and acquisition of critical skills for home, work, and community. The potential social value of the research ultimately is to continue to remove obstacles to social normalcy for this vulnerable population by helping establish roots in addition to a roof.

This chapter provides background on the evolution of research topics in the rise of homelessness in the United States in the 19th century, the second rise in homelessness in the latter 20th century, and as an ongoing problem in the 21st century. It also provides a context of the continued breadth of the problem and the return to homelessness seen even in permanent supportive housing environments. Then the research problem and questions are discussed. The chapter then provides the theoretical framework for the study, the nature of the study, specific definitions of key terms and concepts, any meaningful assumptions, scope, limitations, as well as the significance of the study.

Background

Research in the United States on the insidious social problem of homelessness has been ongoing for over 150 years, and other countries have similarly engaged for arguably much longer. Historically, the literature follows the rise of homelessness, and the descriptive articles focused on recognizing and exposing the phenomenon's existence. The resurgence of homelessness in the 1970s and 80s and the recognition it was still ongoing in the 1990s led to articles focused on categorization and understanding the composition of the group, as well as to begin to delineate factors surrounding etiology (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018; Rossi, 1990). As the

problems continued into the 2000s, the research often contained informatics that can directly inform and assist policy and practice.

Today, homelessness affects approximately 500,000 people in the United States (Henry et al., 2017; U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2021b) and 100 million worldwide (Global Homeless Statistics, 2018). Since 2007, typologies of homeless (transitional, episodic, chronic, and both sheltered and unsheltered) have remained the same, and while shifting may have occurred, the overall per capita homeless rates for the United States has decreased by only about 10% and has begun increasing again in the past 4 years (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2021a, 2021b, U.S. 2021d). These results have occurred despite periods of so-called economic prosperity, low unemployment rates, falling drug use, and aggressive programing such as Housing First initiatives operating. Some national studies have shown that permanent supportive housing can see good results but still leave nearly 1 in 5 returning to homeless status (McQuistion et al., 2014). While certainly not a total solution but of note is that in Hawai'i, the return to homelessness rate of the vulnerably housed has fallen to less than 1 in 10 (Pruitt et al., 2020). Therefore, it is clear that more research is needed to understand additional individual and additive programming needs as they relate to success in overcoming what has thus far been one of the most difficult social problems despite the initial success rates or even perhaps assumed no-fail status of aggressive permanent supportive housing programs.

Among the myriad of contributing factors attributed to this complex social problem, social networking skills and self-efficacy are not often addressed, particularly in

terms of the transition from episodic or chronic homelessness to a supportive housing solution. Rarer still is current lived experiences of the homeless and housing transitioned of Hawai'i. In the current study, I attempted to explore and describe social networking and self-efficacy in current homeless and housing transitioned formerly homeless individuals in Hawai'i. While no program can claim total success in permanent supportive housing success with time, the aloha state has a greater than average social impact in terms of numbers of homeless (Office of the Governor Hawaii, 2020). It is noteworthy that Hawai'i also has a greater than average success rate in their Housing First residents sustaining placement (Pruitt et al., 2020). Understanding the unique lived experiences of this specific group of individuals can inform research, programming, and practice as a requisite component of eliminating this most insidious social problem.

Problem Statement

Ending homelessness has been a pursuit of the agents of positive social change for approaching 2 centuries in the United States and is no doubt one of the most complex, pervasive, and entrenched problems in not only the United States but also in the world. Current research has informed policy and practice, but some work remains to understand the critical perspectives of this vulnerable population and what experiences they bring to the pursuit of understanding and remedy in terms of the cognitive and biological need to pursue normative social connections.

On a given night in 2020, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2021d) noted that 6 in 10 homeless were staying in

shelters; thus, 4 in 10 were sheltered in locations considered unfit for habitation, such as on the street, in makeshift or poorly maintained structures, or in cars. Other key findings of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) report included that for the first time since data collection began, unsheltered homeless counts grew faster than sheltered at 7% vs. 2019 (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2021b). Other key findings contained in the report were that despite previous years' reductions that veterans experiencing homeless remained unchanged in 2021, African Americans, Native Americans, and Pacific Islanders remained overrepresented in the homeless counts compared to the overall U.S. population. Also, the report noted that those categorized as chronically homeless increased by 15% from 2019. The results of the Covid-19 pandemic on homelessness are likely not fully realized as the data showed slow to no improvement overall despite the national and state moratoriums on evictions and foreclosures.

A more recent approach to ending homelessness in Europe and North America is the Housing First program. This program provides housing nonconditionally to the homeless first and then provides assistance to these individuals, which includes addressing other root cause issues as secondary concerns (Padgett et al., 2015). While permanent supportive housing programs like Housing First are operating in most states, including Hawai'i, they are not as yet a total solution (McQuistion et al., 2014; Pruitt et al., 2020) but perhaps a requisite first step toward social normalcy. Once housed, the next iteration of problem-solving for these vulnerable individuals might include various programming tailored to their individual needs, from medical and dental needs to

treatment programs to address psychological disorders and even vocational education. However, without proper social development skills, these individuals may be unable to effectively form or maintain a social network, including healthy relationships with friends and companions, functioning at work with coworkers and authority figures, and generally becoming a neighbor and effective community member (Bell & Walsh, 2015; Gray et al., 2015; Mabahala et al., 2016; Patterson et al., 2015).

Most homeless studies that address social networking do so as it relates to identifying and mitigating unhealthy networks that hinder coping and treatment for serious mental illness, substance use, at-risk behaviors resulting in HIV, other chronic health outcomes (Barker & Maguire, 2017; Gabrielian et al., 2018; Gray et al., 2015; Henwood et al., 2016; Kennedy et al., 2016, 2018; McQuistion et al., 2014; Tsai & Rosenheck, 2015; Yanos et al., 2012). The researchers noted that a principal portion of this population displays chronic substance use or serious mental illness. However, not all currently homeless or recurrently homeless individuals have a serious mental illness or engage in chronic substance use. Thus, it is not inconceivable that other experiences or root causes of homeless status must exist that perpetuate this insidious social problem. While important, these studies have not addressed the ability to create new sustaining networks from the participants' point of reference as they relate to mitigating factors of temporary, episodic, and possibly some instances of chronic homelessness when serious mental illness or substance use disorders are not present.

Additionally, there is minimal current research involving general or social self-efficacy in a homeless population or in other than recently placed Housing First

participants. Overall, these studies did not identify the meaning, importance, and sources of critical life skills, such as creating and maintaining friendships, companionship, and navigating employment relationships for those who may not be additionally suffering substance use or significant psychological disorder but for whom they may be as important in predicting success in overcoming the voluntary transition from homeless to being sustainably housed. Also, from a cultural perspective, most studies were performed in the mainland United States, Canada, and Europe, whereas Hawai'i provides a unique environment for the study of homelessness due to its geographic and cultural differences from mainland North America and Europe (see Wong & Omori, 2016).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore and describe social networking and self-efficacy in current homeless and housing transitioned formerly homeless individuals. I used a phenomenological semi structured interview to examine and describe the social networks and self-efficacy of current and previously homeless individuals in O'ahu, Hawai'i. The findings can be used to stimulate additional research and inform needed intervention or incorporate additional programming to develop better skills building to mitigate the recidivism currently experienced by housing first and other permanent supportive housing initiatives.

Research Questions

Research Question (RQ)1: What are the lived experiences, meanings, and sources of self-efficacy in Hawaiian homeless and vulnerably housed individuals?

RQ2: What are the lived experiences, meanings, and tactics for building and maintaining social networks in Hawaiian homeless and vulnerably housed individuals?

Theoretical Framework

The theory that grounded the current study was the social cognitive theory of agentic behavior (see Bandura, 2001). The concept of human agency can be constructed by the four core features: intentionality, forethought, self-reactiveness, and self-reflectiveness. Self-reflectiveness is the metacognitive ability to ascribe progress versus other and goals comprised of what Bandura (1977) called self-efficacy. This self-efficacy is then a vital determinant of the process of agency and, therefore, the movement towards both internal (individual/personal) and external (status/societal) goals. Social and environmental components influence self-efficacy and, thus, agentic success.

While out-group stigmatization of the homeless may have shifted somewhat, vulnerable individuals appear to experience negative self-reflection regarding the cause of their current situation (Vazquez et al., 2017). Also, homeless stigmatization further isolates these vulnerable individuals, leading to underutilization of services, which in turn perpetuates their continued status with all of its associated risks to wellbeing (Weisz & Quinn, 2018).

In the present study, I sought to identify experiences with social integration by looking at social networks and self-efficacy through the lens of those experiencing homelessness or those who have already transitioned to permanent supportive housing. The social cognitive theory of self-efficacy was appropriate for the study as it provided a

possible framework for understanding the social and environmental components that either add to or deplete goal-setting, action, and resiliency.

The reaffiliation motive is an extension of the evolutionary theory of loneliness in which humans are motivated at a biological level to experience an aversion to loneliness and attempt to self-regulate to regain social connection (Qualter et al., 2015). The theory notes a multistep process in which a threat is recognized, and social withdrawal for reassessment occurs, normally followed by reconnection. However, a lack of affective resiliency, certain personality traits, genetic factors, or a low sense of worth are among many maladaptive cognitive biases that can derail the motivation to reconnect and prolong isolation. The reaffiliation motive informed the present study in that should those maladaptive cognitive biases, affective states, and stigma exist at the critical stage of assessment, it could result in behavior counterproductive to social reconnection. Also similar to self-efficacy, a reaffiliation motive can also be approached through cognitive-based therapies (Cacioppo et al., 2015), which aligned with the intent of the study to inform both policy and practice.

Finally, the transformative paradigm provided conceptual support for the study. The transformative paradigm acknowledges a socially marginalized group's thoughts, feelings, and experiences (Mertens, 2007). The paradigm informed the present study as the homeless and formerly homeless are a historically marginalized population, cloistered from typical social situations and community, by giving voice to their thoughts, feelings, and experiences in their everyday social interactions and their beliefs about what keeps them striving to survive and improve their life circumstance. Also, it must be

acknowledged through the data collection, analysis, and conclusion phases of the research, there are economic and social power differences between participants and the researcher. Finally, the data and results in the transformational paradigm are assisted by relationships between the research and the community (Mertens, 2007). Thus, the concept aligned well with the study's acknowledged research problem, questions, purpose, and significance.

Nature of the Study

In this study, I used the qualitative phenomenological approach to answer the RQs. A phenomenological approach is appropriate for describing the lived experiences and the meanings held by the participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Specifically, the interpretative phenomenological approach (IPA) assisted in providing the meaning of homeless existence, building and maintaining social networks, self-efficacy, and where these elements may derive from according to the individual homeless participants. This design was appropriate because I focused on the individual's understanding and interpretation of their social reality and because it may have been impossible to effectively bracket my preinterpretation of the phenomenon (see Connelly, 2010; Smith et al., 2009). IPA also requires that participants be homogenous in that they all experience the same general phenomenon, although their interpretations of the experience may vary (Miller et al., 2018).

Semi structured individual interviews were used to explore self-efficacy and social networks in homeless and vulnerably housed adults on the island of O'ahu, Hawai'i. A sample size of seven participants was used, with data collection terminating

when a sufficient spectrum of data had been provided. Data analysis included coding and theming as assisted by qualitative data analysis software (QDAS) and based on the lived experiences of the individuals. Each interview was digitally recorded and then transcribed both manually and electronically to assure quality. Appropriately, a requirement of reflexivity or consciousness of the relatively great situational variance between myself and the participant, a lifetime sustainably housed vs. homeless or vulnerably housed, was maintained throughout the data collection and analysis stages of the study.

Definitions

Chronically homeless: An individual experiencing homelessness who also has a physical or mental disability and who has been living in this situation for a minimum of 12 months or at least four iterations in the past 3 years that together result in a total equal to or greater than 12 months duration (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2015). Further, the final rule notes that families are designated chronically homeless if the definition fits the head of household. Finally, 80 C.F.R. § 75791 (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2015) provided additional rules of arithmetic for calculating the 12-month designation for individuals who have experienced incarceration or other episodes of institutionalization.

Episodically homeless: Individuals who are homeless but do not otherwise meet the definition of chronically homeless (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2021c). According to HUD, these individuals are often vulnerably housed due to lack of stable employment, housing, or little depth in their ability or support to mitigate spiraling difficulties resulting from emergent life and health experiences. This

group who make up a larger number of the sheltered population than chronically homeless (Aubry et al., 2013) may also be the least likely to receive case management and gain access to care due to their itinerant circumstances (Aubry et al., 2013; Kuhn & Culhane, 1998). Thus, while these individuals may not have the disability that chronically homeless suffer, their continued exposure to homelessness can still result in loss of wellbeing and prevent meaningful participation in community (Sylvestre et al., 2018).

Homelessness: The lack of a "fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence" (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2011, p. 76017). 76 C.F.R. § 75994 (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2011) specified that it refers to a residence that is not designed for human habitation, for example, a park bench, car, sidewalk, public facility, abandoned building, or camping in a tent. It also includes those residing in temporary shelters or housing provided or paid for by governmental or nongovernmental organizations. It has also been extended to include those individuals or families who are vulnerably housed, such as those who are fearful or in flight from their residence due to violence, assault, or threats to life and health. Merriam-Webster (Home, 2021) provided several definitions of the term *home*. The primary definition is "one's place of residence" (Home, 2021, par. 1), which relates to the traditional view that homeless then is lack of a legal residence. However, the term also has alternate meanings including a "social unit formed by a family living together" and "a familiar or usual setting: congenial environment" (Home, 2021, par 2). These alternate definitions have become more commonplace in modern language, and as such, some social scientists have noted the need to be more specific in the use of the term *homeless*, which is an individual

who is without residence and without a social unit or place as opposed to *houseless*, which is simply the lack of appropriate residence (Passaro, 1996). Moreover, in his study of native Hawaiian homeless, McDonell (2014) noted additional definitions of what constitutes home and family that may differ from a traditional U.S. mainland view of those same constructs. For these reasons, I also used the terms houseless and roofless to mindfully represent those without a sustainable or fit residence only while avoiding any preinterpretation of those individuals' or family's capacity to master the social, environmental, and personal experiences to create a sense of or existing in a state of being they call home.

Vulnerably housed: Individuals who have previously but do not currently fit the definition of homeless and are in a housed iteration of an overall episodic homeless pattern (To et al., 2016). These individuals may be vulnerable to a further episode of homelessness due to a variety of either ongoing or emergent internal and external factors, leading to frequent changes in residential accommodations (Hwang et al., 2011).

Assumptions

One set of assumptions I held in undertaking the present study was that continued success in sustaining supportive housing would allow greater community connection and employment opportunities and greater well-being in the longer term. I also assumed that economic prosperity was not as important to these individuals' positive life experiences as meaningful social connections and striving for recognition and meaning of their individual achievements and experiences. These assumptions are based on the body of literature that highlights experiences of homeless individuals and service providers

regarding the adverse effects of homeless existence and social isolation on physical and mental well-being.

An additional set of assumptions surrounded the effective use of a semi structured interview with adult participants as an effective means of addressing the RQs. I assumed that each participant had the presence of mind to respond to questions accurately, free from any undue influence of powerful others or mental disability, which could have confounded data integrity. Another assumption was that participants were truthful in their responses regarding their age and experiences. A final assumption was that I held the ability to recognize and mitigate bias throughout each stage of the research, from design to collection and ultimately the interpretation of these voices and experiences.

Scope and Delimitations

There has been little research on self-efficacy in homeless and housing transitioned formerly homeless and few studies that have addressed social networking and connections outside the mainland United States, Canada, and Europe. My objective was to utilize lived experiences to find associated convergent and divergent themes of social networks and perhaps self-efficacy that exist in these two groups in the unique social and geographical environment of Honolulu County on the island of O'ahu in the state of Hawai'i. The study included a purposive or criteria-based selection of adult homeless or formerly homeless in a single geographic region. The study involved a semi structured interview protocol where questions and prompts were based on those found in two previously validated measures but that were wholly distinct from those measures in construct.

Transferability in the present study was assisted by rich description (see Lincoln & Guba, 1986), which was provided during data collection and involved the social realities offered by the individuals living the data. This allowed for a description of the phenomenon of social networks and self-efficacy in socially connecting in this unique environment, which can both stand alone and be distinct as an example or for comparison or contrast to other more Western and European homeless populations in terms of individual lived experiences and meaning.

Limitations

The primary risk in the present study was appropriately recruiting participants who could give accurate and meaningful answers to the semi structured interview questions. As with any exploration of experiences, faulty memory can play a role in gathering incorrect or incomplete information. I compensated for this risk by assuring that an appropriate number of capable participants were recruited so that common themes emerged based on a sufficient exploration of both converging and diverging aspects of the phenomenon as opposed to limited responses that could have inappropriately weighted interpretation of the final data. In regards to mental capacity, due ethical consideration was given during recruitment as participants were members of a vulnerable group who has been shown to have higher rates of mental illness than the population at large (see Gabrielian et al., 2018). Additional limitations may have arisen due to continuing social stigmatization of homeless individuals, the isolated nature of social interaction in some cases, presence of distrust or suspicion of motives of outsiders, and the possible intimidating nature of the perceived power difference between themselves

and myself. This may have led to difficulty in participants being forthcoming in their answers to interview questions to provide a thorough description of their true experiences.

The somewhat isolated geographic location of a Pacific Island was acknowledged as both a strength and a possible limitation of the current study. Participants included those who had lived on the U.S. mainland but are now houseless in Hawai'i as the study did not require the participant to be native Hawaiian. The study also did not differentiate between chronic and episodic homeless in the recruiting process. There may have been thematic variations between these two subgroups that were not revealed with the sample size but could have provided important information in a deeper understanding of the RQs. Finally, it was acknowledged that I used the term *Hawaiian* homeless, but participants were limited to those from Honolulu County, and that neighboring islands likely could have provided participants with many different experiences given the differences in the unique social and physical environments found in Maui, Kauai, and Hawaii Island.

Significance

In the present study, I sought to fill the gap in understanding by specifically focusing on homeless individuals' social networks and self-efficacy. The research was unique because it incorporated an essential element of agentic behavior, self-efficacy, thus providing insights into the unique population of homeless or vulnerably housed adults on the island of O'ahu in the state of Hawai'i.

Much of the current literature has focused on at-risk behaviors regarding physical health outcomes (Henwood et al., 2016; Kennedy et al., 2016, 2018; McQuistion et al.,

2014). Overall, researchers have suggested that social networks are independently important factors for a successful transition to housing and preventing the recurrence of the homeless status (Barker & Maguire, 2017; Duchesne & Rothwell, 2015; Gabrielian et al., 2018; Tsai et al., 2012; Tsai & Rosenheck, 2015; Yanos et al., 2012). This study helps provide a better understanding of the makeup of social networks, or lack thereof, in current or previously houseless individuals and if these intersect with the individual's self-efficacy in perpetuating homeless status.

Insights gained in this study can assist in providing cognitive or other social skills building into existing programs designed to assist in general health or in addition to permanent sustained housing initiatives in order to mitigate a return to maladaptive social patterns and likely homeless status. Thus, given the ability to gain agency in revising and extending social abilities, these individuals could obtain and sustain housing, avoid maladaptive social patterns, and build meaningful companionship and participate in their communities through normal social activities. These teachable abilities, in turn, can become beneficial to these individuals in terms of heightened overall wellbeing and can benefit the state in mitigating a key social problem while also reducing financial burdens of care for the City and County of Honolulu and the State of Hawai'i.

Summary

Despite great efforts and aggressive social programming in providing housing, the problem of homelessness continues. In some cases, mitigating the primary obstacle to the problem, housing, is not enough to escape a return in the longer term. Using a phenomenological semi structured interview format, I sought the lived experiences of

individuals currently homeless or who have successfully transitioned into permanent supportive housing to be interpreted through the lens of the theoretical concepts of social cognitive theory and the reaffiliation motive.

In this qualitative study, I attempted to explore and describe the social networking and self-efficacy of houseless and housing transitioned individuals in O'ahu, Hawai'i, in an effort to inform programming policy and practice of the importance placed on self-efficacy and social networking skills by these vulnerable individuals.

In Chapter 2 of the study, a review of the theoretical constructs guiding the design and implementation of the study is provided. The chapter then provides a review of historical studies and those focusing on a few of the many contributing factors to this insidious social problem. The chapter concludes with a synthesis of homeless studies relating to social connection, self-efficacy, and those few related explicitly to Hawai'i.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The problem of homelessness is one of the most insidious social problems of the past 2 centuries and despite times of so-called unprecedented economic prosperity and highest standard of living the world has ever experienced. Now firmly entrenched in the 21st century, progress has been made but there has been little positive change in per capita incident rates. Most recently, the categories of transient, episodic, and chronic homelessness have decreased for some subgroups but have increased for others (Benjaminsen & Andrade, 2015; Kneebone et al., 2015; State of Hawaii, 2021).

The latest strategy to combat homelessness in Western countries has been to subordinate all immediate concerns to the primary constraint, permanent sustained housing, and then deal with the other variables in due time (Padgett et al., 2015). However, even this aggressive initiative does not provide a complete and sustainable solution until some of those secondary root causes or confounding factors driving individuals back into rough or sheltered living are understood and addressed. McQuistion et al. (2014) noted that 23.7% experienced another homelessness episode within 18 months of obtaining housing. While it is understandable that some individuals have one or more obstacles to reestablishing societal functionality, others may have complex problems that require additional interventions for issues such as untreated mental disorders including substances use and depression, other health issues, and even lack the knowledge, skills, and abilities to function in what might be thought of as everyday social situations such as being a neighbor, a community member, a club or church member, a

coworker or employee, or even developing effective friendships (Bell & Walsh, 2015; Gray et al., 2015; Mabahala et al., 2016; Patterson et al., 2015).

Most studies have focused on those who suffer from mental illness, substance abuse, physical disability, and at-risk behavior. However, just as economics is not the only factor leading to homelessness or the inability to stay sustainably housed over time, so too are these not the only layer of obstacles returning to housing and social normalcy for these vulnerable individuals. Overall, researchers have suggested that social networks (Barker & Maguire, 2017; Duchesne & Rothwell, 2015; Gabrielian et al., 2018; Golembiewski et al., 2017; Tsai et al., 2012; Tsai & Rosenheck, 2015; Yanos et al., 2012;) and self-efficacy (Souza et al., 2020) are independently important factors for a successful transition to housing and preventing the recurrence of the homeless status. However, there remains a gap in the literature in exploring and describing the social networks and self-efficacy in adults who are homeless. More specifically, a gap exists in examining or exploring the homeless population in the island environment of Hawai'i. The purpose of this study was to explore the social networking behaviors and self-efficacy of current and formerly homeless individuals on the island of O'ahu, Hawai'i.

The literature review begins with an overview of the literature search strategies used in the review. The chapter establishes the theoretical foundation based on social cognitive theory and the tenet of self-efficacy as it pertains to a homeless individual's agency in returning to social normalcy. This section of the chapter provides an overview of the theory of reaffiliation motives and how they assist in explaining the cognitive avoidance of social isolationism.

An historical overview is provided, including the evolution of terminology and tone from the 1800s to today from the descriptive to the predictive and finally to the preventive incorporating the current social policy of Housing First. Notes on the cultural evolution in causal attribution of the general public and the homeless individuals themselves are also provided in this section. The chapter then moves toward a compendium of salient variables contributing to homelessness, including both the internal and external factors that affect housed trajectory. The review also provides a discussion of why social networks are vital to human wellbeing. The chapter then I address studies looking at a social network as they are experienced and observed in the homeless, including those found in sheltered and unsheltered environments, how they can change for better and for worse while transitioning to permanent supportive housing, the networks of those established in housing, and then an exploration of studies specifically involving Hawaiian homeless. Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion of the sparse literature on self-efficacy amongst the homeless, including definitions, sources, and measurements of this crucial component of setting, attempting, and succeeding in advancing agentic goals and resultant behaviors.

Literature Search Strategy

An extensive search of the literature was performed using the Walden University Library and associated options for multiple databases. Resources were analyzed following multiple search combinations comprised of the following keyword search terms: *homeless, self-efficacy, social networking, Hawaii,* and *Housing First*. Resources based on these keywords were sourced from specific searches performed in APA

PsychInfo, Google Scholar, ProQuest Central, ProQuest Dissertation & Theses Global, Sage Journals, Thoreau Multi-Database, as well as government sites including The Department of Housing and Urban Development's report database and Hawaii.gov for associated reference articles and data.

Theoretical Foundation

Social Cognitive Theory

The following four core features construct Bandura's (2001) concept of human agency: intentionality, forethought, self-reactiveness, which is the self-regulated mechanism described to regulate the need for thoughts and actions, and finally, self-reflectiveness, which is the metacognitive ability to ascribe progress versus others and goals. As humans self-reflect during their endeavors, the belief in their ability to execute behaviors and reach their goal is what Bandura (1977) called self-efficacy. Specifically, Bandura's (1977) theory describes self-efficacy as a heavily weighted determinant of "whether coping behavior will be initiated, how much effort will be expended, and how long it will be sustained in the face of obstacles and aversive experiences" (p. 191). Social cognitive learning theory notes that with low or nonexistent levels of self-efficacy, there would be little reason to continue to act towards that goal, and, therefore, self-efficacy is a key component of agentic success (Bandura, 2001).

Self-efficacy is then a vital determinant of the process of agency and, therefore, the movement towards both internal (individual/personal) and external (status/societal) goals. The social cognitive theory in general and self-efficacy specifically provided a theoretical framework for the current study as social and environmental components

influence self-efficacy and, thus, agentic success. This assists in providing both a causative and a predictive relationship of either executing or obtaining social skills and the agency required to avoid continued or reiterative homeless episodes.

Vazquez et al. (2017) found that housed individuals have changed their causal attribution of homelessness to societal or structural versus individualistic ones. However, they also noted that the homeless often attribute their situation to self rather than society, system, or powerful others. Also, Weisz and Quinn (2018) noted that the stigma of homelessness is predictive of physical and psychological health issues and the utilization of services. Bandura (1982) described that failure to judge personal efficacy correctly can lead to fundamental choices, both positive and negative. Moreover, he noted that continued failures to execute corrective courses of action lead to additional personal efficacy reduction and ultimately to futility and despondency. Thus, a self-defeating lack of fundamental skill sets or beliefs may exist, which negatively impact the homeless individual's self-efficacy and, subsequently, their agency in continual improvement aimed at eliminating root causes of obstacles that can likely lead to ongoing or recurrence of homelessness. In the present study, I sought to identify relationships between social integration and housing success by looking generally at network makeup, quality, and self-efficacy as components of a sustainable return to housing and social normalcy. Once sources and definitions are understood, future research can evaluate the manipulation of the independent variables required to impact socially hindered homelessness, such as introducing a targeted cognitive-based social integration intervention program for both those presently in the homeless or vulnerably housed iterations.

Reaffiliation Motive

Reaffiliation motive (RAM) is a tenet of the evolutionary theory of loneliness in which an individual who experiences social isolation or loneliness is motivated to evaluate and reconnect to avoid associated aversive feelings (Qualter et al., 2015). Essentially the 3-step process described by Qualter et al. (2015) involves an individual perceiving they are lonely or disconnected, an aversive stimulus. This is followed by the activation of RAM in an attempt at remedy or reconnection. Then the behavioral reaffiliation process occurs, which counterintuitively motivates the individual to socially withdraw. However, this is noted as a means of regrouping and reassessing. The next stage is the cognitive reaffiliation process, which occurs when the individual becomes hypervigilant of social cues and stimuli, and, subsequently, reconnection occurs. The Qualter and colleagues noted that this process occurs throughout the lifespan and that variations exist depending on the age or stage of development from early childhood through older age.

Qualter et al. (2015), however, noted that there are some individual differences in how RAM works. Specifically, they noted that the presence of maladaptive cognitive biases at the hypervigilance phase can cause a deeper descent into loneliness. They cited several individual risk factors that may lead to a failed RAM, including low self-worth, affective disability, personality traits such as introversion, genetic factors, and having an external attribution of control. The present study was informed by RAM in that low self-evaluation, affective state, and perceived social stigmatization at the hypervigilance or social monitoring phase could cause an exit from RAM and failure to reconnect and lead

to even further social withdrawal. For example, the continued social stigmatization experienced by current and former roofless individuals could be problematic at the hypervigilance phase.

Additionally, Qualter et al. (2015) and Cacioppo et al. (2015) provided notes on potential therapeutic interventions that could be added to current programming to remedy maladaptive cognitive schemas that lead to a failed RAM, such as cognitive based therapy. However, Masi et al. (2011) noted that interventions other than cognitive based therapy, such as attention retraining and primer acceptance alongside increasing opportunities for social interaction, showed no significant effect on loneliness.

Finally, Qualter et al. (2015) proposed the need for further research on cultural differences, which may affect how a group of people views not only loneliness itself but also the different trigger points for instigation RAM and social monitoring processes through the lifespan. In this study, I explored the meaning of social connections for the houseless, a group who are often closed off from most of society and community, those transitioning to housing, who are in the midst of developing new and repairing old social connections, and sought to understand experiences in the unique culture and environment of O'ahu, Hawaii with a greater than average Asian and Pacific Islander population.

Homelessness in the United States

History of Homelessness

Homelessness has been observed as a social phenomenon for centuries in Western society. In the United States specifically, it begins to appear in articles in the late 1800s

following the Civil War. Early themes in the literature focused primarily on a structural, environmental, or societal etiology for the phenomenon and ranged from themes involving the mentally ill turned out of institutions (Putnam, 1885), transients in inescapable poverty seeking temporary jobs across the country, those left destitute due to severe economic downturns like the great depression, to those who are unemployable and nonfunctioning due to drug addiction and personal disabilities (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018). A key shift in homelessness occurred following World War II, however. Homelessness in the United States decreased dramatically in the postwar economic boom up and until the 1970s (Rossi, 1990). Also, the average homeless individual up to this point was predominantly older, White, and male. A marked change occurred in the late 1970s into the 1980s when homelessness began to rise rapidly once again. Rossi (1990) noted that while mental illness and substance use were still predominant factors, just as in the earlier part of the century, the new homeless were younger, consisted of minorities rather than Whites, and included women and families. Social scientists noted this phenomenon and thus began the era of heightened study of the new homeless, utilizing more available resources of universities and governmental and policy-focused groups, as evidenced by the abundant literature in the 1970s and 1980s.

Research in the areas of factoring, typology, demographics, and characteristics began to blossom in the late 1980s and into the 1990s. A seminal work in the typology of roofless populations was performed by Kuhn and Culhane (1998) when the research team factored characteristics based on the patterns of homelessness. Specifically, they

differentiated chronic, episodic, and transitionally homeless. They noted that a transitionally homeless individual might enter a shelter or living rough situation for one stay or a short period, episodically homeless were frequently in and out of homeless status, and the chronically homeless, which fit the stereotypical definition of homeless, remained homeless for very long periods of time. With each increasing level of exposure, the researchers noted the greater the likelihood of physical or mental distress and that the more entrenched, the older the individual was likely to be. This type of research allowed a more focused response in determining higher risk groups for which intervention could be attempted. Descriptive studies such as these likely began to reveal the length and breadth of this insidious social problem that no longer only included older White males but now minorities, veterans, the underserved unwell, and whole families, single mothers, and unaccompanied minors. However, just as seen in the earlier part of the 20th century, understanding etiology and characteristics likely did not change either the general public's causal attribution of homelessness and the homeless individual's attribution or responsibility from internal to external (Blasi, 2000).

The next grouping of socially themed research in the homeless literature involves social stigmatization and associated social isolation for this vulnerable group. The last 20 years have seen a good deal of research in this area, including social ties to wellbeing. Research in the area of social need, social isolationism, and stigmatization in the 2000s has focused on the need to consider social imperatives in addition to physical mitigation initiatives (Coleman, 2017; Mabahala et al., 2016; Mago et al., 2013; Tsai et al., 2012; Yanos et al., 2012), the need to consider not simply opportunity or quantity of social

iterations but also their quality (Bell & Walsh, 2015; Henwood et al., 2016; Nemiroff et al., 2011; Tsai et al., 2012). Another category of research involving postimplementation social program research such as Housing First or other permanent supportive housing initiatives has been undertaken to inform not only behavioral science but also policy and programming and treatment programs (Patterson et al., 2015; Tsai et al., 2012; Walter et al., 2016).

Additionally, in recent decades, researchers have begun to update or remind scholars, practitioners, and policymakers of the plight of previously stigmatized or socially invisible groups, perhaps based on changes in how the culture currently views these vulnerable individuals. Some examples of subgroups that may have once been considered invisible or to whom internal causality was applied include those suffering from mental disorders, veterans, the elderly, and LGBTQ+ individuals (Belcher & DeForge, 2012; Durso & Gates, 2012; Lee et al., 1990; Mitchell et al., 2017; Murphy & Eghaneyan, 2018; Perl, 2018; Tsai et al., 2016; Tsai & Rosenheck, 2015; Vazquez et al., 2017).

Variables Contributing to Homelessness

The situational determinants of homelessness are as varied as the individuals who suffer in its grip. Studies in this area were practically informative in that they provide some of the markers that allow intervention or prevent a pathway to homelessness and social strife. An important contribution was made by Mago et al. (2013) to curate both structural and social forces through a fuzzy cognitive map process versus a more traditional common-sense mapping process to categories on the causal map to

homelessness. Specifically, they noted the following variables before utilizing both quantitative and qualitative weighting: 1) criminal justice system involvement, 2) poverty, 3) unemployment, 4) education, 5) income, 6) addiction, 7) social support network, 8) family breakdown, 9) mental illness, 10) non-governmental organization assistance, 11) childhood homelessness, 12) government assistance, and 13) cost of housing. The current study focuses on the problem of social networks and interaction identified as a critical component in the holistic mitigation of this complex problem.

Social Networks and Homelessness

The deleterious effects on health from social isolation were addressed by Berkman and Syme (1979) in their longitudinal study on Alameda County residents. The study served to provide two seminal points that inform the current research. Firstly, the researchers determined that social and community connection was tied to one's risk of mortality. In other words, social connection is not simply a source of comfort or happiness for human beings but is actually vital to our overall wellbeing. The second attribute of the study that is noteworthy is that it provided a metric to evaluate social networks, the social network index (SNI).

With an understanding of the importance of social functioning to both physical and psychological wellbeing, its contribution to remaining houseless, and the evolution of homelessness in the United States to include socially marginalized, stigmatized, and underserved subpopulations, a need to delve more deeply into current definitions, sources, assumptions, and implications of social integration opportunities and skills is important. Mabahala et al. (2016) demonstrated in their qualitative study that

homelessness circumstances reside within the classically defined overarching determinants of inequity in both socioeconomics and social justice. Specifically, the study notes four key determinants or dimensions: home and childhood environments, experiences during school life, type of social network, and social opportunity.

Additionally, less salient environmental obstacles can influence social connectivity to community and thus housed versus homeless trajectory, as noted by Nemiroff et al. (2011) in their longitudinal study of once-homeless women. The team found that even provided housing of low quality (defined as inadequate size, non-safe and friendly neighborhood, or not structurally safe) can lead to lower interactivity in the new housed milieu. Finally, a good deal of recent research involves the difficulties experienced in physical and mental wellbeing among the socially challenged homeless populations, including exacerbation of at-risk behaviors (Gabrielian et al., 2018; Gray, 2020; Henwood et al., 2016; Kennedy et al., 2016; McQuistion et al., 2014), avoidance, prioritization, or lack of access to care, or the general increase in disease rates and mortality as a result (Baggett et al., 2010; Klop et al., 2018; Paudyal & Saunders, 2018; Perl, 2018; Tsai et al., 2016; Weisz & Quinn, 2018; Wong & Omori, 2016).

Sheltered and Unsheltered Living

One might hypothesize that the shelter environment's interaction helps the population gain or maintain a normative social competency. Barker and Maguire (2017) investigated the positive nature of various types of peer-support in sheltered environments, including motivation, offering differing viewpoints, providing role modeling, and helping comrades gain experience, leading to trust and sustainable

relationships. Pedersen et al. (2012) attempted to categorize sheltered individuals as socially related, satisfied loners, socially related but lonely, socially isolated, or a group of various styles and then judge how they perceived their social integration. They found that the self-perception of social integration or isolation varied considerably between the groups. They also note a limiting factor was the subject's inability to distinguish natural or genuine vs. contrived social relationships. Thus, they live in a world comprised of social workers and shelter staff, which are likely not representative of interaction with neighbors, friends, family, or the general community. Similar findings were observed in both sheltered and recently housed individuals by Gabrielian et al. (2018), where relationships were actively sought out. Similarly, they observed that relationships with case managers and staff were superficial in nature and that peer relationships were often negatively weighted, encouraging risky behavior.

Patterson et al. (2015) conducted a narrative interview study on the perceived changes in homeless individuals' journey in attempting to transition to housing. Participants noted factors included the ability to feel secure, shifting to new identities, and living alone as opposed to in a sheltered or encampment community where there were meaningful social ties, routines, and activities. The study highlights a finding that transitional elements such as these are likely to deteriorate goal setting to leave the status quo even though the change would fulfill their perceived basic needs such as a sustained roof at no monetary cost.

Barker and Maguire (2017) note in their quantitative meta-analysis that peer support in the homeless demonstrated shared experience, bolstering attenuation,

modeling, and social support to improve eight areas of their quality-of-life matrix. However, poor navigation of peer socialization could have unintended negative consequences when setting goals to escape houselessness or while attempting the successful transition to supportive housing. It also warrants exploring that if obstacles to social agency exist which prevent leaving houseless status, it may also diminish resiliency in maintaining a grant of housing.

Transitions to Housing (Healthy vs. Unhealthy Transition)

A study by Duchesne and Rothwell (2015) involving Canadian homeless helped determine one contextual factor to returning to homelessness: inadequate social support mechanisms after leaving the shelter, which was exacerbated if that departure was imposed or unorganized. The researchers found 40% of those who returned to sheltered life lacked adequate social support. The study specifically surveyed participants who returned to shelters but did not survey those who were already in housing either vulnerably or sustainably. While it is clear that social support is a significant factor in the return to homelessness in this locality, what is unclear is what both successfully and unsuccessfully housed individuals' social networks were defined as.

While necessary, the availability of social networking and support opportunities may not be sufficient to set and obtain goals for this vulnerable population compared to those with heightened social agency. In other words, it may not be adequate for agentic success that simply having the stage set for healthy social interaction that it will occur without additional training or impetus for some members of this stigmatized group. Bell and Walsh (2015) explored the role of social support provided by shelters in their

qualitative interview study, which specifically identified a survival strategy of shelter-centric behavior due to the comfort, acceptance, and companionship of both peers and staff. The authors highlight the pullback towards homelessness that exists due to the lack of success in establishing a new or bridge social network. The participants noted that they did not have valued social interactions once they received housing, such as the shelter's chaplain dropping by for a chat or the staff asking about their day. These and other seemingly banal everyday interactions, while seemingly minor, were more than they were willing to give up. The researchers found that an inability to integrate or form new relationships in the new setting in these cases attracted them back to the shelter environment to re-establish their former networks as the only positive interaction they believed they had. For this reason, the researchers emphasized the need to differentiate between lack of a roof and lack of roots where roots or social connectedness, in this case, became a powerful experiential component influencing their behavior.

In their study of chronically homeless adults who had been in housing for only one year, Tsai et al. (2012) noted that participants in the study showed no significant social integration changes, including community or civic participation, religiosity, or work and social support. Thus, they note a social world composed of social workers and shelter staff may cnot be representative of general community integration. Finally, it may be a misconception that limited social opportunities afforded by housing could overcome a chronically homeless person's tendency towards their previous iteration of socialization.

Gaps in the current literature around social integration involve failure to more succinctly define social integration beyond a narrowly described assumption that it simply means the number of people you speak to or transact within a given period of time. The studies reviewed make little mention of social therapy regimens integrated into the as-is housing, cursory medical, and employment services regimens.

Not only the presence, opportunity, or quantity of social ties are significant factors in social integration during housing transition, but also the quality and type of relationships can also play a role. In their mixed-methods study, Henwood et al. (2016) discuss the significant change in social networks in both size and composition during the transition to permanent supportive housing and that these can lead to an increase in at-risk behaviors if not well navigated. Specifically, they noted the gravity to remain in equal status to cohorts in their homeless environment, which poses a fundamental risk to a successful transition. A study by Cruwys et al. (2014) reported that forming new healthy group memberships helped their homeless participants avoid maladaptive patterns. Thus, not only creating or maintaining relationships is essential to the housed trajectory of these individuals but so too is the removal and avoidance of relationships that perpetuate negative cognitive schemas.

Additionally, Kennedy et al. (2016) explored social network-based intervention to assist Housing First residents' transition toward healthy, supportive social networks to avoid taking sexual risk or using alcohol and other drugs. The study used computer-assisted visualizations to assist in navigating social networks appropriately. It is one of the very few articles that acknowledges the social connection to risk and attempts to

provide a tool or treatment modality to mitigate it. What also remains unexplored in the current literature is the houseless and vulnerably housed individuals' definition and sources of the self-efficacy required in creating new or re-establishing previous healthy social networks.

Housing and the Homeless

Studies in the area of those established in housing primarily involve those recently placed or who have experienced recent setbacks to homeless status, and very few sought the experiences of longer-term residents who have thus far successfully navigated the transition. Of the limited-term studies involving those in permanent supportive housing who experience a return to homelessness, almost all refer to lack of support modalities as a primary contributing factor.

Golembiewski et al., (2017) conducted a longitudinal mixed-methods study of post housing placement social integration and discovered that network sizes decreased over the first year, but contact with remaining members increased. Of note was that family and other higher-quality relationships developed more resiliently when the residents left behind negative relationships that might have been part of a cycle of abuse. This study assists in understanding the individual's success in shedding negative relationships with either new positive ones or by re-establishing older healthy relationships with estranged family, for example.

While maintaining permanent housing is not always predicated upon being sustainably employed for older or disabled individuals, it is certainly important for those whose journey allows them the ability to be productive in the workplace. Mabahala et al.

(2016) used qualitative interviews of UK homeless individuals found that one of the primary motivators to remain in homeless status was the lack of social opportunities in creating new friendships given their social stigma and their perceived inability to interact equitably with coworkers and employers. Thus, the actual and perceived social inequity that dominates these houseless individuals' self-assessments could perpetuate the cycle of living rough. Similarly, Patterson et al. (2015) found two positive themes emerging from their interviews with independently and congregate housing settings with Housing First participants in Canada. Both included the sense of pride in stable and secure housing and that when services and support were offered, it was considered welcome and useful. While the majority in the study said they did not seek social connections, a few did seek new friendships, romance, and reconnection with lost family. Hindering themes for independently housed individuals included the difficulty in reverting to a singular existence, defining their new identity, difficulty in managing their new free time in a constructive way, and missing a feeling of safety in some housing. A deleterious theme of note was that this newly free time and newly found lack of need to focus on day-to-day survival led to a good deal of time to focus on past problems and loss. In the majority of participants, this led to a reduction in controlling their substance use as an escape from these unacceptable thoughts and feelings. The study did not include currently homeless individuals in their baseline interviews, and eligibility requirements included that members have a confirmed mental disorder. Another research gap identified as societal barriers to promote acceptance of persons who have experienced homelessness as neighbors in communities (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine,

2018). Thus, an environmental obstacle to integration may still exist not within the individual but within the community itself. I sought to understand these experiences as they are presented by the individuals experiencing the transition.

Overall, these studies help clarify the various needs for the result of social skill mastery in predicting successful navigation of housing transition. However, they do not identify the meaning, importance, and sources of self-efficacy in building critical life skills such as redefining identity and creating and maintaining friendships, companionship, and navigating employment relationships for the roofless individuals themselves. Overall, the literature lacks the voice for those who may not be additionally suffering substance use or significant psychological disorder but for whom the ability to set and obtain these goals is equally as important in predicting success in overcoming the voluntary transition from homeless to being sustainably housed. Finally, a lack of research exists on factors or themes of successes in Housing First program which are different in Hawai'i (Pruitt et al., 2020) vs. the mainland U.S whether in similar climates such as Los Angeles or similar housing costs such as New York (Corinth, 2017; Corinth & Lucas, 2018). It is noteworthy that Hawai'i ranked 1st in multigenerational households at 7.8% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021a). Also, the average number of people per household data in Hawai'i is 2.86, second only to Utah (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021b). The average purchase price of a on O'ahu as of September 2022 is $1.1 million for a single-family home or $503,000 for a condo (State of Hawaii Department of Business Economic Development and Tourism, 2022) and rent averages $2,500 per month third to Napa and Silicon Valley in California (Daysog, R., 2022).

Homelessness in Hawaii

With few exceptions, the studies reviewed were performed in mainland United States, United Kingdom., Northern Europe, Spain, and Canada. However, Hawai'i provides a unique environment for the study of homelessness due to its geographic and cultural differences from mainland North America and Europe (Wong & Omori, 2016) and a higher unsheltered than sheltered and therefore likely untracked and unattended, homeless population (City and County of Honolulu, 2020; The Council of Economic Advisors, 2019). The Council of Economic Advisors (2019) ranks Hawai'i third in homelessness, with 46 homeless per 10,000 population behind the District of Columbia and New York. The report notes that the homeless rate in Hawai'i is 2.7 times the national average overall and that a Hawaiian homeless individual is the most likely to live unsheltered, 2.4 times more likely than any other state. The hawaii.gov website on the homeless (Office of the Governor Hawaii, 2020) notes that the average life expectancy of a homeless individual in the state is 53 years of age, which is almost 30 years that of the rest of the state's general population. Another striking difference in Hawai'i and other areas experiencing homelessness and utilizing the Housing First initiative is its greater than average housing resiliency. As previously noted, McQuistion et al. (2014) reported overall that that 23.7% placed in permanent supportive housing experienced another episode of homelessness. However, Hawai'i experiences an average retention rate in their Housing First program at 92% (Pruitt et al., 2020).

Similar to the previous general literature review, focusing on Hawai'i specific homeless studies reveals categories dominated by health-related mitigation (Hoshide et

al., 2011; Yamane et al., 2010), basic programs and services, policy informatics, and categorizations (Darrah-Okike et al., 2018; Tanabe & Mobley, 2011). There were minimal articles related to the social networks of the Hawaiian homeless in the past ten years. Two more recent dissertorial studies involving these unique and complex individuals in Hawai'i were noteworthy. Gray (2020) addressed the nation's largest unsheltered homeless population by utilizing qualitative interviews with service providers in order to attempt to define why they believed unsheltered homeless remain so. The study concluded that the majority were mentally ill or had substance abuse problems. Service providers noted the lack of knowledge of the general population and the overall shortage of program dollars and staffing that did not assist with longer-term solutions.

Secondly, McDonell (2014) performed a phenomenological study of individuals in an unsheltered homeless encampment and their service providers on the island of O'ahu. The author clearly differentiates the demographics of the beach dwelling homeless utilizing serviced based on the large numbers of Native Hawaiians who were not only houseless but were taking advantage of provided services. As an example of the differences in these individual points of view, the research notes the Hawaiian focus on family as well as the connection between the respect for family and the belief that the land is part of one's family. Thus, a deep-rooted respect for interacting with the land was a fundamental belief. In fact, during semi structured interviews, fifteen of the sixteen participants did not see themselves as being homeless but, merely houseless, suggesting that for them, the encampment was their home and just different from the traditional definition. Participants also noted a feeling of community there. However, those with

children tended to want to get a conventional house and have more access to care not currently provided by the current community. The research provides important insights into these vulnerable individuals' thoughts and feelings of roots versus a roof and the opinions of their service providers on what is needed to continue to support them. One recent unsheltered interview study did highlight the perceptions of unsheltered homeless in regards to experiential impacts of sit-lie bans and the constant rousting, confiscation of personal property, and movement from encampments in the City and County of Honolulu, which the researchers noted hindered education and services as well as promoting anxiety and despair among the roofless individuals (Darrah-Okike et al., 2018). This is a notable example from an environmental, social, and experiential standpoint and may have some bearing on the lived experiences sought in the present study.

With the present study, I sought to fill the gap in the current literature regarding the lived experiences of social networking and the sources of self-efficacy for homeless and formerly homeless individuals in the unique environment of O'ahu, Hawai'i.

Self-Efficacy and Homelessness

Self-efficacy has been shown to be a necessary component of success for not only success in everyday life endeavors for homeless individuals (Golembiewski et al. 2017), but it is also understood as a requisite for health-seeking in the case of both physical and psychological problems (Paudyal & Saunders, 2018; Thomas et al., 2016; Yildirim & Güler, 2020) which without treatment, in the context of homeless individuals, could alter an individual's permanently housed trajectory. Self-efficacy, as it relates to creating and

striving for goals in the homeless, has been studied as a predictor of overall quality of life. In a study of Dutch homeless adults, van der Laan et al. (2017) determined that a majority of homeless adults create personal goals for their experience in using social services and that this goal related self-efficacy was positively related to quality of life and were independent of income, housing, and use of health services.

One recent study of self-efficacy notes it as a root element in the mental wellbeing in homeless populations focused on youth and their failure to thrive socially and emotionally due to a lack in skillsets and therefore a need to include a bolstering element when dealing with this particularly vulnerable sub-population of homeless. Begun et al. (2018) found no significant correlation between substance use and self-efficacy in their study of New Orleans youth. They also note that social connectedness and self-efficacy were predictive of lower levels of depression but not necessarily substance use amongst their participants in three mainland cities. Neither study involved adult homeless or vulnerably housed, nor did they explore this admittedly essential ability to overall well-being as experienced, defined, and sourced by the individual participants.

Bandura (1977) notes the four sources of self-efficacy include mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and affective states. Several of the elemental components of self-efficacy could be at risk in navigating a life lived rough. For example, mastery and vicarious experiences may be rare if one is living sheltered, unsheltered, jobless. Housing First programming may not provide education and practice of social integration or bolstering goal-setting overall. Finally, it is noteworthy that affective states can affect this vulnerable population at greater rates than the general

population in terms of those suffering from both mental and physical disabilities, both moderate and severe (Jego et al., 2018).

Regarding affective states, mental illness is a frequently noted root cause of both initial and continued episodes of homelessness. Self-efficacy is a mediator of social support and both objective and subjective recovery from mental illness (Thomas et al., 2016). Many of the building elements of self-efficacy can be made more difficult, be they for both mentally ill or for normally functioning adult homeless in terms of environmental or community acceptance, although present studies have not determined why this is so. Yanos et al. (2012) found that while mental health recovering individuals living in supportive housing were not equal to their non-distressed counterparts but psychological factors did not account for the difference. So, while a contributing factor psychiatric distress, by itself, is not indicative of success in integrating into communities.

With the advent of technology and the highest level of connectivity tools than any other time in history, it warrants acknowledging that mastery and vicarious experience may be part of the new social landscape for this vulnerable population, specifically for homeless youth (Harpin et al., 2016; VonHoltz et al., 2018). These studies look primarily at cell phone use as it relates to social media access and use and focus exclusively on the experiences of sheltered youth and do not address social connectedness of those over 21. Buente et al. (2020) provided one view of how adult members of this group of individuals utilize more contemporary connecting and networking methods by using Facebook. However, the study also focused on sheltered homeless, not those in the Housing First journey, did not survey those using any other platforms or apps other than Facebook, and

do not include any experiences related to non-technological means of networking. The lived experiences of these vulnerable individuals in the present study seeks to reflect the definitions realities of any form of social interaction mastery, including those of increased mobile app use from any format or source for both those in a current homeless status or housed formerly homeless.

A gap in the literature exists in understanding and then more fully addressing primary or newly diminished foundational obstacles to self-efficacy, specifically exploring attempts to master healthy social experiences and skills in the homeless and housing transitioned formerly homeless adults. Unlike the current literature in this area, I sought to highlight lived social experiences of both currently and previously houseless individuals and the sources of their self-efficacy and ultimately their agency in pursuing roots in addition to a roof.

Summary and Conclusions

An analysis of historical literature suggests that despite recognition of and attempted intervention measures applied to the variables associated with assumed root causation of homelessness, the problem persists, even in best-case scenarios of using permanent supportive housing initiatives. The literature reveals that physical and social environmental factors, both internal and external, are critical elements in successful navigation away from houselessness and into social normalcy and that both the quantity and the quality of those relationships is important. What remains unclear in this vulnerable group is the meaning, sources, and uses of self-efficacy to build and maintain these relationships and if it is a critical dimension of maintaining housed status.

Additionally, few studies give voice to the homeless in the year-round tropical climate and unique culture of Hawai'i, nor do they provide an understanding of what social networks consist of, what they mean to the individuals experiencing them, and how they may relate to escaping houselessness longer term even with a grant of supportive housing.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore and describe the social networking and self-efficacy in current homeless and housing transitioned formerly homeless individuals in Hawai'i. I used purposive sampling for phenomenological semi structured interviews to examine and describe the social networks and self-efficacy of homeless individuals in Hawai'i. The findings can be used to stimulate additional research and inform additional programming and better skills building to mitigate the recidivism currently experienced by Housing First and other permanent supportive housing initiatives.

This chapter includes an outline of the research design and rationale as well as the role of the researcher, methodology, instrumentation, procedures for recruitment and participation, data collection and analysis plans, issues of trustworthiness, and ethical procedures of the study.

Research Design and Rationale

The RQs guiding this study were as follows:

RQ1: What are the lived experiences, meanings, and tactics for building and maintaining social networks in Hawaiian homeless and vulnerably housed individuals?

RQ2: What are the lived experiences, meanings, and sources of self-efficacy in Hawaiian homeless and vulnerably housed individuals?

Phenomenology is a philosophy associated with Husserl (1970) in which he explored very detailed reporting of human consciousness from the first-person point of

view. As a methodology for qualitative research, phenomenology is grounded in an interest in lived experiences, focusing on the phenomenon itself through the lived experience of the participant's world, which also involves their day-to-day tasks and social interactions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Two distinct traditions grew from Husserl's philosophy; one is descriptive or transcendental phenomenology, which describes how to analyze experiences and determine the themes that might exist; the other is interpretive, which takes the same data and attempts to categorize it based on interactive psychological and social components (Burkholder et al., 2016). While a variety of both philosophical and research approaches exist, Patton (2015) noted that what all phenomenological approaches commonly have at essence is the overriding goal of understanding lived experiences and how they take on individual and possibly even shared meaning.

The IPA focuses on the individual's understanding and interpretation of their social reality but also holds that it may be impossible to effectively bracket the researcher's preinterpretation of the phenomenon (Smith et al., 2009). IPA also requires that participants be homogenous in that they all experience the same general phenomenon, although their interpretations of the experience may vary (Miller et al., 2018). Phenomenological IPA guided the present study in answering the RQs, by providing the meaning of homeless existence, building and maintaining social networks, self-efficacy, as well as attempting to uncover the origins of these elements. Appropriately, a requirement of reflexivity or consciousness of the relatively significant situational variance between the researcher and the participant, respectively a lifetime

sustainably housed vs. currently homeless or vulnerably housed, was maintained throughout study's design, data collection and analysis, and interpretation stages.

Another qualitative research concept that informed the present study was that of transformative paradigm. The transformative paradigm involves the concept of acknowledging the thoughts, feelings, and experiences of a socially marginalized group and that data and results within the paradigm are assisted by relationships between the research and the community (Mertens, 2007). The transformative paradigm reinforces the reality that the target population was that of a subculture that exists in a year-round tropical environment on the island of O'ahu, Hawai'i, whose in-group includes only one another and perhaps a select set of governmental and nongovernmental entities, and who have diminished social status and economic means. Understanding this marginalized group's lived experiences in the sociocultural context helps provide a basis for social change and transforming the understanding of their lives.

Interviews with housed but formerly homeless individuals have provided some information on the importance of social support in adapting to a new life (Mabahala et al., 2016; Patterson et al., 2015; Walter et al., 2016). The present interview study allowed for a more robust explanation of experiences that can provide a better understanding of the social requirements of members of this particularly vulnerable group. It may also help determine how to fulfill social imperatives within a Housing First paradigm and thereby assist social workers and case managers in mitigating return to known social networks, be they in the shelter or encampment or with previous socially maladaptive peers as opposed to the new housed environment and prosocial community.

Role of the Researcher

In conducting this phenomenological qualitative study, the role of the researcher can best be described an observer-participant in the areas of data collection/interviewer and data analysis. Particularly palpable in any interview study involving this vulnerable group is the stark difference between respondents and researcher on several levels, including social, financial, and even perception of others, including authority figures. For this reason, a power difference was recognized as inherent in the process. Thus, case managers or other governmental or nongovernmental support or service members with whom the individuals had a relationship agreed to provide flyers for potential participants for the study rather than direct recruiting or utilizing community bulletin boards or social media advertisements by myself alone.

Another concern included my biases and premature assumptions. Thus, a process of *epoche* was undertaken where assumptions or prejudgements are recognized and then set aside for the sake of integrity in data collection and analysis (Moustakas, 1994). While IPA notes the difficulty in fully bracketing researcher's biases and preinterpretations of participants and outcomes (Smith et al., 2009), I began with the understanding that researcher biases exist in an effort to bring them into consciousness, and then attempts were made to reflect on impact and mitigation within all aspects of influence on the study in terms of design, data collection, data analysis, and final interpretations of the data. Mitigation tactics involved interview practice using recording to assist in critiquing and practicing techniques in order to provide an even tone in voice and expression to avoid leading as well as caution while developing and using probing

questions to avoid undue pressure to answer a question the participant has no known or desired answer for (see Dawidowicz, 2016). Also, consensual digital recording was used during live data collection to assist in similar reflection post-interview.

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) noted that the qualitative researcher is the primary research instrument. For this reason, a journal was established early in the process to allow me to reflect on motivations or reasons for conducting the study, how the designs were developed and carried out, awareness of biases and power differences, and ultimately how they related to the interview respondents in order to allow authentic experiences and meanings to be shared, heard, and highlighted in the results. Additional validation strategies, including member checking, thick descriptions, and reflexivity, were used to mitigate biases and ensure data trustworthiness.

Methodology

Participant Selection Logic

The population of interest was currently homeless and previously homeless now in supportive housing. A purposive or criteria-based sampling strategy was used to select participants from this population, and the additional criteria included only participants aged 18 and older, fluency in English, and only those residing in Honolulu County, Hawai'i. The venues for sampling were specified nongovernmental organization shelters or service nodes for the homeless and through participant feedback for housed individuals. Also, case managers with these professional organizations were presented with the study's purpose and sampling criteria and then provided flyers to make available to prospective participants.

In IPA research design, Miller et al. (2018) provided guidance that it is not the researcher's focus to produce a specific sample size at the outset. Generally, the condition of saturation is used to determine sample size in qualitative research designs (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Saturation can be defined as occurring when new iterations of observed behaviors and responses within and amongst the various realities explored within the study offer no further information or become redundant (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). However, in the IPA framework, individual experiences are ideographically analyzed before committing to common themes, sample sizes are typically small, and as previously noted, participants are homogenous (Miller et al., 2018; Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). Thus, in terms of appropriate sample size using IPA, these two sets of researchers noted that rather than relying on a determination of redundancy, a sufficient sample might be better defined as when both the available convergent and divergent Yildirim formation is obtained from the participants. As a benchmark, Pietkiewicz and Smith (2014) stated that small samples of five to 10 are common, Alase (2017) noted a broader range of between two and 25, and Noon (2018) recommended four to eight. While Smith et al. (2009) suggested up to six for first-time students, once experience in gaining rich participant stories and interview prowess develops, the number is generally reduced from there. The present study reached saturation or sufficient convergent and divergent information was gleaned on the phenomena of interest when four homeless and three housed participants had been interviewed.

Instrumentation

The RQs were explored utilizing a semi structured interview format based on the conceptual elements of social networks found in a previously developed instrument, the Social Network Index (Berkman & Syme, 1979; Cohen, 1997). Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed using QDAS prior to analysis. I performed the role of secondary transcriptionist to check that the transcription software had precisely captured the participant's voice verbatim. The interview protocol contained 15 questions related to Research Question 1, and 10 related to exploring Research Question 2 (see Appendix A). While the interview was semi structured, the participants were allowed to talk at length on topics passionate to them or avoid any topics or prompts they did not wish to discuss.

Procedures for Recruitment

Participants for the houseless participants were recruited through flyers provided to the offices of staff workers from governmental and nongovernmental service organizations (NGOs) that provided services and assistance to homeless and previously homeless housed residents on O'ahu. Both partners were introduced to the study's RQs and purpose.

The criteria for selection were as follows:

- adult (aged 18 years or older)
- homeless or housed for 6 months or longer on the island of O'ahu, Hawai'i
- no known issues of diminished capacity
- individual able and willing to participate in an interview that might last 2 or more hours

- individual would allow the interview to be audio recorded

Individual participants were provided an incentive to compensate them for their valuable time and effort. The incentive was determined with consultation from the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) and included a choice of gift cards from a nearby general merchandise and grocery store and a local 24-hour restaurant chain.

Procedures for Participation

Participants from the houseless group were interviewed in a semiprivate area provided by the NGO service partner at a time convenient for both the organization and the individual participant. Participants from the housed group were interviewed in a semiprivate meeting area at the housing complex or in a place of their choosing, where they felt comfortable talking without distraction. This population has a greater than average chance of being represented by those suffering with a psychological disorder, so some additional method of capacity assessment was deemed appropriate to protect participants. Applebaum (2007) proposed that the general means of judging capabilities across multiple jurisdictions is if one can appreciate the consequences of the situation, understand the relevant information, communicate a choice, and apply reason to the situation. As the study was a minimal risk interview and no clinical treatment elements existed, determination of competency required my judgement at the time of consent and participation. In consultation with the Walden University IRB, a brief researcher-administered assessment was used to ensure that the rights of the vulnerable population were protected and that data offered represented the genuine experiences of the individuals' living data. The assessment consisted of a post consent brief set of questions

to assist in revealing whether participants had capabilities in understanding what the research study was about, if they felt they had experienced pressure to participate, if they understood participation was voluntary at all stages, and what benefits they believed the study had for themselves directly or others. Additionally, it fell to me to determine if an individual was exhibiting physical indications that they may have recently used drugs or alcohol. This should have been readily visible at time of introduction and consent questioning (example: slurred, sluggish, or tangential speech, high anxiety, highly distracted/disassociated, tweaking movements, gyrating, nodding off, paranoia, hallucinations, excessive, inappropriate affective state). Demonstration of diminished capacity would have resulted in termination of the interview, no use of the data obtained to that point, and compensation and thanks provided to the participant. It was also predetermined that mild, general disabilities were not a criterion for dismissing any potential interview participant. It is noteworthy that while these protections were in place, no participant who expressed interest in the interview was rejected for any of the above exclusionary criteria.

I provided an opening statement to introduce, in general terms, the study and what was expected of the participant during the interviews. An informed consent was provided for review and read aloud to the participant if they chose. A copy of the informed consent document was provided upon the participant's request. Once an understanding of the consent form was acknowledged and consent was given by the participant, the interview protocol began (see Appendix A). Additionally, a closing statement was conveyed

verbally to each participant, thanking them for their contribution and reorienting them towards any follow-on questions or concerns that may have arisen post encounter.

Data Collection

The use of interviews generally allows the ability to answer the RQs for a group who would be difficult to observe, and they also allow for experiential and historical information to be gleaned on the topic of interest (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). More specifically, a more standardized but still open-ended interview provides some consistency in questions amongst all participants and helps assure more complete data in exploring the experiences that make up the phenomena (Patton, 2015).

Data were collected via semi structured interviews with two groups of individuals with a history of living rough, the homeless, and those who were previously homeless or houseless but have made a transition to supportive housing. The interviews took place at several venues on the island of O'ahu, Hawai'i. First, houseless participants were recruited via flyers provided to participants at a partner NGO that provides services to primarily unsheltered homeless people in and around Wahiawa in central O'ahu. Second, access and recruiting to currently housed but previously houseless participants were via flyers provided by a housing agency partner and involved individuals who were established in supportive housing for 6 months or more.

The sample size was not preset but estimated at between five and ten or until sufficient convergent and divergent information had been provided by participants in each group. As interviews were around 2 hours each, interviews were programmed to occur at no greater rate than 3 per day. Basic information about the interview and an

introduction to the study, in general, were available in both the informed consent and in the opening statements The interview protocol (Appendix A) consisted of some general information and 15 open-ended questions related to RQ1 and 10 open-ended questions related to RQ2. Additionally, my research journal served to record reflective thoughts, feelings, and perceptions throughout the entire data collection and analysis process. Of specific focus were the limitations noted in the Role of the Researcher section, including biases in experience, perception, social and financial status, inequity in power and race, sexual preference, and pre-interpretation of assumed themes of the lived experiences of the participants.

Interviews were conducted and data collected primarily using recorded audio from a Sony ICD-PX370 digital voice recorder. The corresponding .mp3 interview files were uploaded to Atlas ti 22 and transcribed verbatim. Then Atlas ti 22 was used to code and theme the interview transcriptions. During the interviews, the participant was engaged in conversations intended to assist in confirming or check that what I, as the research instrument, heard and interpreted is correct to assure its meanings according to the participant were brought to bear in an accurate and balanced way. This additional focus on re-iteration during the interview was due to concerns that member checking sessions with this often-transient group of participants may become logistically challenging as time progressed. In addition, handwritten marginal notes were taken during the interview and used to assist in member checking and coding.

Following each interview session and upload to the analysis computer, all data was removed from the electronic voice recording device and stored as backups and in the

Atlas ti 22 application installed onto a 128-bit encryption operating system on a laptop computer. Following each interview, each participant was given closing statements, and follow-up contacts for myself and the IRB, in the event there were latent questions or concerns. This information was also shared with organizational partners for their own follow-up needs or in case participants contact them directly regarding questions or issues arising from the interviews.

Data Analysis Plan

Post data collection, data analysis was completed on the transcribed digitally recorded interviews from adults both houseless and previously houseless but currently transitioned to supportive housing. Semi structured interview sets corresponded to both RQs regarding the participants' lived experiences with social networks and self-efficacy. Also, transcripts were read and compared to verbatim audio recordings to assure accuracy in the complete capture of the participants' voices in the final data.

Transcribed data were input into the Atlas ti 22 application, a QDAS that is utilized as a tool of organization and analysis. QDAS applications have been shown to be reliable tools for interpreting qualitative research that is more efficient and can also assist in a more thorough and intuitive analysis of qualitative data (Salmona & Kaczynski, 2016). Following each iteration of the interview with each group, transcribed data were analyzed utilizing an open coding method provided by Atlas ti 22. The open coding found in the QDAS was performed in a line-by-line fashion. Interview data were collected until there remained no convergent or divergent information found.

Issues of Trustworthiness

The validity and reliability of qualitative research are of critical importance and provide the basis for both the researcher and consumer's trust that qualitative methods and findings are "worth paying attention to" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 290). Lincoln and Guba (1985) utilize the term trustworthiness to describe a state of alignment with four main elements; credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability to produce authentic, fair, and balanced qualitative findings. The use of multiple validation strategies is recommended to assure the ability of any researcher and consumers of their research to determine a study's accuracy (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This section outlines the four tenets of trustworthiness and the related elements within each that were applied to the present study to provide an assurance of quality in both the methods and subsequent analysis and findings. The overriding tactic required to produce valid and reliable research is that it is conducted, end-to-end, in an ethical manner (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Thus, the final part of this section the ethical procedures employed in the study.

Credibility

In the context of qualitative research, credibility describes how a researcher ensures that their view, interpretation, and representation of participants' life experiences and voices are accurate or in agreement (Patton, 2015). In the present study, credibility was established by utilizing three techniques, including what is traditionally called saturation, member checking, and reflexivity.

Member checking or respondent validation is a common technique to assist with internal validity or credibility and involves following up with respondents on preliminary

or emerged themes to assure that the researcher's understanding fits with their own (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). As there were logistical obstacles to re-engaging with the participant group, a more longitudinal or late-stage follow-up was made difficult. Thus, the primary means of validation was accomplished during and at the end of each interview session by asking for clarification and attempting rephrasing and on the spot validation of interpretations. Also, member checking was undertaken at the data format level using multiple listening sessions for each audio recording and reading and re-reading printed transcripts to ensure that multiple interpretations were considered.

IPA generally moves away from the traditional definition of saturation as redundancy to simply state that information is gathered until sufficient convergent and divergent data have been presented on the phenomena of interest. The conventional benchmarks for the number of participants in IPA guided research have been applied to assist in assuring that sufficient data were gleaned from the interview process.

Reflexivity involves the self-awareness of how the researcher affects the research and how the research affects the researcher (Probst & Berenson, 2014). Reflexivity, just as the researchers and contexts it is applied to, can be an individualistic experience but essentially involves active, critical self-reflection and knowledge, as well as a healthy uncertainty of process and findings as generalizable (D'Cruz et al., 2007). The first strategy was to engage in critical self-reflection to understand the differences in lived experiences and perspectives at a conscious level, including those of inequity in power, socialization, finances, gender, race, age, sexual orientation, and world views. Additionally, a conscious effort was made to remain mindful of problematizing self-

efficacy and social networks when no problem may currently exist. The second strategy was to assure awareness and conscious thoughts on the bias that might emerge during data collection and analysis, and for this reason, a researcher journal become the impetus for recognition and action. In these ways, reflexivity assisted in assuring that credibility in both process and findings were provided, and fairness and balance were maintained.

Transferability

The assurance of transferability involves the researcher providing sufficient detail to allow findings to provide potential comparisons to be made in additional cases, contexts, or settings (Patton, 2015). One appropriate technique or litmus for transferability is that of thick descriptive data (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). This study provides a rich description of data collection methods and the social setting, characteristics, and contexts as described by individuals who have lived the data they have provided. Providing thick descriptions allowed for a deeper understanding of emerging themes by the researcher and the consumer and offer an immersive element to assist in providing validity to the findings overall (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Dependability

Just as reliability is necessary, but not sufficient for validity, Lincoln and Guba (1985) note that there can be no credibility without dependability. Dependability, as described by Lincoln and Guba (1985) as helping provide an answer to the question of whether research is consistent if repeated. Patton (2015) described dependability most succinctly as an assurance that the study was “logical, traceable, and documented” (p. 685). The responsibility for judging quality may begin with the researcher but ultimately

relies on the consumer for assessment. Sandelowski (1986) described what she called auditability or a trail that the reader could use to assess acceptable progress and ensure consistency. To provide sufficient dependability in the present study, the use of audit trails was undertaken to assure that not only the methodological and design rigors including aspects of theory and concepts, instruments, participant pool, sampling strategies, item and research question specific questionnaire, and participant interaction scripts were included but also analytical steps from the use of specific QDAS, to coding, and interpretation were made available in the associated sections and appendices.

Confirmability

The acquisition, interpretation, and reporting of the data must be linked with the factors attributed to them in ways that others can confirm (Patton, 2015). As previously discussed, when providing dependability, a comprehensive audit trail is an essential component of providing confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Also, Lincoln and Guba (1985) note that the assumed equity provided by confirmability might also entail elements such as the understanding of biases or any agenda of the researcher themself. The present study was confirmed through the use of audit trails and by employing reflexivity. The use of a reflexive strategy of journaling in the present study involves the continual self-examination and declaration of biases and perspectives including but not limited to power differences, social inequity, economic inequity, perhaps gender, racial, age, and sexual marginalization involving the participants of the study and myself. The inward-directed mindfulness can provide the self-awareness required to avoid or to mitigate biases that could threaten the qualitative research (Patton, 2015).

Ethical Procedures

Before approaching participants or formally engaging the assistance of partner organizations, adherence to all pertaining ethical tenets was enabled through approval for all procedures and protocols to be undertaken in the present study by the IRB. Participants were given the opportunity to participate in the interview and were able to opt-out at any stage. Informed consent was obtained from each participant. Those with an inability to understand or participate in the interview for reasons of diminished capacity as noted in the brief assessment did not result in any rejections or dismissals from any participant who sought an interview.

The anonymity of participants was assured by transferring all digitally recorded materials to a 128-bit encrypted computer for data analysis. Participants gave their first names and the location at the time of the interview was noted on each protocol. Once data was analyzed, and follow-on protocols were completed with participants the data were converted to a pseudonym with reference numbers, P1-P7. Information and data are kept for a period of five years from the date of publication of the study and then destroyed using appropriate software and hardware levels of action, including wiping and destruction of the hard drive containing the raw data.

Letters of consent and understanding were obtained from both partner organizations for allowing a venue for flyer recruitment and in some case in providing a meeting place for interviews on their property as requested by the participant. The organizations were both informed that their identity would not be published in the final

document but shared with the dissertation committee, IRB, URR, or program director if requested.

As previously discussed, there were obvious but important differences between the respondents and researcher on several levels. This power difference was continually acknowledged and attempts put in place to keep it minimized by the process of reflection and associated journaling throughout the entire research process.

An additional concern from an ethical standpoint involves the use of compensatory or incentive instruments in conducting this qualitative study. The study used an incentive consisting of a gift card for a local store where general merchandise and consumables can be purchased easily by participants with limited means of transportation. It is well acknowledged that the use of paid incentives for the homeless to participate in research has historically raised concerns, particularly in light of those who might have used this disadvantaged population in an exploitative way (Cohen, 1996). The present study acknowledged the risk of providing undue inducement, coercion, or normalizing an income model by participating in research for this vulnerable population. As noted by Dickert and Grady (2008), it is difficult to extract the need for financial benefit when individuals begin to weigh the pros and cons of participating in any research project. This may be particularly acute for those at the lowest levels of the socioeconomic spectrum, particularly those who are houseless or vulnerably housed. The model used to incentivize the present study was based on the wage payment model described by Dickert and Grady (2008). According to the authors, this model uses a rationale for incentive based on the fact that participants are part of a marketplace in which wages for unskilled

labor were already set, and thus participants were paid an average hourly rate based on their geographic area as they were at essence performing work for the researcher. I proposed low risk as questions and topics involve everyday thoughts, feelings, and behaviors and therefore does not seek to overcompensate based on risk or needs of the researcher, which might provide an undue inducement. In addition, the study's use of incentives did not expose participants to exploitation and inducement because they had other options for making a wage that is commensurate with the interview incentive through employment in an area with an average to low unemployment rate of 4% pre-covid and 8.5% as of April 21, 2021 (State of Hawaii Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, 2021) or in participating in panhandling or busking in the community at large.

The rate of wage reimbursement and thus incentive was calculated using U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2021) occupational employment statistics of unskilled hourly workers in Hawaii, which range from roughly $13-20 hourly and the average interview session length estimated at two hours and including time to and from the venue of a half-hour each way for a total of three hours of expended time. This would result in an incentive with a value of $50 commensurate with other jobs requiring similar skills, abilities, experiences, and the amount of effort and time out of normal activities now required to participate in the research interview. As noted by Dickert and Grace, this wage payment model is a methodology that provides a means to recruit participants as well as providing a fair and consistent method for appropriately compensating them for their contribution efforts, valued time, and inconvenience as would be expected by anyone providing unique services in the State.

Summary

This qualitative study seeks to answer RQs by exploring the meanings, sources, and uses of social networking and self-efficacy of current and formerly homeless individuals on the island of O'ahu, Hawai'i. Data was collected through the use of semi structured interviews with 7 individual adults who were currently houseless or who have transitioned to permanent supportive housing. Interviews were recorded and transcribed, then coded and themed assisted by the QDAS Atlas ti 22.

The IPA and transformative paradigm guided the research into the social reality of this often-marginalized group. The information gained from the study may assist in a greater understanding of the social needs of these individuals, especially when transitioning from houseless to housed status.

Trustworthiness in the study's findings was provided by addressing validity and reliability through member checking, saturation, rich description, and audit trails. Also, due to stark differences in power and social status between myself and participants, the role of the researcher, as instrument, was guided by reflexivity throughout each iterative process of the research but particularly through the data collection, analysis, and presentation provided in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore and describe the social networking and self-efficacy in current homeless and housing transitioned formerly homeless individuals in Hawai'i. The study used purposive sampling for phenomenological semi structured interviews to examine and describe the social networks and self-efficacy of homeless individuals in Hawai'i. A sample of three housed formerly homeless and four currently houseless individuals from various locations on the island of O'ahu were interviewed to answer two RQs: (a) What are the lived experiences, meanings, and sources of self-efficacy in Hawaiian homeless and vulnerably housed individuals? and (b) What are the lived experiences, meanings, and tactics for building and maintaining social networks in Hawaiian homeless and vulnerably housed individuals?

In this chapter, a description of the setting in which the interviews were conducted and demographic information of the participants is provided. A detailed account of the data collection and analysis are then presented, with a description of the codified major themes, categories, and codes that emerged from the data. Additionally, evidence of trustworthiness is discussed. The chapter concludes with the presentation of results and findings for both RQs in the study, and discrepant codes are discussed in relation to the overall analysis.

Setting

The data were gathered from interviewing three housed but formerly homeless and four homeless individuals on the island of O'ahu. The focus of the interviews was a rich, thick description of what these individuals considered important in terms of social interaction and their self-assessment of how they viewed challenges around relationships in their current environment and in transitioning to housing as applicable.

Recruitment was through flyers provided to clients by two participating NGOs. Once communication with participants was established, they were given the opportunity to provide a place, date, and time they would like to meet. Semi structured interviews were conducted one-on-one and audio recorded. Participants who consented to the interview were provided a $50 gift card to their choice of a retail store or local restaurant chain. At that time, they were also informed there would be an opportunity for a second follow-up interview to review the codified themes, subthemes, and codes that emerged from their interview to ensure that it rang true to what they intended to say. A similar $25 gift card was given for the second interview. All participants were given the option to read or have read the consent form read to them prior to signing. All participants except one had the consent read by me as they noted they were not able to read it well. To comply with local regulations for Covid-19 and to provide for the safety and comfort of the participants, I maintained social distancing and wore a mask for the main interview.

Participants included seven adults, three of whom were currently in housing but were previously homeless and four who were currently homeless and, at that moment in time, staying in a shelter, an organized encampment, or a solo camp. Sufficient saturation

and redundancy were established in housed residents with the third participant and with currently houseless individuals following the fourth participant's interview. A variety of venues were used for the interviews, and each was chosen by the participant for their comfort. Housed participants included the parking lot outside a housing development, picnic tables outside the local community college, and a meeting room at the NGO shelter. For homeless participants, the venues included two meeting rooms at a local NGO shelter, a beach nearby an encampment, and a tent set up with tables and chairs on the grounds of an encampment.

Demographics

All research participants were residents of Honolulu County, Hawai'i. All were or had been homeless for a year or more. Categorically, all participants were considered chronically homeless just prior to participation in the study. Historically, P1 and P7 were in and out of homelessness but only during periods where they were within an institutional system, for example incarceration or foster care. Housed residents had been in housing between 3 months and just over a year. Additional demographic data, including current housing status, age, gender, duration of homelessness, length of time in current housing assignment, and overall years living in the islands, is provided in Table 1.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Participant	Status	Age	Gender	Duration of homelessness (years)	Years in independent housing	Years living in Hawai'i
P1	Housed	62	M	>40	>1	Lifetime
P2	Housed	66	M	2	.25	~5
P3	Housed	40	F	1	>1	Lifetime
P4	Houseless	55	M	3	-	2
P5	Houseless	38	M	6	-	1
P6	Houseless	46	F	>10	-	Lifetime
P7	Houseless	21	M	4	-	Lifetime

Data Collection

Participants included seven adults, three of whom were currently in housing but who were previously homeless, and four who were currently homeless. As a benchmark using the IPA framework, Pietkiewicz and Smith (2014) stated that small samples of five to 10 are common, Alase (2017) noted two to 25, Noon (2018) recommended four to eight, and Smith et al. (2009) suggested up to six for first-time students, and once experience in gaining rich participant stories and interview prowess develops, the number is generally reduced from there. Seven participants were interviewed over a 4-month

period from January to April 2022. All participants were over age 18 and all were fluent in English. No participant who noted interest in taking part in the study was excluded.

Participants were scheduled through phone and email. Interview sessions were recorded for later transcription, and all audio and written communications were secured on my laptop computer, secured with encryption, and stored in my home office. The interviews lasted from approximately 45 to 100 minutes in length. The interviews were conversational and semi structured (see Appendix A). Each conversation covered the interview protocol but not necessarily in the order presented due to the conversational nature of the sessions, allowing the participants to provide deep, rich descriptions of their stories in a way that seemed most natural to that individual.

Data Analysis

Once interviews concluded, audio data were immediately transcribed and input into Atlas ti 22, a qualitative data analysis software program. Atlas ti 22 was used to perform a line-by-line analysis that began with free quotations. After reviewing all quotations for consistency, similarities, or differences, the responses resulted in 17 codes. The codes subsequently were developed into nine categories, and ultimately two overarching themes emerged (see Table 2).

Table 2

Social Networking and Self-Efficacy Emergent Themes

Example quotation	Codes	Category	Theme
"What keeps from having close friendships here is predominantly worldview."	Personal / situational / cultural differences are great and difficult to overcome	Difficulty in overcoming social gaps	Obstacles to socially connecting
"I don't feel like having a significant other would be beneficial to my life in any way; in fact, I would I feel like I would be more a destructive force in that other person's life."	Fear of harming or being harmed by others physically or emotionally	Lack of ability to self-regulate emotional/ physical response	
"If you want off the street to work, it ain't gonna work with a whole bunch of dope. A lot of times, you know, I'm gonna be slipping, but I have to go for a test. Then I stop. But I don't want to fool my case manager and them and disappoint them anyway.”	Substance use / self-destructive behaviors	Psychological or physical obstacles	
"Especially after covid, I was like, first I was like I don't want to go out and about cause honestly, I had a little bit of a scare with covid-19."	Covid / other illness		
"But this is probably something you should note I'm on the autism scale. High-functioning obviously."	Other psychological disorders		

Example quotation	Codes	Category	Theme
"I live my life in a very solitary manner. I think that my when I say my good friends, when those people think about me, they respect my privacy."	Desire to lead a solitary life		
"People used to drive by and say get a job, go get a car. They really shouldn't be yelling at us like that because they always refer to us as "you guys," like "you people," they always make a habit of "you" on top."	Shame/ stigma / fear of additional judgement	Difficulty in establishing trust	
"A lot of us homeless people, houseless people, don't like to communicate with any because we've been done wrong so much. Our trust our dignity has been put down because they promise they say this, they say that, and they don't come through. It's all factors, and then we get the state or HPD who come out and do sweeps, and they take our whole tent hey my IDs in there my everything what am I going to do now you know, and that's another thing we got to do that's crazy."	Fear / dislike of authority figures		
"That's when we had the canopy law. You had to sign up for it every day, every morning by eight o clock. HPD with come to my camp, and I would just show it 69 people with me that they signed up for it. Because nobody else had a phone."	Perception of social rules / policies as hypocritical, illogical, or financially motivated		

Example quotation	Codes	Category	Theme
"Because we have no trust, we can't even leave our things with our neighbor because they'll go through our stuff. I want to go to work, you know, yes, yes, I do. There's a lot of them who want to go to work, but where can they leave their stuff, you know what I mean?"	Fear of other's motivations		
"I try my hardest. I only had a 6th-grade education, that is, as far as I went in school."	General lack of knowledge / education	Lack of education / tools	
"Some people ain't got phones, or if you do, the other person ain't got a phone."	Lack of access to / knowledge of technology		
"I do go to church, and I also do volunteer services. It keeps me busy and out of trouble."	Desire to be part of the group / community	Desire to learn new things	Motivators to socially connecting
"Most of the time, even though I was houseless, I was still coming to school. So that kind of kept me busy, you know, and constructive."	Desire to connect through learning / exploring		
"As long as I have been homeless, I pretty much go out of my way to help. Whoever needs the help, I know, everybody needs help now and then, you know, everybody."	General desire to help others	Desire to be useful	
"To be stark, the main motivation to maintain relationships in a situation like this is both self and other preservation. Like I'm interested in my own self thriving, and I'm interested in others surrounding as well."	Drawn to others for security or future potential for need of assistance	Self-preservation	

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

Sufficient convergent and divergent data were presented by participants after seven interview sessions. The conventional benchmarks for the number of participants in IPA-guided research were applied to assist in assuring that sufficient data were gleaned from the interview process (see Alase, 2017; Noon, 2018; Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014; Smith et al., 2009).

Member checking or respondent validation is a technique used for internal validity or credibility. It involves following up with respondents on preliminary or emerging themes to assure that the researcher's understanding fits with their own (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). As there were logistical obstacles to reengaging with the participant group, only two respondent validation sessions were performed, one session with a housed participant and one with a houseless participant. Three participants failed to respond after two attempts via email/phone. The remaining two had relocated and were no longer in their original locations for follow-up attempts. Following two member checking sessions, a deeper clarification of one quotation was provided by an individual participant, but no changes to data were required. Discrepant experiences were purposefully included in the data and analysis of the interviews to also lend to credibility.

Additionally, reflexivity was a consistent strategy throughout the research process, including the interview and data analysis sessions. This included critical self-reflection and the understanding of the differences in the life experiences of the participants versus that of the researcher. Also, mindfulness was given to problematizing

areas of participants' social lives when no problem actually exists. Another consistent thought process included awareness of conscious thoughts on the bias that might have emerged during data collection and analysis, and a journal was maintained at various points throughout the research process. In these ways, reflexivity assisted in assuring that credibility in both process and findings were provided, and fairness and balance were maintained.

Transferability

An appropriate litmus for transferability is that of thick descriptive data (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). Providing thick descriptions allows for a deeper understanding of emerging themes by the researcher and the consumer and offers an immersive element to assist in providing validity to the findings overall (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The study provided a rich description of data collection methods and the social setting, characteristics, and contexts as described by individuals who have lived the data provided. The data were obtained in a more immersive setting, as venues were all in areas the participants were familiar with, to assist in highlighting everyday experiences occurring in those surroundings. Although the interview protocol was semi structured, the participants were allowed the time to fully flesh out and describe their experiences and tactics at length and using multiple examples. Thus, each of the seven interviews produced thick, descriptive data on the phenomenon of interest and assisted in the understanding of emerging themes.

Dependability

Just as reliability is necessary but not sufficient for validity, Lincoln and Guba (1985) note that there can be no credibility without dependability. Dependability, as described by Lincoln and Guba (1985) helps provide an answer to the question of whether research is consistent if repeated. Patton (2015) further noted the need for documentation and auditability. The present study used common qualitative, and more specifically IPA, methodologies to assure full, consistent, and transparent documentation of each aspect of the study from design to data interpretation.

Confirmability

Having a consistent and transparent audit trail is critical to both dependability and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As previously noted, the present study provides logical documentation of replicable research protocols involving concepts and methods, as well as data collection, analysis, and interpretation. The inward-directed mindfulness can provide the self-awareness required to avoid or to mitigate biases that could threaten qualitative research (Patton, 2015). The use of reflexive journaling was undertaken throughout the research process, including continual self-monitoring for conscious biases or agendas by the researcher by using strategies that promoted mindfulness of known or declared biases and inequities due to power differences, social inequity, economic inequity, gender, race, ethnicity, cultural beliefs, age, or sexual marginalization, continual self-examination and declaration of biases and perspectives, including but not limited to power differences, social inequity, economic inequity, and perhaps gender, racial, age, and sexual marginalization involving the participants of the study and myself.

Results

Results were reviewed by coding interview transcripts followed by an overview of respondent codes, which were later extracted and analyzed for each participant and as a group utilizing the QDAS Atlas ti 22. Free quotation and coding allowed the emergence of eight sub-themes and two overarching themes (see Table 2). Table 3 below indicates the number of coding references provided by those who were now in housing (HO) and those still experiencing houselessness (HL). The table shows the number of housed or homeless, referencing the code or indicator (Ref). For example, there were three housed participants and if all three reference this code, then the result would be 3/3. Thus, all three housed participants referenced the code. The table also assists in providing the number of times the code was alluded to (Stmts) in the interview sessions delineated by housed and houseless participants. This was particularly helpful in finding discrepant cases for further discussion.

Table 3

Social Networking and Self-Efficacy Reference Data

Theme	Category / subtheme	Code / Indicator	# HO Ref	# HL Ref	Total Ref	# HO Stmts	# HL Stmts
Obstacles to socially connecting	Difficulty in overcoming social gaps	Personal / situational / cultural differences are great and difficult to overcome	3/3	3/4	6/7	6	6
	Lack of ability to self-regulate emotional/ physical response	Fear of harming or being harmed by others physically or emotionally	1/3	4/4	5/7	3	7
	Psychological or physical obstacles	Substance use / self-destructive behaviors	1/3	2/4	3/7	3	2
		Covid / other illness	1/3	1/4	2/7	1	1
		Desire to lead a solitary life	0/3	1/4	1/7	0	1
		Other psychological issues	0/3	3/4	3/7	0	3
	Difficulty in establishing trust	Shame / stigma/fear of additional judgment	1/3	2/4	3/7	2	3
		Fear / dislike of authority figures	1/3	2/4	3/7	1	2
		Negative perception of social rules / policies	2/3	3/4	5/7	8	8
		Fear of others' motivations	2/3	3/4	5/7	7	13

Theme	Category / subtheme	Code / Indicator	# HO Ref	# HL Ref	Total Ref	# HO Stmts	# HL Stmts
	Lack of education / tools	General lack of knowledge / education	2/3	0/4	2/7	3	0
		Lack of access to or knowledge of technology	3/3	2/4	5/7	3	2
Motivations to socially connect	Desire to practice group agency	Enjoy being part of a group / community	3/3	0/4	3/7	3	0
	Connecting to the world through learning / exploring	Enjoys learning new things	2/3	1/4	3/7	4	1
		Uses devices / apps	3/3	2/4	5/7	3	2
	Desire of usefulness	General desire to help others	3/3	3/4	6/7	7	9
	Self-preservation	Drawn to others for security or potential need for assistance	1/3	1/4	2/7	2	3

Note. HO = Housed. HL = Homeless.

Theme 1: Obstacles to Socially Connecting

The predominance of quotes and codes referred to phenomena that were perceived as barriers to initially or subsequently connecting socially. The categories in this group range from difficulty in overcoming differences with other individuals or groups, the inability to trust either self or others, stigma and shame attached to their circumstances, lack of knowledge to better their situation, and illness.

Difficulty in Overcoming Social Gaps

Many participants in the study noted that they had difficulty socializing and overcoming differences between themselves everyday s due to personal, situational, cultural, or racial differences. Housed participant P2 shared the following regarding his experience when he goes to church with his girlfriend, "They think I'm kinda funny because I don't speak Tagalog, they kind of like talk behind my back a little bit." P1 noted a while homeless, he struggled with others he categorized by ethnicity,

> There was a lot of Micronesians about. I dealt with them hard. Every day I call out one and said let's go, and they look at me like I am a crazy guy. Like that guy wants to fight everybody, no, I just want to fight with you guys. Because they just disrespect our island so much. I'll be fishing and rubbish can right there, and they trash their trash right there on the place I am fishing.

Homeless participant P5 noted, "I find that if I try to express those (his Taoist beliefs) to someone who is Catholic or Protestant, you know they get easily offended." P1 also commented on an experience going from homeless not housed:

> Now, the people here, who do they associate with? Only people they know. If you live in an apartment, people are too busy to be associating with you. They know where you really came from. And you are so used to spending time hanging out and talk story or whatever. It's not there no more.

Fear of Harming or Being Harmed Physically or Emotionally

Every homeless participant expressed thoughts on emotional or physical harm in regards to violence or their inability to form intimate friendships or even successful romantic relationships. One comment about early childhood by P1 was,

> I got beaten up a lot when I was younger. We were taught to hold in our feelings. For a little girl, it was like, oh come come, come, but for a boy, it was like, oh you wanna cry? Come here, I'll give you something to cry, and you get un backhand. And we were taught to hide our feelings. You know, I did not realize that until I was older. If show crying, you are weak, and they will take advantage of you. Always like that, hard. Hardness. To this day, I think about that, but it's in there.

P4, a houseless participant, shared,

> What I'm working on is to try to be confident in my surroundings, so I am busy working on myself. If I put myself out there, then somebody is going to come around. Then if it fails, how bad would it be? It's not only the person but myself too.

P5 shared, "I don't feel like having a significant other would be beneficial to my life in any way. In fact, I would feel like I would be more of a destructive force in that other person's life." P6, a houseless single mother, said, "Because like I said, I was terrible, I beat up, I was terrible. I don't even want to begin on my past." Several, both currently and previously homeless, noted the need to be aware of your surroundings at all times was a critical skillset when on the street. So be it sender or receiver, most participants

have struggled with physical and emotional roadblocks to their belief that they could create or maintain normal relationships.

Psychological Obstacles to Social Connection

Participants shared a great deal about several psychological disorders they might have or have experienced in their time living rough that were a hindrance to normal social functioning. One more commonly experienced disorder is that of substance use. P1, who had been on the streets for over 20 years before finally getting into housing in the past year, said,

> If you want off the street to work, it ain't gonna work with a whole bunch of dope. A lot of times, you know, I'm gonna be slipping, but I have to go for a test. Then I stop. But I don't want to fool *Person A* (case manager) and them and disappoint them anyway. I work my hardest and do my best. But I cannot keep hiding all the time. I slip, and I get back up. It's the hardest thing to do right now.

While some may hypothesize that those who are homeless for extended periods of their life choose to be solitary, alone, or apart from others. In the present group, only P5 addressed a general lack of interest in interacting with others:

> I live my life in a very solitary manner. I that when I say my good friends, those people think about me they respect my privacy. They respect the fact that, are we going to chat every week about, you know, what their dog did? Are we going to, like, make meaningless conversation just for the sake of conversation? Is that really necessary?

Trust

The predominant phenomenon which emerged in discussions with both groups was a basic difficulty in trusting others. In some forms, the mistrust resulted from the shame of being homeless and judgment from those in "normal" society. P1 reflected on his formerly homeless experiences and stated,

> People used to drive by and say, get a job, go get a car. They really shouldn't be yelling at us like that because they always refer to us as *you guys*, like *you people*. They always make a habit of *you* on top.

P5 added,

> I have extended family…and the last time I was on the mainland…I did not feel. I felt it would be inappropriate for me to just show up on the door and be like, hi, I'm homeless, and I like to drink wine, so maybe you can help me with those things.

Another aspect of trust was fear or dislike of authority figures. Houseless participant P4 said,

> What reason why the police do not want to shake hands? Something like that I am still struggling with because what I saw on their badge is to stand for protect and serve. So, I mean, when you separate that, what do I need to know? It is difficult for me to understand.

Another homeless respondent, P6, noted,

> A lot of homeless people, houseless people, don't like to communicate with any because we've been done wrong so much. Our trust, our dignity has been put

> down because the promise, they say this, they say that, and they don't come through.

P1 said,

> I only had a 6th-grade education. That is as far as I went in school. I had friends that wanted me to come back. This was after being out of school for three years. I went, and I was in the class, listening to music and stuff, which everybody else was getting stoned. I was there listening. Then this cop comes in, and because the teacher said I was new guy in school. He arrested me. So, I asked him why are you guys arresting me. He told me for being in school trespassing. I said are you guys kidding me. You know you guys did not even ask me what I am doing here, why I am here. You know I could be out there vandalizing, robbing people. I couldn't understand it.

A code related to distrust of powerful others was the perception that social rules or policies, be they general or homeless-focused, were hypocritical, illogical, or financially motivated. P6 shared,

> When we had the canopy law, you had to sign up every day, every morning by 8'oclock. HPD would come to my camp, and I would just show it (holds up phone). Sixty-nine people with me that they signed up for it. Because nobody else had a phone. Only I had a phone. Daily they would come. And it was insane because of the tickets they were giving. And so, you can see the circle.

A final discussion area provided a unique perspective that most who have never lived in this environment might fail to realize. There is a fear or distrust of others'

motivations. As have previously discussed, there is a need to be aware of the physical surroundings and others who may produce either physical or emotional harm to a houseless individual who may not enjoy the same protections and means of exercising them as someone who is in housing. However, during the coding, it became apparent that there were also phenomena in which the very people one might consider friends or neighbors could also become a source of distrust. This particular version of distrust was experienced in what might be considered fair weather or opportunistic friendships and the fact that if you leave your worldly belongings, you likely would lose everything you had again and again. One example of this leave and lose phenomenon was noted by a long-time homeless but currently housed participant P1:

> *You go to court for sit-lie ban tickets* (sic), but when you get back out there, your stuff is gone. Because you wasn't there to watch 'em. It's not gone by the guys come through it was gone by your neighbors, pretty much. I used to sit back and watch guys going through guys who just got locked up, break into their car, everything in the car, take everything. Guys out here will be jacking guys selling dope; they don't care. Guys on the streets will jack anybody, so you gotta watch yourself outside.

Another currently housed participant, P3, reflected on their houseless period:

> And you got these homeless people that when somebody has money and when they are in their camp you see all the ones that don't have money flock to that person and then when that person doesn't have anything it's like the same situation there then they all separate and I'm like wow.

P4 noted, “Wow, we are supposed to be smarter. It seems like we should have knowledge, but it seems we block one another. That is something hard for me.” And another homeless participant said,

> Because we have no trust, we can’t even leave our things with our neighbor because they’ll go through our stuff. I want to go to work, you know, yes, I do. There’s a lot of them who want to go to work, but where can they leave their stuff, you know what I mean?

Education / Tools / Technology

A more common discussion amongst housed participants regarding actual or perceived obstacles to connecting and functioning socially was either the general lack of education or access to technology to better utilize virtual connections to conduct business or connect with others. P1 stated, “Some people ain’t got phones, or if they do, the other person ain’t got one.” P4 said, “To be honest with you, I don’t even know how to text; that’s how behind I am.” P5 added, “Some of the elderly people, for literally the first time in their lives, literally have just received phones and they don’t even, it’s like what is this thing.” Only one participant, P3, noted the need for the homeless to receive more general education, perhaps something that could assist them in life, things they were never taught but need to know to function in society.

Theme 2: Motivators or Promoters of Social Networking

The second theme that emerged in the data included ways to bolster social networking abilities. A good portion of the participants provided information that allowed emergent categories of social networking and supporting self-efficacy, including a need

to practice group agency, learn new things, feel useful, or in some cases, self-preservation.

Desire to Practice Group Agency

This category was solely discussed by the housed group and included statements such as this one from P1,

> Here in this group, I mean we talk about who pretty much runs this place, and it's pretty much us. So, I look around the group and see people who are not part of the program that is part of our community, and we came from the streets, every single one of us from the street. To be honest with yourself, you have today; maybe you gotta be the one. Just don't hold that door open or shut.

And from P3, who transitioned to housing almost a year ago,

> I am a little softer now than what I used to be. I used to be, I was not easy to contact or that easy to talk with, but you know, like I said, I think about my age, and I think about the people that live around and stuff like that and you gotta have respect for their feelings and what their limited to and what they can do.

And, "I do go to church, and I also do volunteer services. It keeps me busy and out of trouble."

Desire to Learn

Predominantly codes again came from the housed group that dealt with exploring the world through learning and, in some cases, specifically noted were the enabling capacity of digital connectivity. P3 said, "Most of the time, even though I was houseless, I was still coming to school. So that kind of kept me busy and, you know, and

constructive." And, "Some people think I am nosey, but it's like I'm learning. You know, I would rather know than not know. Because I might be able to help the next person down the road." P2 added,

> What makes it hard to keep old friends is distance. I mean, picking up that phone right there and talking to somebody 5000 miles away is just like we're are talking right now, but I know that can't happen till they decide to break down and get an airline ticket and come out here and visit me. But on the device is the next best thing, yeah?

P5 added a perspective that he wanted to learn but in a less formal or more self-directed manner,

> I'm really not willing to attend any sort of class anymore. I feel like, you know, I, you know, lifelong learning is important, but that idea of traditional education isn't quite so. You know, like if I want to learn something, I will learn it in the way I want to learn it the way I want to learn it, and I won't get graded on it.

The participant stated he likes to go to the library and use their Wi-Fi to learn using the internet.

General Desire to Feel Useful

Almost every respondent had at least one statement that reflected their desire to be needed and feel useful within their respective groups. Some examples include from the housed group, P1 said, "As long as I had been homeless, I pretty much go out of my way to help. Whoever needs the help, I know, everybody needs help now and then, you know, everybody." A homeless voice, P7 noted,

> My relationship with my friends means a lot to me, but it kind of varies because I'm going, to be honest, there's a lot of drama and my friend groups, and normally, I'm the one that people go to, to fix the situation.

Self-Preservation

While not as common a motivator from either group, one in each group noted they were drawn to others for security or the future potential need for assistance. P5 contributed,

> To be stark, the main motivation to maintain relationships in a situation like this is both self and other preservation. Like, I am interested in my own self thriving, and I am interested in others as well. Do I consider these people my friends? Oh, not so much, but they are my current social group, and here's how a person should behave within the social group. Like you help out where you can whenever you can, and those people will help you. It doesn't need to be anything more than that for me.

A housed perspective was offered by P3, who said,

> To have good relationships, it is important because you never know when you need good information, you need help, you need to find something or get in touch with a persona that can help you. So yes, that is very important and to keep good relationships is a really big help.

Summary

This chapter described the setting, demographics, data collection, and analysis steps of the study, as well as the codes, categories or sub-themes, and overarching themes

which emerged. Evidence of trustworthiness was presented to assure credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability through thick, rich descriptions, audit trails, and reflexive strategies.

The results assisted in answering the RQs: (a) What are the lived experiences, meanings, and sources of self-efficacy in Hawaiian homeless and vulnerably housed individuals? and (b) What are the lived experiences, meanings, and tactics for building and maintaining social networks in Hawaiian homeless and vulnerably housed individuals? by providing qualitative interview data that were transcribed, coded, categorized, and themed for each respondent utilizing QDAS. Emergent categories and themes revealed that the lived experiences, meanings, and tactics/sources for both building social networks and self-efficacy involved both obstacles and promotors to connecting in general. More specifically, obstacles experienced consisted of overcoming differences in personalities, cultures, and overcoming biases of race or ethnicity, a perceived inability to avoid physical or emotional harm to/from others, substance use, various psychological issues, general trust of others, and lack of education/tools to communicate. At the same time, promotors were identified as having a general desire to perform group agency, to seek to connect to the world through learning, a general desire to feel useful, and to satisfy self-preservation. Throughout the sections, singular or discrepant codes were discussed to give voice to these vulnerable individuals.

Ultimately, the findings from the rich descriptions provided in the interviews addressed the RQs and captured the essence of the lived experiences of both homeless and housing-placed individuals on the island of O'ahu. If one assumes that the essence of

a phenomenon is its “style, its way of being” (Dahlberg, 2006, p.18), the themes which emerged provided a glimpse into the essence of the social reality of this vulnerable group which includes the desires and fears that drive them to attempt, make, keep, or abandon both positive and negative relationships and function within a social world. Chapter 5 provides an interpretation of the findings in the context of the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that guided the study’s design, limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research. The chapter concludes with policy, practice, and positive social change implications.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative investigation was to explore and describe the social networking and self-efficacy in current homeless and housing transitioned formerly homeless individuals. I used a phenomenological semi structured interview to examine and describe the social networks and self-efficacy of current and previously homeless individuals in O'ahu, Hawai'i. The study was guided by IPA, which assisted in providing some of the meanings of homeless existence, building and maintaining social networks, self-efficacy, and where these elements may derive from according to the individual homeless participants. The overarching themes that emerged included those phenomena that hinder positive social normalcy or perpetuate negative social outcomes and those that drive or promote positive social connection.

Chapter 5 summarizes key findings noted in Chapter 4, describes findings in terms of peer-reviewed literature discussed in Chapter 2, and interprets findings in the context of social cognitive theory and the RAM through the lens of the transformative paradigm. It also provides limitations of the study, recommendations for future research, and implications for positive social change in terms of both practice and policy.

Interpretation of the Findings

The study assisted in providing a unique context of individual lived and observed experiences of houseless and formerly houseless participants on O'ahu, Hawai'i. Studies concerning Hawaiian homeless, in general, were few versus those of European and mainland Northern American metropolitan areas. Thus, the voices of this unique, often

unseen group provided rich data to assist in answering RQs: (a) What are the lived experiences, meanings, and tactics for building and maintaining social networks in Hawaiian homeless and vulnerably housed individuals? and (b) What are the lived experiences, meanings, and sources of self-efficacy in Hawaiian homeless and vulnerably housed individuals?

The two overarching themes that emerged included a set of obstacles that prevent or present greater difficulty in mastering social connections and a set of motivators that produce agency in connection building or maintenance. The majority of respondents indicated that they personally had experienced individual or cultural differences they could not seem to overcome in connecting with those different from themselves. Another common indicator for this theme was a fear of harm. Harm included being harmed by others and the concern that they would cause harm to others and therefore placed themselves in a sort of self-quarantine to avoid infecting others with their bad luck or overall lack of control, be it emotional or financial. Another common indicator involved difficulty establishing the basis for most relationships, trust.

Less than half of the participants openly voiced concerned with stigma or judgment of others as a stumbling block to setting goals or otherwise interacting socially. Similarly, a dislike of authority figures was posited by roughly half the group. In both instances, the participants referred to current or past homeless iterations. Stigma and fear of authority were not a frequently noted concern of the housed group. As an example, P1 noted that while homeless, he saw the police as a cause of division and the social systems as something for others, but now that he is housed, he has insurance, a government-issued

ID card, and a paycheck, and he never thought he would appreciate those things until he got them back. A greater number of both groups believed, through experience, that many of the social rules and policies surrounding the homeless and housing system were burdensome at best to totally illogical and frustrating to the point of making someone give up on society. Also, most participants in each group noted fear of others' motivations. One common indicator was that most acquaintances or neighbors were frequently self-centered and with an everyone for themselves mode of operation. Three participants noted that during their homelessness that they frequently saw and experienced the leave-and-lose phenomenon, whereby leaving their worldly goods unattended for more than a few hours resulted in pillaging, not by strangers but by their so-called friends and neighbors. P6 noted that paradoxically she and many others would like to go to work, but if they leave for an 8- to 12-hour shift, their stuff, what little they own, will be stolen before they return.

Another prevalent indicator involved a lack of knowledge or access to technology. As both day-to-day business and personal contact over great distances is remedied through smartphones and applications, it should not go unnoticed that this is especially important for houseless individuals or housed individuals who may not have an affordable means of transport. All three housed participants noted that lack of tech knowledge was something they experienced or witnessed. P2 noted that he frequently assists people in his building to sign up for Wi-Fi services or transact business online. It was noteworthy that every participant had a smartphone, but their expertise and use of the device varied greatly.

The second theme, promotors of social connection, that emerged from this unique group of participants revealed that connecting was through exploring and learning new things. Regarding the use of technology, all housed and half of the homeless group explicitly noted the utility of devices and apps for functioning in everyday life, including socially. Some used Facebook, FaceTime, or Google Duo to connect with friends nearby and thousands of miles away. Others used it for entertainment and learning, such as watching using Netflix, reading using Audible, or catching up on current events via Twitter. All used the devices for voice and some for notes and texts. One other finding of note was that all the housed participants and none of the houseless participants noted enjoyment or a desire or to be part of a group, club, organization, or community event as their means of socializing.

Similarly, in regards to enjoying connecting through learning new things, housed participants discussed this more often than did houseless participants. The most common indicator for this theme was the general desire to help others, as discussed by six of the seven participants. In some cases, this desire was in volunteering in the community at large; for others, it was helping those in their building, encampment, or simply in their circle of friends.

During the course of the interviews, several observations connected to the literature explored in Chapter 2. Overall, the study confirmed the findings of multiple peer-reviewed studies, but in some cases, there were discrepant voices the previous findings did not expose or explore. In terms of the variables that were root causes of houselessness, all 13 of Mago et al.'s (2013) variables impacting homelessness were

observed during semi structured interviews with the participants, including (a) criminal justice system involvement, (b) poverty, (c) unemployment, (d) education, (e) income, (f) addiction, (g) social support network, (h) family breakdown, (i) mental illness, (j) nongovernmental organization assistance, (k) childhood homelessness, (l) government assistance, and (m) cost of housing. Also, Mabahala et al. (2016) noted four dimensions that most of the interview participants confirmed. These were home and childhood environment, discussed in four of the seven interview sessions; one instance of experiences during school life; type of social network, discussed by two participants; and social opportunity, discussed in general terms by all participants but noted as a hindrance by only one currently housed individual.

Another common aspect of the peer-reviewed literature included how recidivism or chronic homelessness was likely and due both to environmental and internal factors. Henwood et al. (2016) described the gravity of remaining in equal status to still homeless cohorts. In some cases, this included co-substance use relationships. This experience was noted by one of the three housed participants. The participant even noted that having been homeless for most of his life, he felt he was still “one of those guys.” Also, the individual noted several examples of how his new relationships made him continue to pull away from that old crowd mentality and avoid continued substance use for fear of disappointing his new friends and employers as an example of an adaptive strategy to maintain housed status, as described by Cruwys et al. (2014). The other two housed individuals noted that they almost immediately made new friends and found it acceptable to leave houseless relationships behind. Similar information was shared by several

participants, as noted in Bell and Walsh's (2015) findings that a holding of the status quo is often seen, particularly regarding relationships provided in a shelter or houseless environment. This involved cohorts, staff, and other agency caregivers. They found that ultimately, these relationships waned following a transition to housing, leaving a gap in one's social network. This resulted in the newly transitioned individual having to cultivate social roots all over again. Also, this may be made more difficult by the fact that the new community is not as welcoming to the formerly homeless. One housing participant, in particular, noted that it was a blessing not to have that stigma any longer but that if people knew you were homeless, they would typically not associate with you as quickly or freely. The other two housed participants noted that it was not a topic they dwelled on or often shared regarding their previously homeless status unless in a trusting circle.

It is important to note that giving voice to a variety of individual experiences, needs, and preferences was a fundamental gap in some of the peer-reviewed literature on homelessness overall. Some variances from findings noted in the peer-reviewed literature were observed during the present investigation. One such example that failed to confirm Bell and Walsh's (2015) finding was provided by a houseless participant who looked at the relationship between himself and his cohorts and staff members as, at best, that of a temporary alliance. He noted the need to be sociable but also believed that the people who visited from both government and nongovernmental agencies were doing so because they were paid to do so. Thus, separating from them was not a concern. Similarly, a homeless participant spoke quite negatively of staff workers from various agencies. She

believed them to be financially motivated from the standpoint of grants and that their only interests were in what they thought were best for clients, not what the clients thought was important to them. She, too, may not be drawn back to those relationships if severed. Thus, it may depend this gravity back towards relationships while homeless may be dependent on the quality of those relationships for the individual.

Several articles involved studying the changes in network makeup post housing placement. Two of three housed residents and two of the four houseless participants stated having only a precious few close or meaningful relationships. These two participants noted that their networks were fewer in quantity but higher in quality, specifically with the ability to build trust vs. their homeless experiences. A discrepant voice by the third housed individual noted that he had a greater quantity of friends and acquaintances when housed than in his previous sheltered state.

Self-efficacy, as it relates to goal setting, was studied by van der Laan et al. (2017), who noted that a majority of homeless create personal goals for experience using social services, which was positively related to the quality of life as well as receiving housing and proper use of health services. One participant in the present study said they refused to set immediate or long-term goals; they just lived in the moment. The participant revealed a few goals during the discussion that they had made in the past but found them unachievable. However, most participants in both homeless and houseless modes noted that they set achievable goals for themselves during the sessions, but what was emergent in the findings were that some of the deterrents to goal setting (see Table 3) were not previously noted in the peer-reviewed literature on self-efficacy. Of note is that

when asked how they viewed their ability to make new friendships/relationships compared to others, every member of the housed and homeless group stated they believed themselves to be either good, equal to, or better than others at achieving social connections, even though the majority had only a handful of trusted relations. This may indicate that they had a positive belief in their abilities but were exercising choice to limit their circles.

Connections to Theoretical Constructs

Bandura (1977) formulated the four sources of self-efficacy: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and affective states. Each of the four intersected homeless and formerly homeless transitioning to housing and posed the risk of impacting self-efficacy and possibly future goal setting and striving to regain social normalcy. Experiencing others being taken advantage of by the leave-and-lose phenomenon is but one example of how vicarious experiences can impact trust and slow the desire to seek out both friendships or communal activities with one's neighbors. Witnessing violence against fellow homeless living rough was also indicated as an everyday possibility, so as P1 noted, that it is best to always stay aware based on what you see happening to others who were not. Verbal persuasion can be exemplified by the stigma or judgment feared by a formerly houseless participant who stated he was frequently mocked by people of means and told to get a job or get a car. However, this same participant was later encouraged to remain off drugs and get employed once he got into housing by his case managers, who told him he was valuable and needed by members of the housing development. He now thinks about this every time he feels the draw of substance use and

tells himself he has goals, and not letting down those who believe in him is one of those. Affective states, especially those of physical symptoms of distress or poor health experienced by houseless individuals, may play a role in feelings that they were dysfunctional socially and physically. There were also possibly ties to negative emotional, in addition to physical states. As one participant noted, if he cried as a child, he was punished and was told he needed to be hard. He understood the need to let emotions out in a healthy way, but still, nearly 60 years later, believes he will likely fail at that because of inextricable hardness. The final and perhaps best-demonstrated effect on social connections was that of mastery experiences. One participant humbly spoke about how having received an employee of the year award drives him to do better and, again, not let down those depending on him. Learning new things and being the go-to person in their development for that knowledge or skill were noted as positives by all three housed participants. One participant noted that he had 20 friends locally, and breaking the ice with someone know is almost infectious once you begin doing it and people start responding positively to you. He also found great satisfaction in learning and using technology and understanding how to apply for various aid packages available from state and federal sources to assist his friends and neighbors.

As provided by Qualter et al. (2015), the normal RAM operates within a 3-stage process: (a) preceding aversive event or a perception of disconnection occurs; (b) RAM activation occurs, which generally involves a social withdrawal and subsequent reassessment; and (c) individual becomes hypervigilant of social cues and reconnection occurs. However, according to Qualter et al., several individual risk factors exist that can

cause one to stall in Stage 2 withdrawal and perhaps even deepen isolation and loneliness. Specifically, they noted low self-worth, affective disability, personality traits, external attribution of locus of control, and genetics as RAM confounding factors. P4, as an example, noted the need to lead a solitary life and attributed some of his difficulties in life to both high functioning autism and the fact that he wanted to be part of the community and get a specific service job that he had applied for all over the island but no one would hire him for. Also of note is that perpetuation of external attribution of control was discussed by four participants in regards to the city or state's treatment of the homeless, including sweeps in which they had to move with a moment's notice and the enactment of the canopy law, which required online sign up every morning by 8 AM for camping or they would be ticketed and have to go to court, and when they would return, their belongings would be rummaged or gone, causing them to have to start all over again.

Finally, another complicating factor of reaffiliation may be actual or perceived stigmatization during hypervigilance. P6, for example, noted a couple riding up and down the road, who finally stopped and moved garbage bags from her side of the road to the other side of the road. She became angry and asked them why they were moving what could be her stuff to the side of the road that was for garbage pickup. She said they were just trying to be nosey as if she were an oddity to be looked at or be played with. While this couple may have been well-meaning, their actions were interpreted as a rebuff by the participant.

In summary, self-reflectiveness via self-efficacy, an essential component of agency in social cognitive theory, assists in explaining several voiced topics among the participants. Deficits or confounding factors interfering with the four core components of self-efficacy including mastery experiences, verbal persuasion, affective states, and vicarious experiences, were discussed in both present and past tense by the study participants. This, in turn, may help explain why living outside social norms is self-sustaining from the standpoint of goals and actions towards positive life change. Alternately, RAM assists in explaining the possible derailment of leaving and reaffiliating or re-entering social normalcy by this vulnerable group, including low self-worth, affective disability, and external locus of control. These factors may further aid in explaining why continued or deepening social isolation is seen as prevalent in chronic homelessness. Also, more research is needed to flesh out additional factors hindering reaffiliation across different cultures and in unique social enclaves such as the homeless.

Limitations of the Study

There were several limitations in the study that must be acknowledged. In terms of trustworthiness during the study's design, data collection, and data interpretation phases, one inherent limitation is the cultural, economic, social, and power differences between myself and participants. It should also be acknowledged that simply by volunteering for the interview that the participants may have been more engaged socially and perhaps experienced fewer physical or psychological disorders than those who would not or could not bring themselves to participate. Also, member checking was very limited due to logistical obstacles to performing follow-on sessions in all but two participants.

These limitations of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability were counterbalanced with reflexivity, audit trails, and the thick descriptive data provided by the participants.

While saturation was found with seven O'ahu/Honolulu County participants, this particular subgroup of the overall homeless and housed, population may not be reflective of every ethnicity, life situation, demographic group, or even culture found in the diverse environment in Hawai'i. Specifically, it contains participants over age 30 primarily, predominantly with male gender identification, and does not include housed or houseless from neighbor islands, each with their own unique history and environmental obstacles.

Recommendations

Qualter et al. (2015) called for additional cultural research on RAM across the lifespan. Similarly, there is a need to extend this methodology to additional homogenous groups in the neighboring counties of Kauai, Maui, and Hawaii Island to determine if there may be additional themes that did not emerge on the more populated island of O'ahu. There were likely other aspects of the uniqueness of Hawai'i that require fleshing out, and investigation is needed to determine various ways to transmit the housing success rate seen in Hawai'i of over 90% (Pruitt et al., 2020) to other localities. While there were copious data on homeless and housed but formerly homeless individuals overall, it is clear from the review of current literature that gaps still exist, even in North American and European mainland settings. Some remaining gaps include determining the lived experiences of homeless before and after the transition to housing in other homogenous groups in the mainland United States, of Asian and Pacific Islanders overall,

and avoiding focusing solely on homeless participants who are burdened by uncontrolled physical or psychological disorders.

The desires and fears of social agency provided by participants may assist in the formation of a new survey instrument that could be administered to a larger pool of participants. Covid provided less opportunity not only to perform face-to-face interviews but also to perform assisted survey questioning to larger numbers of participants. As it subsides, a more specific, experience-based interview protocol or survey-based tool may become the next logical iteration of social networking and self-efficacy investigation amongst current and formerly homeless. Moreover, there are several measures of social networking and self-efficacy which could be informative for the homeless, those who have successfully navigated housing, and those who have reverted back to homeless status following a failed housing attempt.

Additionally, it may be enlightening to focus on younger participants or those who are more technologically savvy as it remains unclear whether that virtual friendship or online community participation can successfully compensate for the lack of physical or in-person connections to an extent to prevent feelings of isolation or hinder a return to social normalcy. The need to have either education on or provisions for low or no-cost access to apps for both business and personal needs emerged in many conversations with participants. However, additional information is needed to help determine if providing free technology access to currently homeless is simply providing a basic need in the present culture or would have unintended consequences by actually reducing agency in a return to housed status.

Implications

Positive Social Change Implications

Despite global efforts, homelessness remains one of the most insidious social problems facing the world today. Homeless counts persist and have risen in some areas (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2021), even in times of economic prosperity or ample job availability. There appears to be a change in attribution from internal or individual to external, social, or environmental sources by the general public but not necessarily by the homeless themselves (Vazquez et al., 2017). There have also been positive strides in the 2010s regarding the paradigm of care for this vulnerable group. Aggressive programming in the form of Housing First and other permanent supportive housing initiatives aim to provide Housing First and then deal with other root cause issues secondarily.

These initiatives have shown promising results but still leave nearly one in five returning to homeless status overall (McQuistion et al., 2014). In Hawaii, more recently, results have been as high as 92% remaining in the program longer term (Pruitt et al., 2020). Unfortunately, there is still not enough housing available for this entire population on O'ahu. However, even taking into consideration those who have transferred to housed living again, 8% of this vulnerable population will fail at the transition and revert back to homelessness in 1-2 years. Thus, a housing grant is necessary but not sufficient to maintain a roofed existence. It helps eliminate the large obstacle of high housing costs certainly, but there remain several other significant factors, specifically physical and psychological health. As state Medicaid, in Hawaii, is provided to all residents in need

one must still understand and utilize some degree of personal agency in applying and interacting with case managers and other civil service organizations and health care workers to take advantage of and maintain this service. Besides the need to live in the modern, very connected world of the 2020's it is likely a requisite that you interact socially and perhaps even technologically with others to not only survive but also to thrive.

In the present study, I seek to provide positive social change in the form of understanding houselessness by exploring the actual lived and observed experiences of the people suffering without a roof and those who have transitioned to a new roof, their social networking and self-efficacy, what it generally consisted of and what it meant to them. The results showed several internal and external or environmental obstacles to social normalcy in living houseless and transitioning to housing and a smaller number of promotors of social connection that can inform practice and policy through relevant programming. With greater understanding of the elements of fear or desire in their reality, it may assist individuals in achieving better outcomes in getting a housing grant, successfully transitioning to more positive social connections while transitioning, reconnecting with family, navigating relationships with coworkers and supervisors, transacting business, enjoying new friendships, or even cultivating meaningful romantic relationships. This, in turn, could result in positive social change at a social level if it breaks the current homeless status and assures recurrence is less likely.

Methodological and Theoretical Implications

The social cognitive theory of agentic behavior (Bandura, 2001), in which self-efficacy is a core component (Bandura, 1977), grounded the present investigation to understand the social and environmental components that either promote or detract from goal-setting, action, and resiliency. The results provided a glimpse into the reality of several homeless and formerly homeless currently housed individuals and their struggles, concerns, and positive experiences, all affecting their social success. Specifically, the results highlighted both internal and external factors from lack of education and tools to function in society to oppressive rules/ordinances and a general lack of trust in others to a desire to contribute to their community and feel useful by others. Armed with this knowledge and that found in more in-depth future studies of these vulnerable but incredibly enduring individuals could provide incorporation tactics applied by agencies, organizations, and even family members to mitigate negative environmental factors to social agency through the lifespan.

Additionally, RAM was also utilized to ground the present study. During the investigation, some specifically identified risk factors for maladaptive cognitive schemas emerged, which may confound the cognitive reaffiliation stage (Qualter et al., 2015). Thus, understanding and applying education and programming for continued reduction of social stigmatization to bolster self-worth and promotion of altering homeless individuals' concept of causal attribution from internal to external. The emergence of affective states not conducive to success in hypervigilance and subsequent reconnection is also of concern in this group. As previously noted, more study is needed regarding the

culture of homelessness and their possibly unique RAM trigger points and risk factors that may lead to deepened isolation tendencies. A final note on implications for RAM involves its therapeutic interventions; further investigation is needed to anticipate cognitive-based therapies that include the homeless or those transitioning to housing, to include their unique needs and learning preferences.

Practice and Policy Implications

Investigation of cognitive-based therapeutic interventions for transitioning houseless would further knowledge and possibly provide unseen success in avoiding returning to immediate-term satisfaction of reaffiliation but perhaps longer-term maladaptive connections in the old, homeless environment. Also, understanding the actual meanings of an essential element of wellbeing, socially connecting, and its promotors and its detractors could assist case managers and shelter staff in mitigating further social isolation, as well as assisting in eliminating or reducing issues of education/tools, trust, personal cultural biases that create divisions amongst homeless ethnic groups or between homeless and others in the community. Also, social care personnel and law enforcement could produce ways of reinforcing learning and exploring in their own way and pace, as well as designing ways to promote a feeling of helping others in order to bolster positive social connections and agency.

Alongside this strong desire to feel useful that emerged in the study, there was more than one story of enhanced mastery shared by participants relating to the fact that they were tapped by program managers to be not just workers but leaders and case workers of a fashion in their new housed environments and associated programs. They

had the peer respect and certainly the experience to be able to relate empathetically to the struggles encountered by those striving for a housing grant or those that have transitioned but now must create a new life over again.

Additionally, providing program funding and development for both personal and technology-based learning and perhaps even hardware and services around successfully connecting would require funding and participation of both governmental and non-governmental organizations in concert. Homelessness has not only a personal, human cost but also a social and systematic cost. These additional services could, upon successful implementation, reduce the obstacles to social stability, including the vicious cycle of mistrust they experience and the aversive consequences of living rough, which is felt acutely by the individual but also by society in terms of current medical, shelter, and other assistance costs.

Conclusion

Chronic or recurrent, episodic homelessness is omnipresent in most Western societies, including the westernmost state of the United States, the Hawaiian Islands. Despite several aggressive programs operating with some success, many individuals still have failed to achieve escape velocity into housing or found themselves back in homeless status within one or two years. While it is clear that housing and treatments for psychological disorders represent critical needs, there are many, like the majority of the participants of this study, who do not fit into that mold but may require additional assistance in learning what either has yet to be mastered or what may have taken a maladaptive turn along the way, that of successfully navigating requisite social skills.

A phenomenological semi structured interview of four houseless and three housed participants on the island of O'ahu, Hawai'i, provided two emergent themes with five categories of obstacles and four categories of promotors of social normalcy from their unique perspectives. Further research is suggested in additional cultural settings containing predominantly Asian and Pacific Islanders, including the neighboring counties of Kauai, Hawai'i Island, and Maui, as well as other pacific island locations such as Guam. The study's findings should be used by service providers, programming, and policymakers to develop programs and funding to address necessary, essential human requirement of socialization as it pertains to a stigmatized, isolated, and often unheard group.

The construction of socialization training and self-efficacy-building programs for those transitioning into housing could provide those who have underdeveloped or suffered a setback in social mastery with a greater sense of self-worth, self-efficacy, and tools to set and achieve realistic normative goals. Some other emergent needs in programming involve ethnic inclusion and diversity training and the socialization components of the workplace. Given the digitization of social interactions for personal business, vocation, entertainment, and both friendly and romantic connections in today's culture, access to modern tools such as smartphones, computers/tablets, and wi-fi for housed participants alongside training and support in their use could provide a sustainable social bond to communities both near and virtual.

Also, some current policies, such as homeless sweeps designed to not only take homeless encampments and individuals from public view or perhaps also to disallow

convenience or sedentary lifestyle, could be having the unintended consequence of distancing the homeless from rejoining society rather. The robbery and violence associated with homeless-on-homeless crime, if addressed by police directly, might go a long way toward alleviating the fear of legal and judiciary system personnel so frequently noted here. Lastly, as a houseless single mother said, “The mayor comes up with his or her own idea and passes on to the governor, and he just signs; what about coming to us and ask us what works.” Crafting environmentally and participant-relevant programming using parameters gained from a qualitative understanding of these lived experiences could assist in further reducing houselessness in the islands and elsewhere by helping them establish roots as well as a roof.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Date	
Time	
Location	
Interviewee (Given Name)	
Status (Housed/Houseless)	
RQ1: What are the lived experiences, meanings, and tactics for building and maintaining social networks in Hawaiian homeless and vulnerably housed individuals?	
Housed and Houseless	
1.	Thinking about your average day or week, would you tell me about your interactions with your close friends (meaning people that you feel at ease with, can talk to about private matters, and can ask for help)?
2.	Can you tell me about your average daily or weekly interactions with acquaintances (those you have interacted with more than once and while not strangers, you would not yet consider them as friend yet)?
3.	How do you go about creating new acquaintances and friends?
4.	Do you have children you interact with? If so, can you tell me about those interactions in the average day/week?
5.	Can you tell me about interactions you have with parents, in-laws, other relatives in the average week? If so, how do you stay connected.
6.	Are you or were you married or living with someone in a marital type relationship? If so, how do you stay connected and communicate?
7.	Do you belong to a church, temple, or other religious group? If so, can you tell me about your experiences in connecting in your day-to-day routines?
8.	If you attend classes, can you tell me about how you connect and interact with instructors and fellow-classmates?
9.	If you have a job, can you describe your experiences in interacting and communicating with coworkers and supervisors?
10.	Do you do volunteer work or belong to any sort of group, club, or organization? If so, could you describe your experiences in participating in these meetings or activities?
11.	Could you describe your experiences interacting and connecting with social workers, case managers, and healthcare workers?
P1	Probe Question – All Social Group Categories – In what ways do you typically connect (in person, social media, text, phone, email, other)?
P2	Probe Question - All Social Group Categories – Individual meaning in connecting and communicating with this particular group?
12.	Have we missed discussing anything about connecting socially that you think is important?
Housed Only	
13.	About how long have you been in housing?

14. Can you describe how your relationships with the groups we have previously discussed (acquaintances, friends, family, coworkers, classmates, clergy, community organizations) have changed since you moved into housing?
    Who are the individuals or groups most important to your continued success and wellbeing now vs. when you were living rough?
15. Who are the individuals or groups most important to your continued success and wellbeing now vs. when you were living rough? Why is that?

RQ2: What are the lived experiences, meanings, and sources of self-efficacy in Hawaiian homeless and vulnerably housed individuals?

16. What motivates you to maintain your current relationships?
17. What are your experiences with trying to make new friends?
    - What obstacles do you experience when making new friends?
    - What obstacles do you experience when trying to keep your old friends?
18. What do you think about your abilities to make new acquaintances and friends is compared to others?
19. What factors do you believe make it easier or harder for you to make new friends?
20. What are your experiences in joining and participating in formal and informal gatherings (group of people you may or may not know for example a church service, game, meeting, party)?
21. What factors do you believe make it easier or harder for you to successfully join group activities?
    - With acquaintances or strangers?
    - With friends or family?
    - With coworkers/classmates?

    With club/organization/church/community groups?
22. What makes you give up on trying to make friends with someone new or even someone who may seem different from you?
23. Thinking about difficult tasks or goals, what are your beliefs about your ability to overcome them?
24. How do you go about setting goals for yourself, especially difficult ones, what factors do you consider?
25. Is there anything important in discussing your ability to maintain or make new meaningful relationships we have not talked about that you would like to share?