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Disenfranchised Residents' Perceptions of the Public Transportation Accessibility-Job Opportunity Mismatch in San Bernardino, California

Maggi Elgeziry
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Walden University

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Maggi Elgeziry

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Walden University
2022

Abstract

Disenfranchised Residents' Perceptions of the Public Transportation Accessibility-Job
Opportunity Mismatch in San Bernardino, California

by

Maggi Elgeziry

BA, Carleton University, 2004

MS, American Public University System, 2014

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy and Administration

Walden University

May 2022

Abstract

People access employment opportunities at a more affordable rate by using public transportation. In San Bernardino, California, poverty, minority populations, and low-skilled individuals all exceed national rates. This research explored how a cheap and reliable means of transportation would facilitate access to job opportunities that would otherwise be relatively expensive for this disadvantaged population to access. Research has documented the benefit of public transportation in communities where public transportation is pivotal in helping disadvantaged populations access job opportunities. Common good theory (CGT) was used to explain the shared benefit that communities reap when working together for a common socioeconomic purpose. Basic qualitative methodology was used to gain an understanding of the needs of this population; the sample size included 16 participants, recruited through flyers. Data were analyzed through coding and themes. Findings showed that methods for getting to good paying jobs were either insufficient or not available. Implications for positive social change included the recognition of methods to help alleviate a socioeconomic problem affecting a city and a population. These methods of addressing the common good will be beneficial and applicable for other metropolitan areas that have similar struggles and may be integrated into broader public policy changes.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother, without whom my dreams would not have happened and upon which my goals come to fruition. Thank you for the limitless love and support that creates and makes dreams come true. My greatest honor includes working with people from different socioeconomic backgrounds who shared 'untold' stories, to them I thank for sharing their stories with me and dedicate my achievement, knowing that they are a part of who I am. Last and never least, I dedicate my triumph to all those with challenges. We all have a reserve of hope that fuels us to the highest of abilities. Never give up and dream big!

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Transportation is a means of economic opportunity by virtue of transporting people to areas of employment or goods to store fronts (Fu & Jenelius, 2018).

Transportation facilitates the socioeconomic well-being of cities and even nations all over the world (Dale et al., 2017). In this study, I examined the socioeconomic needs of public transportation access in San Bernardino, California. I used a qualitative methodology of inquiry, namely basic qualitative study, with residents of San Bernardino. By doing this, I explained what San Bernardino's disadvantaged and low-skilled population need to access job opportunities in San Bernardino.

Background

The socioeconomic well-being of communities is dependant on the availability of employment opportunities to which all members have access. Not all the members of San Bernardino community have the same financial opportunities. The levels of disadvantage and low-skilled individuals are higher than the national average, and this population would benefit from access to low-skilled employment opportunities (Spencer-Hwang et al., 2014; Strauss, 2018).

Despite an increase in job opportunities for low-skilled individuals in San Bernardino, which would directly benefit the impoverished population, many residents do not have the financial means of accessing those opportunities due to lack of personal transportation and to inefficient public transportation options (San Bernardino County, 2015a; Tang, 2018; United States Census Bureau, 2019). Studies support the assertion that the availability of public transportation would help those of low income to access

employment opportunities (Blumenberg & Pierce, 2016; Legrain et al., 2017).

Transportation is a necessary mechanism for community members to access job opportunities during employment time shifts.

Past researchers, such as Legrain et al. (2016) and Schuetz (2015), examined the role of transportation in communities as a mechanism that addresses employment and equity. Nelson et al. (2015) addressed the employment outcomes of light-rail transit and found that employment opportunities increased in communities with transportation that included light-rail transit. According to Legrain et al. (2016) and Nelson et al. (2015), public transportation indiscriminately facilitates employment and financial opportunities for all members of society. Nelson et al. (2015) found that investments in light-rail transit increase economic activity in the areas where transit systems exist and that without such investment, economic activity would have declined. These findings confirm the vital socioeconomic role of transportation in facilitating revitalization of a community and in sustaining the economic well-being of a region and its residents. An effectual transportation system seems to be a vital component of improving the financial well-being of low-skilled and socioeconomically disenfranchised city residents. It is plausible that a commitment to a transportation system which responds to these socioeconomic needs could be used by San Bernardino's low-skilled and disenfranchised population.

Public transportation in San Bernardino is not equitable and disproportionately affects the minority population, which is also economically disadvantaged (United States Census Bureau, 2017). This problem has negatively impacted the already economically disenfranchised population in the city because those residents cannot afford alternative

means of transportation to access new job opportunities during all available time shifts—a necessity when there are limited public transportation options during certain time frames. The public transportation system may be accessible to all commuters, but it should also provide accessibility in reaching desired employment opportunities during all hours of employment (Weinreich et al., 2018). I conducted a qualitative research study to better understand what the residents identify as necessary for San Bernardino’s disenfranchised and low-skilled population to access job opportunities, using basic qualitative methods of investigation, could yield solutions to this transportation problem. However, according to Litman and Brenman (2012), “many current transportation policies and planning practices are biased in various ways that favor mobility over accessibility and automobile transport over other modes” (p. 1). Such transportation bias must be addressed because under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, any discrimination based on race, color, and national origin is nationally prohibited where federal financial assistance is received. Any transportation in a community should therefore equally serve all its residents.

According to Hamre and Buehler (2014), public transportation is beneficial in the Washington D.C. metropolitan area. The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) has successfully freed residents of Washington D.C. from dependence on private automobile use through its successful operation of an extensive transportation system. That success is built upon the coordination of transit agencies and the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments’ Transportation Planning Board and addresses the socioeconomic needs of Washington D.C. (Hamre & Buehler, 2014). A

successful transportation system may similarly enable the San Bernardino area to benefit from similar socioeconomic improvements for the welfare of its disenfranchised, low-skilled, and economically marginalized population. Where regional transit is available in urban areas and accessible to communities, it is more responsive to economic clusters and results in better employment opportunities (Tilahun & Fan, 2014). According to Schuetz (2014), there is a financial gain that benefits the economic well-being of the region where transportation is prominent in neighborhoods. Equitable transportation opportunities could benefit the low-skilled and economically disadvantaged population of the greater San Bernardino area, which in turn could translate to an economically healthier San Bernardino.

There is a socioeconomic need for public transportation to help communities access employment opportunities. In the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan region, however, there exists an insufficient level of transit access which may necessitate automobile ownership to facilitate with transit (Tilahun & Fan, 2014). Automobiles are therefore another mode of transportation which may be used to access employment opportunities. However, this may not effectively address the needs for transportation and accessibility in all other metropolitan areas because not all metropolitan areas have similar socioeconomic variables. Automobile ownership is not likely an ideal solution for the economically disenfranchised of San Bernardino. San Bernardino residents need affordable transportation alternatives, namely efficient public transportation. This relatively affordable form of transportation must operate on a schedule that accommodates all hours of employer operations so that it could transport San

Bernardino's low-skilled and economically disadvantaged workers to all areas of economic opportunity.

Legrain et al. (2016) analyzed equitable transit relative to job location, sectorial concentration, and transit use relative to low-income workers in Toronto, all of which are issues that are prevalent in San Bernardino. In support, Rawshandel (2017) highlighted that most of the Los Angeles population who rely on public transportation are low-income and minority populations. Legrain et al. (2016) determined that equitable transportation and accessibility to jobs, influenced employment opportunities of those who are economically disadvantaged.

Problem Statement

There is a public transportation problem in San Bernardino. The economically disadvantaged San Bernardino residents who rely on public transportation cannot access job opportunities at the times that those jobs are available, even if they are potentially qualified workers. The public transportation options that would take residents to potential job opportunities at all hours of employment are limited (Omnitrans, 2017; Tang, 2018). This problem may be exacerbated by a lack of available and reliable public transportation in areas of the communities where disenfranchised, low-skilled, or underemployed residents live. This problem of unequitable public transportation access in San Bernardino also disproportionately affects its minority population (Spencer-Hwang et al., 2014) and has not been explored by previous researchers whose work is in the available literature. I conducted a basic qualitative inquiry to understand how individuals living in

these communities perceive and experience public transportation accessibility in order to provide insights on how to address the problem.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this basic qualitative research study was to understand public transportation access needs of economically disadvantaged residents seeking job opportunities. The phenomenon of interest was the lack of public transportation during times when job opportunities are available. This basic qualitative research will contribute to the scholarly/peer-reviewed literature because I identified the needs of a community considering the potential inequities in the existing schedule of arrival and departure times of public transportation. The participants in this research were 16 economically disadvantaged residents who live within San Bernardino city limits.

Research Question

The research question that I used to guide this study was: How do economically disadvantaged residents of San Bernardino perceive access to public transportation during times when they need it for employment opportunities?

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework I used in this study was the common good theory (CGT). I employed the concepts or principles of the CGT, according to Albareda & Sison (2020) ,to understand the public transportation benefit that all residents of San Bernardino can attain, addressing their collective socioeconomic and political needs. The common good approach is a philosophy that was used for a very long time and was initiated by classical philosophers. According to Brown University,

The ancient Greek philosophers Plato (427-347 BCE) and Aristotle (384-322 BCE) promoted the perspective that our actions should contribute to ethical communal life. The most influential modern proponent of this approach was the French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), who argued that the best society should be guided by the “general will” of the people which would then produce what is best for the people as a whole. This approach to ethics underscores the networked aspects of society and emphasizes respect and compassion for others, especially those who are more vulnerable (Brown University, n.d., p. 3).

Understanding potential reasons for policy change is a vital benchmark in the study of public policy used to beget socioeconomic change (Green-Pedersen & Princen, 2016). San Bernardino was prosperous, prerecession of 2000-2002, and it is necessary to understand how residents were able to access prerecession employment opportunities, such working in Norton Air Force Base which operated from 1998-1994 (Gordon et al., 2017), as well as newer employment opportunities operating 24 hours per day, necessitating new and viable means of access. The economically disadvantaged residents of San Bernardino face a common shift in employment opportunities and a common challenge of accessibility to public transportation (Kiewit & McCubbins, 2014). When a transportation service is found to disproportionately impact some members of a population more than others, it compromises equity between people. The Federal Transit Agency requires all transit agencies to pay attention to the equity of proposed changes to transportation service to help ensure that all people have an equal opportunity to partake

in transportation services (Karner, 2017). Accessibility to transportation may be what is required for people to obtain potential job opportunities and as such should be provided (Simm, 2011).

In this study, I used the CGT framework to determine the needs of the disadvantaged residents of San Bernardino and ultimately what socioeconomic actions are most beneficial for the disadvantaged residents of San Bernardino. The result of this exploration of San Bernardino's transportation shortcomings and opportunities could lead to recommendations for the common good of other communities experiencing potential transportation accessibility shortcomings.

Nature of the Study

I used a basic qualitative research approach for this study to understand experiences from the interviewee's point of view, which I then used to generate themes about insufficient access to public transportation. I employed a basic qualitative research approach, rather than other types of qualitative methodologies, because my goal for this study was, according to Bogurcu (2019), the exploration of interviewees' descriptions of their perceptions and experiences about available public transportation during times when transportation was needed to access potential job opportunities

I did not choose a quantitative research approach for this study because it was not my goal, according to McCusker and Gunaydin (2015), to collect numerical data for statistical analysis to test a theory or hypothesis. In accordance with Venkatesh et al. (2013), I also dismissed the mixed-methods approach, which combines a qualitative methodology with a quantitative methodology, because I did not use a quantitative

research approach. After exploring the applicability of the six most common qualitative methodologies of inquiry: basic or generic qualitative inquiry, narrative, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study, I determined that a basic qualitative approach was the most suitable research inquiry to employ for this project because, according to Kahlke (2014), it has the flexibility of tailoring questions to understand research question . I used a basic qualitative study to develop a straightforward interpretation of participants' perceptions and descriptions in the context of access to public transportation in San Bernardino.

The theoretical framework of this study, CGT, was suited for a basic qualitative study, and I used this framework to understand the first-hand accounts of the economically disadvantaged San Bernardino residents regarding their experiences accessing public transportation when they needed it for employment opportunities in San Bernardino. I was also able to understand where their needs in this area were not being met.

Case study methods include interviews, forms, observations, records, and cases (Grant et al., 2019; Yazan, 2015). Case study analysis is used to examine case studies of individuals, events, or groups “to gain in-depth understanding of situations and meaning for those involved” (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017, p.7) in order to develop the case. Case studies are used to test or generate a theory by describing a particular event; however, I could not use a case study to formulate an analysis of the research phenomenon being studied or to answer the research question from unique participant description. I determined that a case study approach would not include the level of detail I required,

and therefore I opted not to use this qualitative research approach to answer my research question.

Phenomenology's main purpose is to develop a rich understanding of the essence of participants' experiences of a phenomenon (Tuohy et al., 2013). I chose not to use this approach because it was not aligned with the purpose of this study, which was to determine public transportation needs of disadvantaged residents seeking job opportunities at all times of employment operation, rather than illuminating the individual's lived experience of public transportation access needs.

I chose not to use a narrative approach for this research because that in narrative research, the researcher uses individuals' stories to make meaning out of their life experiences. My goal for this study was not to transfer knowledge via the telling of stories about an individual's experience with access issues to public transportation.

I chose not to use ethnography because the research question of this study did not warrant embedding myself into the culture of the participants, which is a primary practice in ethnographic research. Ethnography relies on observing a group of people within a culture to define cultural context (Bamkin et al., 2016), which was not the purpose of this research.

In grounded theory, more research emphasis is put on the development and analysis of theories within a set of data (Ruppel & Mey, 2015), which was also not the objective of this research. It was not my goal to develop a new theory; rather, I sought to describe and make meaning of the personal accounts of the interviewees who directly

described access issues with public transportation during the times of day when economic opportunities are available to them.

Definitions

Disadvantaged: Disadvantaged is defined as those lacking the basic resources believed to be necessary for an equal position in society and include the poor, undereducated, and unemployed, who lack access to basic life necessities such as housing, healthcare, job security (Mayer et al., 1993).

Disenfranchised: Disenfranchised is defined as underrepresented members of a population who are lacking social and economic justice (Darrell et al., 2016).

Greater San Bernardino Area: Greater San Bernardino Area is defined as the city of San Bernardino and its bordering cities.

Public transportation: the mechanism by which people use to go to and from areas of socioeconomic functions. In this study, it includes busses, automobiles, and light-rail.

Assumptions

Every research framework is guided by philosophical assumptions that shape a study relative to how it is defined (Sutton, 1993). Although basic qualitative inquiry is often criticized as being methodologically less rigorous than other established methods of qualitative inquiry (Kahlke, 2014), I used CGT as a practical theoretical framework for interpreting the participant's reality. While basic qualitative inquiry is not necessarily theory-driven, I determined that CGT was a useful framework to use to guide my research process, study design, approach, my method of gathering and analyzing data,

and yielding results that will help contribute to social change. I assumed this using this epistemology would result in a better understanding of the experiences of my interviewees. I used this theory and followed Gelo et al. (2008) to frame how each of my interviewees constructed or described their realities. I used this philosophical lens to analyze the phenomenon of insufficient access to public transportation provided by my interviewees.

One of the practical assumptions I made in this basic qualitative study was that all the interviewees would be available and provide multiple descriptive honest and truthful viewpoints. I assumed that by using open-ended interview questions, I would obtain subjective responses that described the experiences of each respondent which I could then interpret to provide an overview of the public transportation experiences of San Bernardino residents. I assumed my interviewees felt comfortable sharing their opinions. I also assumed that the interviewees would be truthful and forthcoming with their answers and that such interviews would generate genuine and accurately recollected responses, which would apply to the perceptions and experiences of each participant. Finally, I assumed that the results of this research would contribute to a greater understanding of the public transportation needs of disadvantaged communities within San Bernardino.

Scope and Delimitations

All research includes delimitations—boundaries that are intentionally imposed on the study by the researcher. In this investigation, I focused on the geographical area of San Bernardino, California and residents thereof. A significant delimitation of this study

was that I restricted the study to residents of economically disadvantaged communities within San Bernardino. In addition, the participants of this study included San Bernardino residents who consider themselves low income, use public transportation, have searched for jobs in the San Bernardino area, and have had difficulty accessing job opportunities because they could not find transportation to the job. By virtue of targeting only economically disadvantaged San Bernardino residents who used public transportation, I excluded many other residents of San Bernardino. This delimitation therefore meant that they were dismissed while they could have been representative of the residents of San Bernardino. That geographical specificity was another delimitation, as it excluded other cities serviced by public transportation in San Bernardino County.

Limitations

Assumptions about a research design may result in limitations that weaken the validity of a study. Researchers sometimes use the term trustworthiness to refer to four elements generally associated with discussions of validity in naturalistic inquiry: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This section includes discussion of some potential weaknesses in my research design, including the limitations of the basic qualitative approach, my role as researcher, and the sampling procedure.

Limitations of this research included conducting a basic qualitative research study that could foreseeably entail using more than one data instrument, such as a personal interview or a focus group. This limitation of basic qualitative research makes this research approach not as methodologically robust as other qualitative research options. In

addition, I had no prior experience conducting interviews, which resulted in my preference to conduct individual open-ended interviews.

I analyzed the data, and they were not influenced by another person's perspective. As a researcher who is employed in the California Department of Transportation, it was critical that I continually kept potential bias in check by using a reflexive journaling technique and coding of data to address this potential limitation.

The socioeconomic welfare of the San Bernardino community is unique and could be a result of its history and political circumstances. The potential difficulty in applying this research in other metropolitan areas is therefore a limitation of this research. Furthermore, as is common with most qualitative methods of inquiry, my study involved a small sample size, which limits generalizability.

Significance

I expected the results of this study to provide insights about whether the existing transportation system met the accessibility needs of all members of a community at all times of employment operation. My goal was to examine the relationship between available public transportation and the accessibility to beneficial employment opportunities for the economically disadvantaged communities in the San Bernardino area.

Transportation options can be used to address and improve the conditions of the economically disadvantaged population, improve insufficient transportation access, and address unemployment in San Bernardino. These goals can be achieved by providing its disadvantaged population with the means, and opportunities, of taking advantage of their

location which is in the county seat of the largest city in San Bernardino County. If these residents are given the opportunity to make use of their location and its associated opportunities of employment, they may benefit from a common good of employment opportunities which may in turn result in their having a higher standard of living and be contributing taxpayers.

Significance to Advance Knowledge in the Discipline of PPA

With regards to our knowledge of Public Policy and Administration (PPA), this study was significant because it focused on the public transportation needs of a marginalized population. The results and recommendations, which emerged from this research, may be used to inform public policies that lead to creating equitable opportunities for economically disadvantaged communities.

Significance to Advance Practice and/or Policy

Nelson et al. (2015) claimed that “America’s transportation policies perpetuate social and economic inequity” (p.4). There is a civil rights issue when transportation inaccessibility negatively impacts the low-skilled, minority and disenfranchised population of San Bernardino more than other more affluent residents of San Bernardino (Roman, 2016; Tang, 2018). By having this unmet need of society, which includes the availability of efficient public transportation, there is enough information to suggest the need for more policy change that will make equitable and timely operation of transportation available for all residents. The United States Department of Justice (2016) contends that an advancement in the practice and/or policy consequently leads to positive social change. The disadvantaged population of San Bernardino require transportation

that would serve their needs of reaching employment opportunities. It may be reasonable to contend that the more affluent residents of San Bernardino may have more conveniences that could include less reliance on the hours of public transportation operation by virtue of having personal vehicles; and having higher paying employment opportunities that afford them work schedules during the operating hours of public transportation. The low-income, and low-skilled residents of San Bernardino do not have the same convenience of not being reliant on public transportation to access potential employment opportunities as the more affluent residents have, and they are the population that will benefit by the results of this research. This study addressed the needs of impoverished populations and viable means of overcoming transportation hardships/inequity.

Significance to Advance Positive Social Change

Implications for social change included the recognition of methods to help alleviate a socioeconomic problem affecting a city and a population by replicating strategies that have been used in other metropolitan areas and proven to be successful. The disadvantaged and low-skilled today could be a much-needed source of revenue for a metropolitan area, if they are equipped with the availability of equitable transportation that could transport such population to areas of financial opportunity. All types of employment opportunities should be accessible. Public transportation helps lead people to areas of employment and should be recognized as a vital component of all metropolitan areas for their social, environmental, and economic sustainability. Existing transportation policies in San Bernardino may have to incorporate public transportation,

the needs of its marginalized population and employment opportunities to help address the socioeconomic wellbeing of the city. San Bernardino as well as the cities that border San Bernardino have financial and employment opportunities that all the disadvantaged, low-skilled and underemployed residents of San Bernardino should have equitable access to whenever these opportunities necessitate.

Summary and Transition

I have identified the socioeconomic needs of a population of low-skilled and economically marginalized residents of San Bernardino to be active participants in their community. I presented the potential benefits of a public transportation system which operates at hours of employment opportunity. Transportation is a means of access to employment opportunities and a factor in the resulting socioeconomic benefits. Not all members of society reap similar benefits of transportation, and those not receiving equitable benefits include the disadvantaged population of San Bernardino. This population required an affordable means of transportation that they have equal access to and was available to them at all hours of employment opportunities. Research documents benefits to communities which include that of having equal access to transportation at times of employment opportunities. This was not the case for the San Bernardino community. The proposed study sought to better understand whether existing transportation system met needs of community at all times of employment operation which the low-skilled individuals of San Bernardino need to be active participants in the workforce. This chapter will be followed by a review of relevant literature in Chapter 2.

Chapter 3 will describe the study design, participants, procedures of investigation, assessments that will be used and the method of information to be obtained and assessed.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this basic descriptive qualitative research was to understand public transportation access needs of economically disadvantaged residents seeking job opportunities. There is a public transportation access problem in San Bernardino. In spite of available job opportunities in San Bernardino, not all residents who qualify for them seem to be able to access those jobs because they do not have the means to travel to the job location during the hours of employment. Pendall et al. (2014) argued that the residents of downtown locations benefit most from accessibility to transportation and the availability of job opportunities. Perry (2017) agreed that the use of transportation in metropolitan areas (for example Toronto, Canada and Washington D.C, United States) resulted in the socioeconomic well-being of their population. However, in San Bernardino, this has not been the case (Roman, 2016; Tang, 2018). In fact, San Bernardino includes a high minority and economically disadvantaged population, many of whom have personally experienced financial hardships such as bankruptcy despite residing in a downtown location (Howlett, 2016; Roman, 2016). For this reason, accessibility, such as public transportation, must be responsive to the socioeconomic needs of all members of the community.

The socioeconomic well-being of a community consists of the provision of job opportunities to which all residents have equal access (Perry, 2017) Elected public officials must be cognizant of the potential efforts of socioeconomic change that could improve the well-being of the communities they represent. San Bernardino has a higher than national average number of economically marginalized population with low-skill

levels (San Bernardino County, 2015a). To provide a mechanism for all members of the community to have equal access to employment opportunities, there must be a public transportation system which is affordable to all members of a community and serves these members during employment operation timeframe. Legrain et al. (2016), Nelson et al. (2015) and Pendall et al. (2017) documented the socioeconomic benefits people derive using public transportation. Metropolitan cities have invested heavily in public transportation as a means of benefitting their socioeconomic well-being (see Hamre and Buehler, 2014; Legrain et al., 2016; Tilahun and Fan, 2014).

I obtained literature for this review which included documents regarding the socioeconomic status of San Bernardino. I used this literature to examine the effects of the use of public transportation in metropolitan cities. The socioeconomic benefits, which are gained when an investment in public transportation occurs, could help describe the socioeconomic benefits that San Bernardino may gain. I identified what a population of low-skilled and economically marginalized residents of San Bernardino need to be active participants in their community. Finally, I used the CGT to illustrate the benefits of a public transportation system which operates at hours of employment opportunity.

Literature Search Strategy

In the literature review, I focused my search on the key terms *public transportation, San Bernardino transportation, equity, San Bernardino, poverty, job opportunities, accessibility, common good theory, basic qualitative research, recession, economy, unemployment, bankruptcy, and Inland Empire*. I then focused my search on my theoretical foundation.

To conduct the literature review for this research, I used the Walden University library to access the following research databases: ProQuest, Political Science Complete, SAGE Political Science Collection, and Academic Search Complete. I also used the search engine Google Scholar to identify relevant peer-reviewed publications. The key terms, which I used to search these databases, included: *public transportation, San Bernardino transportation, equity, San Bernardino, poverty, job opportunities, accessibility, common good theory, basic qualitative research, recession, economy, unemployment, bankruptcy, and Inland Empire.*

I reviewed much of literature which was about transportation and its accessibility to economically disadvantaged populations. To get an overview that pertains most to the economy, the policies and the socioeconomic needs of San Bernardino, California, I also obtained a historical overview of the economy of San Bernardino that played a role in the current welfare of its residents.

Most of the sources that I accessed were scholarly work published over the last five years. The literature I obtained from the peer-reviewed journals, the search engine Google Scholar, and online sources, did not directly refer to employment opportunities in San Bernardino nor to the associated need for public transportation access to transport San Bernardino's disadvantaged population to employment opportunities at all hours of employment operation. This shortcoming of literature resulted in the content of this review being limited to the impact of public transportation in other metropolitan areas.

Theoretical Foundation

I found CGT to be the most applicable theoretical foundation to use in this study. CGT refers to that which is beneficial to all members of a community through their collective participation (Mele, 2009, as cited in Albareda & Sison, 2020). The common good can be considered a part of Aristotelian ethics, Thomistic philosophy, and Catholic social teaching, which teach that all human beings share a common good (Albareda & Sison, 2020). Sison and Fontrodona (2013) indicated that the CGT is applied in many cases by people where it ultimately is of value to individuals who could be working in a firm. In that context, the common good could quate to an increase of skill and ability of each worker which translated to the overall common good of both the firm and also each employee. Similarly, the participants in my study were local to the research area and were interviewed on a matter of their common interest. The common good has teleological, social, political, economic dimensions (Perry, 2017). I ascertained the socioeconomic hardship common to San Bernardino, by reading the literature which indicated that CGT could ultimately be the most appropriate theory to use (Pendall et al., 2014; Perry, 2017).

Literature Review Related to Key Concepts

Socioeconomic hardship is evident in San Bernardino (Roman, 2016; Tang, 2018). Many residents are disadvantaged or are only qualified for low-skill employment opportunities. The locations of suitable jobs often necessitate accessible public transportation (Pendall et al., 2017). I selected qualitative method of research because it was the best approach to explore this topic and understand the personal experiences of San Bernardino residents who had a first-hand account of the common needs of the San

Bernardino community. I determined that a basic qualitative design is the best tradition of study to use. By using it, I would be able to reveal the lived experiences of an individual (Caelli et al., 2003). I used qualitative research to focus on each individual who had personal experience with the topic of investigation. I studied each in depth and obtained a record of data from rich interviews with the participants .

I was able to have an overview of the disproportional socioeconomic conditions of San Bernardino residents by examining the following literature review. How these conditions and needs measured on a national average were also discussed. There is a public transportation access problem in San Bernardino. Despite available job opportunities, not all residents can access those employment opportunities. I used this literature review to relay the information found necessary in addressing San Bernardino's high unemployment rate which could be alleviated with improvements in transportation accessibility. I discussed other national and international examples of how transportation was used to address socioeconomic problems which I included in this literature review. The availability of public transportation may be a public policy issue (see Ni, 2012), which will be better understood examining these national and international examples.

The Socioeconomic Status of San Bernardino Residents

Examining transportation equity may help address the social, and economic concerns of San Bernardino. As Jones and Lucas (2012) explained, "it is only recently that attention has turned more toward the social impacts of the transport system, and the concepts of transport equity and social justice" (p. 15). Research and government websites attest to the objective status of the socioeconomic conditions of San Bernardino.

San Bernardino County reveals that San Bernardino's rate of poverty surpasses the state and national average (San Bernardino County, 2015; Tang, 2018). Callahan and Pisano (2013) confirmed that San Bernardino "is one of the poorest large cities in the nation and the largest city to file for bankruptcy in the nation" (p.88). Prior to San Bernardino filing for bankruptcy in 2012, it was recognized in 1978 as an All-America City (Callahan & Pisano, 2013; Lovett, 2011). This change of San Bernardino's socioeconomic well-being can be attributed to many things such as the housing market crash that happened "as house prices outran rent and the housing boom roared right through the stock market crash and recession of 2000-2002" (Bardhan & Walker, 2011, pp. 306-307). Kiewit and McCubbins (2014) attributed San Bernardino's economic downturn to the Great Recession of 2008, arguing that it disproportionately impacted city and local economies. There is a clear association between San Bernardino's weak economy and its high rate of poverty (Gallagher et al., 2019).

Potential Factors Attributed to the Marginalized Conditions of San Bernardino

Residents

What was once recognized as an All-America City was negatively affected by the loss of large employers that were essential for middle-class jobs, a consequent move to rental-occupied housing, and the development of an interstate highway that changed the growth pattern of the San Bernardino community (Callahan & Pisano, 2013). The large employers and their associated staff numbers that were lost include: Kaiser, which directly contributed to approximately 10,000 jobs that were lost with its closure; Norton Air Force Base, which resulted in the loss of 12,500 jobs with its closure; and the railroad

maintenance facility, which resulted in the loss of over 3,000 jobs with its movement to Topeka (Callahan & Pisano, 2013; Gordon et al., 2017). The collective loss of employment in San Bernardino is a significant factor that could be directly attributed to the current marginalized conditions of San Bernardino. Other impacts to San Bernardino's socioeconomic well-being further escalated the marginalized conditions of San Bernardino.

The housing crash of 2008 contributed to job losses, retail losses, absentee landlord housing and the consequential change in the demographics to that of a lower income population (Callahan & Pisano, 2013; Kiewit & McCubbins, 2014). According to San Bernardino County (2015), San Bernardino has less than the 63.1% national average of owner-occupation. More than 70% of San Bernardino residents are renters (Callahan & Pisano, 2013). What further defines the disenfranchised state of San Bernardino is its "unemployment rate of 18%, with over 48% of the population on public assistance, and a median income of \$38,640" (Callahan & Pisano, 2013, p. 89). Gaining employment relative to the skill levels of the residents of San Bernardino could be argued to be the gateway to the socioeconomic well-being of San Bernardino.

During this recession in 2008, California, and specifically the Inland Empire, an area east of Los Angeles and regarded to predominantly include Riverside and San Bernardino as well as their adjoining cities (Allen, 2022), exceeded the national average in terms of jobs that were lost, yet it recovered by 2014, exceeding national employment levels and returned to 2012 and 2011 prerecession GDP levels (Gallagher et al., 2019, p. 7). However, in the Inland Empire "per capita GDP has not returned to 2007 levels"

(Gallagher et al., 2019, p. 7). This implies that there is a shortage of well-paying employment opportunities.

For comparison, Riverside, another city in the Inland Empire, has fared much better than San Bernardino during this recession. While San Bernardino experienced a rise in poverty and unemployment, Riverside's socioeconomic conditions improved which could be attributed to it having better transportation options than San Bernardino (Shaheen & Chan, 2016). It could, therefore, be argued that transportation may be significant for the improvement of the socioeconomic condition of a city.

Employment Needs of San Bernardino Residents

San Bernardino includes a higher than national average of individuals with low educational levels. For example, approximately 32% of San Bernardino residents over the age of 25 during the 2013 to 2017 timeframe did not graduate from high school (United States Census Bureau, 2018). According to San Bernardino County (2015), the economy of San Bernardino County is responsible for the employment of 888,554 people. The current economy of San Bernardino is specialized in transportation and warehousing, public administration, and wholesale trade, respectively employing 2.02, 1.27, and 1.26 more people than what would be expected in a location of this size. San Bernardino County (2015) lists the largest industries in San Bernardino County, as retail trades (116,210), healthcare and social assistance (114,675), and transportation and warehousing (79,345), while the highest paying industries are utilities (\$74,007), management of companies & enterprises (\$68,229), and mining, quarrying, oil, gas extraction (\$65,220).

These potential job opportunities do not necessarily require higher levels of education. The potential employees do not need much more skill and education than what residents in San Bernardino already have. Potential employees, however, must have access to all of the job opportunities in San Bernardino, if an improvement in their socioeconomic conditions were to happen like they did for Riverside, which improved its socioeconomic conditions by harnessing the benefit of improved transportation-system (Shaheen & Chan, 2016).

Access to Job Opportunities

Employment opportunities require a means for potential employees to access those opportunities, and accessibility to employment opportunities is not equal amongst all members of society (Allen & Farber, 2019). Public transportation may provide those means, especially to disenfranchised or low-skilled workers (Pendall et al., 2014). Members of a population that are classified as low-skilled and disenfranchised would most likely not be workers of the high-technology sector; therefore, to access job opportunities they would require physical accessibility to their places of employment. Public transportation provides that physical accessibility (Pendall et al., 2014). Physical access to job opportunities varies amidst members of a population who are financially comfortable and those who are financially disadvantaged; cost and the economically disadvantaged population would be those who require the cheaper alternative to public transportation, while the more affluent of a population would include members who can afford using a private vehicle for transport (Pendall et al., 2014; Perry, 2017). In light of insufficient public transportation options, commuting without a car has further

marginalized the economically disadvantaged from accessing potential work opportunities (The Leadership Conference Education Fund, 2011).

In 2007, following Europe's financial crises, cuts in quality public transport accentuated the use of private transport (Romero & Monzon, 2018). It could be argued that private transport improves people's opportunity to secure employment opportunities (Blumenberg & Pierce, 2016). A community with an already-weakened socioeconomic profile is probably not one with access to a private vehicle widespread enough to be used to supplement inefficient public transportation service. San Bernardino has a weakened socioeconomic profile (United States Census Bureau, 2018), which makes the supplement of a private vehicle to access job opportunities not feasible and accentuates the need for public transportation that is responsive to the socioeconomic needs of a population.

Accessibility may incorporate various modes of transportation that require support from city and planning officials. Current transportation policy is about the result of provision and policy on the operation of the economy rather than being strictly about the impact of transportation (Johnson et al., 2017). According to Rivasplata et al. (2012), all transportation entities should work together to help provide for the interests of passengers, employers, and the economy at large. San Bernardino needs all the support it could get to help its large disenfranchised and low-skilled population access work opportunities, rise out of unemployment and contribute to the economy by being taxpayers. These potential levels of support must be reasonable in-light of San Bernardino's socioeconomic conditions.

Effects of Public Transportation Use in Metropolitan Cities

While transit may be a means for people to get to their social and economic destinations, transit is not equally available amongst commuters, and low-wage job opportunities are not necessarily accessible by low wage employees (Legrain et al., 2016). This may translate to the accessibility to versus location of low wage employment opportunities in the San Bernardino area. Legrain et al. (2016) contend that where there exist areas of poverty, there should also be a higher level of accessibility to transit.

The job opportunities that low-skills individuals are qualified for do not all necessarily have the same level of transit accessibility; some exist in the downtown area and some are increasingly located in the suburbs, which necessitates a more responsive and effective transit system. Where there exists an employment center, the means of accessibility determines means of commute and highlights equity concerns where employment is suburbanized and far from the inner-city where low-income employees reside and are thereby distant from job opportunities (Legrain et al., 2016; Gobillon & Seldon, 2021).

Investment in Public Transportation

Since cities' infrastructures are highly influenced by the transportation methods of urban transportation, they require consideration of their ridership (Pamplona & Oliveira, 2016). There has to be a justification in investing in transportation. The type of transportation may differ and so does its benefit to various metropolitan cities.

Metropolitan cities in the United States have invested in public transportation and their investment includes urban rail and bus rapid transit (BRT) means of transportation

(Perry, 2017). Not all cities demonstrated the same measure of increase in the use of public transportation; the reasons why some metropolitan areas met or did not meet their forecasted target of public use vary. Research demonstrates that despite BRT becoming a more popular choice for rapid transit, the current ridership forecasting suggests that more needs to be done (Perry, 2017). Perry (2017) added that an investment in BRT could be one of the most significant investments in public transportation in a community's history.

Upon San Bernardino's investment in a BRT line, it projected an average daily ridership of 5,600 daily trips. This did not occur. According to Wall (2015), there were only 2,300 average daily trips. Delays in the opening of the new transit center were reportedly to blame (Perry, 2017). Other metropolitan areas reported significant gains in BRT ridership. These metropolitan areas include Eugene, Oregon; Grand Rapids, Michigan; Los Angeles, California; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; San Antonio, Texas; and Snohomish County, Washington, all of which had actual ridership exceeding their predicted ridership by over 100% (Perry, 2017). This increase in ridership suggests that there is a need in metropolitan areas for public transportation.

Integrating public transportation with the infrastructure of local economies is something states take very seriously. According to Federal Highway Administration (2017), the proximity of public transportation to both potential employees and employers is a concern. In July 1997 the State of New Jersey had its bus services assessed to better serve the commuters of the Work First New Jersey (WFNJ) program. This program did not ensure that residents living in close proximity to a transit route will find a job nor did it provide information on transportation frequency or schedule. On the other hand, it

supported the public transportation initiative by providing the following: Get a Job, Get a Ride which provided residents with a free month of free New Jersey Transit public transportation; County Transportation Coordination Planning which will provide transportation to WFNJ participants, senior citizens, disabled and low-income job seekers, as well as residents needing transportation to access employment opportunities; GIS analysis which will help local communities assess the most efficient and effective way of transporting WFNJ Transit recipients; and finally Transit Training Video to help educate individuals on using transit in New Jersey.

Connecticut is another state that identified the need of an improvement of public transportation to help address its employment needs. It did so by extending the hours of operation of two of its bus routes and offering special transportation services for its residents who need transportation to participate in training (Federal Highway Administration, 2017). Wisconsin and Massachusetts are two more states that identified the benefit of transportation. The welfare recipients of those states were identified as not having adequate transportation services of reaching employment opportunities. This is a national need that calls for improved regional accessibility, as these three case studies revealed (Federal Highway Administration, 2017).

The state of Massachusetts answered its local employment needs by allowing commuters to deduct transportation expenses from their personal income taxes (Rall, 2015). Many states recognize the socioeconomic gain of public transportation and are leading with methods of promoting public transportation in their jurisdictional areas

(Rall, 2015). Therefore, a paramount need to improving or expanding transportation services was agreed upon by a number of states in the United States.

Potential Socioeconomic Benefits of Public Transportation Investment

Transit service is insufficient when the traveling needs of the public are not addressed, thereby forcing low-income employees to use private automobiles to access job opportunities that are not served with accessible public transportation (Legrain et al., 2016). Public transportation should serve the public and in this service the identification of the needs of the public should be addressed. Where the public enjoys a greater rate of accessibility to public transport, there is an associated rise in employment rates (Merlin & Hu, 2017). Schuetz (2014) attests that there is a financial gain that benefits the economic well-being of the region where transportation is prominent in neighborhoods. Indeed, it is documented that where regional transit is available in urban areas and accessible to communities, it is more responsive to economic clusters and results in better employment opportunities (Tilahun & Fan, 2014).

The benefits of investment in public transportation are confirmed, according to Allen and Farber (2019), who indicated that in Canada as well as around the world, public transit is integral in providing urban populations with the opportunity to participate in the work force. The Canadian Government confirms that an investment in public transportation is crucial and has concluded that across the country, its provincial and municipal policy goals include social equity (Government of Canada, 2017). The inability to access areas of economic opportunity negatively impacts individuals' economic security, quality of life, as well as the larger community's socioeconomic

welfare (Fransen et al., 2019). Indeed, equity is attained when an intervention of transportation makes its distribution more fair or equitable (Golub & Martens, 2014; Litman & Brenman, 2012)).

Accessibility to public transportation is directly related to better socioeconomic conditions of communities. Cape Town's 2013 ITP Review revealed that "focus is seldom placed on social dimensions of transport when it comes to transport related research, policy, planning and practice" (Jennings, 2015, p. 771). More emphasis and understanding of the social dimensions of transportation are necessary to address the socioeconomic welfare of residents of San Bernardino.

Needs of Encouraging Active Community Participation from Disenfranchised San Bernardino Residents

Where there is a high level of low-income population, the means of access to employment opportunities at a reduced or relatively affordable price needs to be addressed, for equity, and for the economic concerns of the public, if not for the entire metropolitan area. CGT will be used to explain the shared benefit that communities reap when working together for a common socioeconomic purpose (Albareda & Sison, 2020). San Bernardino has a dynamic history marked by socioeconomic change and CGT will be used to help analyze potential reasons for that change—and for policy change. According to Green-Pedersen and Princen (2016), understanding potential reasons for policy change is a vital benchmark in the study of public policy to use to beget change. This basic social and economic reality cannot be more pertinent than in a community, such as San Bernardino, which has endured a high unemployment rate, low skill levels,

and a high rate of economic disparity (San Bernardino County, 2015a). Where there exist areas of opportunity, a reliable public transportation system must be a prime focus of the city to transport its potential employees there, at all the times of employment opportunity (see Weinreich et al., 2018). The need for a community with a shared future is regarded by Yu Lintao (2018) as necessary for the advancement of Chinese communities on the world level. The common good has been referred to as the “general welfare” and used in the words of the Preamble to the Constitution of the United States (Koppenberg, 2020).

A better understanding of the needs of the San Bernardino community in the financial and social well-being of San Bernardino and its residents will be explored using CGT. This theory helps display and explain the common good needed to change in public policy and the potential socioeconomic benefit attributed to a more responsive transportation (Simm, 2011).

Benefits of a Public Transportation System with Longer Hours

Low-income neighborhoods have been known to have more access to employment opportunities by car than by transit (Boarnet et al., 2017). The declined rate of accessibility to job opportunities by the poor could be the result of the spatial distribution of employment and housing and result in socioeconomic restructuring (Hu, 2014). Accessibility to job opportunities lies in the location of job opportunities as well as in the socioeconomic access to and availability of such opportunities. Low-skilled job opportunities have suburbanized, rendering them inaccessible to poor job seekers who have limited access to transport mobility (Hu, 2014). Car ownership is financially burdensome to the economically disenfranchised residents of a community. Accessibility

to transportation must also encompass transportation that operates at hours of employment needs to effectively help the low-skilled and financially marginalized members of a community get to their employment destinations (Allen & Farber, 2019; Gris  et al., 2019). A public transportation system that is cost-effective and operates at hours of economic need will enable the economically disenfranchised members of a community to fully participate in the socioeconomic infrastructure of their community. This participation would therefore further enhance the socioeconomic well-being of San Bernardino. According to Ni (2012), public-private partnership offers a way to integrate private investment with public transportation. Indeed, this may be a means to enhance the current practice of providing public transportation that brings the needed change to the current practice that is not accessible to all. An investment in public transportation helps lessen poverty in socioeconomically disadvantaged communities all over the world (Albareda & Sison, 2020; Mohammadi et al., 2018).

Summary and Conclusions

This review of the literature introduced common themes that are related to transportation and public policy issues. Existing literature does not adequately focus on San Bernardino and the potential for how improved public transportation access could benefit its economically disadvantaged population. The literature review, consequently, included the role of transportation in other metropolitan areas. Local governments have been found to use transportation to address the socioeconomic shortcomings of their jurisdictions. This suggests that public transportation may be a social justice issue worth examining further. The availability of public transportation at hours of employment

opportunities may therefore best serve the disenfranchised and low-skilled access more job opportunities. To sufficiently address equal employment opportunities, investments in public transportation must be a priority, to help all potential employee access CGT was used to examine participants' personal experience with current conditions in the field of investigation.

In Chapter 3, I will describe the research design, participant selection logic, my role as the researcher, and data collection instruments. I will also discuss the ethical considerations related to participant recruitment and informed consent. Finally, I will explain the plan I used for data analysis and the issues of trustworthiness that I considered in designing and implementing the study.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this qualitative research was to examine how the existing transportation system met access needs of all members of a community, at all times of employment opportunities. I presented an overview of the socioeconomic needs of the disenfranchised residents of San Bernardino in the two previous chapters. In this chapter, I will discuss the research design, which I employed to understand those needs. More specifically, I will explain the rationale for choosing a basic qualitative research approach, my role as the researcher, participant selection logic, instrumentation, data collection, data analysis, issues of trustworthiness and ethical procedures. I will conclude with a summary of the key points of my research design.

Research Design and Rationale

I used the research question in this study to answer was: How do economically disadvantaged residents of San Bernardino experience access to public transportation during times when they need it for employment opportunities? I used the central phenomenon to examine how the existing transportation system is meeting access needs of all members of San Bernardino community members at all times of employment operation. I used the research design to follow the qualitative tradition of inquiry. My goal of this research is to understand public transportation access needs of economically disenfranchised residents seeking job opportunities. I used a basic qualitative research methodology for this study because, as Jervis and Drake (2014) pointed out, this method of inquiry enables the researcher to understand perceptions and experiences from the interviewee's point of view. Ultimately, I used the results of this basic qualitative

research approach to generate common themes related to public transportation access in San Bernardino. To best understand these perceptions and generate relevant and meaningful themes, I was able to leverage the methodological flexibility of basic qualitative inquiry to depart from the more rigid boundaries of other qualitative approaches as needed throughout my study (Kahlke, 2014).

Role of the Researcher

From amongst three roles a researcher may take: observer, participant, or observer-participant; my role aligned most with that of observer-participant. A primary role of the qualitative researcher is to collect, analyze and interpret data to understand how participants perceive their experiences (Snodgrass, 2014). Patton (2015) claimed that researchers could be biased based on a number of factors that include previous experiences of prejudice that may cause them to be biased. Despite being an employee of the California Department of Transportation and working in San Bernardino, I had no personal or professional relationships with the research participants, nor any involvement in supervisory or instructor relationships involving power over the participants. I managed potential researcher bias by using reflexive journaling to assess my own experience. I was therefore cognizant of influencing this research in any way and took the necessary action to eliminate this. I did not conduct my study within my work environment. Therefore, in my role as a researcher, I followed ethical guidelines. These guidelines included member-checking as well as following up on the interviews to prevent subjectivity in this area in which a researcher may have prior familiarity (Hofmeyer et al., 2012; Yin, 2014).

Methodology

I describe my participant selection process in this section. I also present justification of my choice of inquiry. Researchers have many theoretical methods and approaches in qualitative methodology to analyze, through methods of participant observation and inquiry, what participants hold to be true in their local context. Flick (2018) explained that the researcher's reflection on their action in the field and the members being studied are documented and are a part of the research process. A basic qualitative approach was the best research tradition for this study because I used it to understand the description and experience of residents who experience living in San Bernardino.

The main purpose of basic qualitative inquiry was to answer straightforward questions without framing the inquiry within an explicit theoretical, philosophical, epistemological, or ontological tradition. I found that basic qualitative study was the best research tradition to help answer the research question that guided this study.

Participant Selection Logic

Sixteen individuals participated in this research study. I recruited them primarily via an advertisement in the local newspaper. I specified in this advertisement that I sought potential participants who take local public transportation in San Bernardino to email me about their interest and availability to participate in a university research interview. In addition to advertisement in both a local paper and penny saver, I posted flyers in locations such as bus stops, bus terminals and on bulletin boards of local San

Bernardino libraries to recruit participants. Participants included San Bernardino residents and workers in the San Bernardino community.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, I specified that this interview would most likely occur on Zoom or another mutually agreeable social media platform. I individually interviewed each participant who met the criteria. I also ensured that I selected participants that included men and women, with knowledge of San Bernardino's disenfranchised and low-skilled individuals, and who are residing in San Bernardino.

While I could have used a larger sample size, DeCarlo (2018, p. 276) explained that in qualitative research respondents are purposefully selected based on "specific characteristics". I confirmed that a small sample size of 16 was reflective of San Bernardino's disenfranchised and low-skilled community and was enough to reach data saturation. During the data analysis, I was able to determine that no new ideas emerged after the initial 16 interviewees. Data saturation was reached after transcribing and coding of data and when no further data collection was necessary (Saunders et al., 2017).

The participants in this research provided a firsthand account of the economically disadvantaged residents who live in San Bernardino city limits. I used the answers to the research question to explain how transportation could contribute to solving a socioeconomic problem by helping the disenfranchised and low-skilled residents access job opportunities. I collected the data collected from the interviews to develop common themes from respondents, which I used to answer my research question.

I began by recruiting potential participants to partake in my research. I then contacted each of the potential interviewees who contacted me with an expressed interest

in participating in this research. Once potential interviewees were identified, I selected the first 16 respondents, who met my interview criteria, and e-mailed each one of them to explain in detail the nature of my study. I also disclosed their option to withdraw from the interview at any time of their choosing and apprised them of the confidentiality of this research. Only after informed consent was provided to me via email were the research participants able to start the interview process.

The participants had to answer basic qualitative open-ended questions. The answers the participants provided to the interview questions was the data I used to derive themes common to all of the participants and described San Bernardino employees' perception of common socioeconomic problems present in their community. I interviewed San Bernardino residents and obtained a subjective response that created an indication of a common need identified by San Bernardino residents. This was used to gain the attributes needed for analysis and explanation of the potential rewards or limitations they experienced from using public transportation.

Instrumentation

In accordance with the tradition of qualitative inquiry and according to Yin (2014), I was the primary instrument in gathering data for this study. I used my interview question sheet to read my questions to my research participants. I used a note pad to document the answers obtained from my interview. I also supplemented my documentation of the answers to my interview questions by using an audio-tape. My interviewees were local to San Bernardino.

During the interviews, I manually took notes, recorded the answers that I had, bracketed, or set aside, my own experience or assumption to avoid bias, as explained by Chan et al. (2013). I used concepts from my literature review, theoretical framework, and methodology of inquiry to formulate questions that would elicit enough information to be able me to answer my research question. I also used reflexive journaling to assess my own experience and to help me be cognizant of influencing this research in any way and took necessary action to eliminate. I established content validity by obtaining approval from my dissertation research committee and Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). My data collection through the answers to my 15 interview questions was sufficient to answer the research question. As a result, I was able to obtain data from research participants in San Bernardino and document all answers both in writing on a note pad and through the use of an audio-tape.

Procedures For Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

To recruit participants, I advertised the study in both a local paper and penny saver. I also posted recruitment flyers in locations such as bus stops, bus terminals and on bulletin boards of local San Bernardino libraries.

I collected data from research participants who were local to San Bernardino. I collected this data through the use of open ended interview questions written in English. The interviews were conducted remotely, over a social media platform, and outside of major holidays or work hours. Although in person interview was a preferable means for collecting in-depth data, the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated other remote arrangements.

I collected the data as soon as the research participant and I agreed on a mutually agreeable day and time. My data collection spanned a period of 45 to 75 minutes for each interview. I recorded the interviews on an audio tape, over the phone and manually on a notepad. One participant preferred to send me his written response to the interview questions via email. The other 15 participants took part in the phone interview. As the primary researcher, I was solely responsible for data collection. Upon the completion of my data collection, I provided each participant with a copy of their interview transcript to ensure that what I documented was what the respondent meant.

All participants were informed about the reason for this research study, apprised that they could quit participating at whatever point they chose, and that they would receive a copy of the interview to fact check that I had transcribed the data in the manner by which they intended. By making participants aware of the steps taken to ensure that their privacy and that their will to stop the interview process would be respected, data collection was facilitated. Follow-up interviews were not necessary.

Data Analysis Plan

This basic qualitative study with residents of San Bernardino was designed to examine how the existing transportation system in San Bernardino is meeting access needs of all members of a community at all times of employment operation. I started listening for codes and themes as I began my interview process. I interviewed 16 participants and transcribed then coded each interview. I self-transcribed the audio recorded interviews and consequently was able to repeat my transcription process at any time. As Philipp and Lauderdale (2017) suggested, taking notes and hand coding

amplifies the result of data analysis. I was therefore able to connect more with my participants and interpret what they disclosed, according to Saldana (2016). Due to the small number of participants, hand coding was my preferred method of analyzing the data obtained from the interviews. Furthermore, I was also motivated to use hand coding because my initial consideration for qualitative data analysis software, NVivo, was cost-prohibitive. Ultimately, I selected a more affordable qualitative data analysis software program called Quirkos to complement my primary use of use of hand coding to identify themes obtained from the respondents' answers, gestures, and their choice of words. Through the use of these themes, my data analysis was more comprehensive, the potential for biased results was lessened and the comprehensiveness, credibility, and accuracy of the research was increased. I used the data were used to understand what residents of San Bernardino identify as the employment accessibility needs of San Bernardino's economically disadvantaged better. As a result, I could potentially guide transportation policy and thereby address the socioeconomic needs of communities. I analyzed and managed data by analyzing the pattern of common themes. I transcribed all the data that were generated and stored them in data files to write my report. All my themes were generated from my interview questions and were viewed from the lens of CGT.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Several criteria must be met to ensure the quality of research, namely credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Shenton, 2004). I provided evidence that demonstrated that my study was credible, transferable, dependable and confirmable.

Credibility

Following Shenton (2004), I was credible and able to demonstrate that my research was void of bias and subjectivity. I provided the participants of my study with the option to receive a copy of this research to help them ensure that it reflected what they wanted to share, as suggested by Thomas (2017). As a result, I was able to validate my interpretation of the respondents' description of their answers to the interview questions, ensure credibility and trustworthiness. I obtained my data from interviewees who were local to the study area and who were aware of the study research question. I ensured that the data was obtained from a source with firsthand experience with the research question. I was therefore able to ensure credibility and attain trustworthiness. To obtain both credibility and trustworthiness, my method of obtaining data was through open-ended questions with my study participants, all of whom had firsthand knowledge of the topic of my research.

Transferability

To help ensure transferability, I provided thorough information about how I obtained my data and a description of the interview as advocated by Tracy and Hinrichs (2017). Also, as suggested by Hadi and Closs (2016), I explicitly provided my method of data analysis. By providing such elements in my research, it will facilitate future researchers to follow my steps of research in their studies. Transferability, similar to external validity in quantitative studies, was established by ensuring that my research questions and answers to these questions had a common theme which helped my method of analysis be easily followed. The transferability of the data collected was ensured by

using the qualitative data analysis software, Quirkos, and manual coding to code common themes which could easily undergo peer review.

Dependability

To answer the research question, I collected data through in-depth participant interviews. I relayed back data, analytical categories, interpretations and conclusions to my participants, which strengthened the data by ensuring that both the respondents and I agreed on what was said. If any of the participants objected to the accuracy of my transcribed interview, they would have been allowed to provide better wording that would more accurately reflect what they intended to say. To account for unclear responses given by the participants, where relevant I asked the participants to offer more clarification as soon as they provided an answer that I did not fully understand.

Confirmability

My primary tool for ensuring confirmability was the use of a reflexive journal. Throughout the research process, I used a personal journal to track my daily research-related activities which included documenting thoughts I had during the interview process, the data collection methods used, or my personal feelings. This journal kept me alert to potential bias that could occur. Confirmability of the data collected was further ensured by establishing an audit trail, via which I provided detailed information about each step throughout the research study.

Ethical Procedures

To ensure that this research was carried out ethically, the proposed study underwent review by Walden University's IRB (IRB Approval # 05-05-21-0558293).

This process entailed an ethics review of the research methods, including the participant recruitment strategies and the interview questions, and review of the informed consent form. The informed consent document informed participants about the study, what their participation would entail, and how their identity would be protected if they participated. As I discussed each of these elements of the study during the informed consent process, I provided participants with an opportunity to ask questions about the study before agreeing to participate. I also reassured them that, even if after they agreed to participate, they could stop participating in the study whenever they chose without any explanation, and that the security and privacy of all participants was guaranteed. To guarantee confidentiality, I did not disclose any identifying information about participants at any phase of the research.

It is important to point out that federal guidelines for human subjects research explicitly characterized vulnerable populations as pregnant women, kids, and detainees. While it was possible that some of my participants could have been pregnant, I did not deliberately recruit individuals from any vulnerable populations. Given that the interviewees were members of a socioeconomically disenfranchised population, their response to the interview questions may have been very personal and cause discomfort. I therefore took necessary steps to ensure that each participant's responses remained confidential and that I was the only person that knew their names.

The chosen participants were asked to sign informed consent forms, with signatures accepted electronically. Each participant had to review, sign, and verbally acknowledge their understanding of what the questions were to entail before the

interview started or data was collected. Except for one participant who chose to be interviewed via email, I conducted open-ended interviews via telephone call with each participant. All participants were assured that any identifying information linking them to any specific response would not be shared with any organization, publication or person. The participants were assured that their role in this study was to provide responses that would only be used in the context of this research. They were further reminded that they could end the interview at any time or change their responses as needed.

Participant responses remain in a password-protected computer to which only I have access. Similarly, all other materials, which included informed consent forms, notes, phone interview transcriptions, and all other forms of communication used for this dissertation, are also stored securely and only accessible by me for five years after the completion of this dissertation research. After this period, all materials used for this dissertation will be properly and thoroughly disposed of in accordance with the university's ethical research guidelines.

Finally, I avoided conflict of interest by conducting my study in my home office, without the assistance of friends or coworkers. I was the only keeper of the interview material. This level of assurance helped the respondents be forthcoming about their personal experiences and helped me obtain the responses that demonstrated the experience of my respondents.

Summary

This chapter focused on the study's basic qualitative research study methodology, which I used to examine how the existing transportation system met access needs of all

members of San Bernardino community members at all times of employment operation. I discussed why a basic qualitative approach aligned best with my method of data collection and framework. My framework of research aligned with my purpose which will ultimately help policymakers identify needed changes in society. My primary research tool was interview questionnaires. Interviews with residents of San Bernardino involved open ended questions that provided an array of answers to the interview questions. These answers helped address common transportation concerns in this research. In accordance with IRB guidelines, I conducted my research in a respectful and ethical manner. In Chapter 4, I will discuss how I analyzed the data and will present my results and evidence of trustworthiness.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this basic qualitative research study was to understand public transportation access needs of economically disadvantaged residents seeking job opportunities. To guide this study, I used the research question, How do economically disadvantaged residents of San Bernardino perceive access to public transportation during times when they need it for employment opportunities?

I presented the results of my study in Chapter 4. In this chapter, I presented my research setting, data collection strategies, data analysis procedures, evidence of trustworthiness and the results of the data analysis.

Setting

Consistent with qualitative inquiry, I conducted this research in the natural setting of the participants within the City of San Bernardino. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, all interaction with potential and eventual participants was required to be virtual. Ultimately, interviews took place by phone or email. I scheduled the interview sessions at a day and time that the participants chose.

Initially I intended to provide each participant with a \$10 Starbucks gift card or a \$10 Amazon certificate. When I experienced a whole month of nonresponse to my recruitment flyers and newspaper advertisement, I increased the compensation amount to \$20 and added a Walmart eGift card option. These two modifications resulted in greater interest in participating the study and facilitated participant recruitment.

I used an initial telephone call or typed communication to ensure that the participants provided the needed consent and they fully understood what the interview

process entailed. During this exchange, I also covered the rights of the participants to end the interview at any time of their choosing with no further questions asked of them. I provided the participants with the opportunity to speak freely and ask questions throughout the interviews. I encouraged each to select a convenient and private location to participate in the study. I suggested their home, library, or wherever else their full attention, privacy and identity would not be compromised.

During the actual interviews, I reminded participants that their responses were strictly confidential and that they could end the interview at any time of their choosing if they did not feel comfortable. By providing the participants with this level of assurance, they were comfortable in providing me with their full attention and proceeding with the interview process. Each was willing to disclose or discuss their lived experiences without reservation or hesitation.

Demographics

Of the 16 individuals who participated in this study, half (eight) were male and half (eight) were female. All participants were residents of San Bernardino. They had different employment opportunities, but all had experience using San Bernardino's public transportation system. Although I did not specifically ask participants about their socioeconomic status, based on the participation criteria in my recruitment materials, and on their interview responses I surmised that most of my interviewees either came from or were aware of the economically disadvantaged areas within San Bernardino.

Data Collection

The sample size for this study included 16 participants, whom I interviewed from July 4, 2021 to September 4, 2021. Participants responded to the flyers placed at bus stops and by word of mouth via participants who had been interviewed. No participant responded to the recruitment ad that I specifically placed in the local penny-saver newspaper. However, due to initial nonresponse, I modified the original incentive to participate by adding an option for a Walmart eGift card form of compensation. I also increased the amount of compensation from \$10 to \$20 for each type of gift card incentive. These IRB-approved modifications generated interest in the study and increased the response rate. Ultimately, 14 participants opted for the Walmart eGift card.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, all forms of interaction with the participants had to be virtual. After establishing initial contact with participants, I provided them with the option to be interviewed via Zoom, Skype, Instagram, or by phone. All but one participant opted for a phone interview. The outlier participant expressed personal reasons that prevented him from being interviewed by phone. In lieu of a phone interview, he emailed his responses to the interview questions to me.

I used TapeACall Pro to record the phone interviews, with the participants' permission. The telephonic interviews were conducted at a time of the respondent's choosing, which aligned with my availability. The telephonic interviews lasted between 45 and 60 minutes, depending on the participant's desire to elaborate or discuss in further detail ideas that went beyond my interview questions. The emailed response to the questions were also answered at a time of that respondent's choosing. In addition to the

main interview, I followed up with each participant a second time for member checking to verify their responses as needed. As a result, I was able to clarify what each interviewee meant to say.

Unusual Circumstances Encountered in Data Collection

The data collection procedures involved placing recruitment flyers in bus stop areas in the early morning and late evening hours of the day. Some people use these areas to seek shelter. Many of the individuals whom I encountered in the bus stop areas appeared to be homeless. Others may have been unemployed because some of these individuals were under the impression that I was posting applications for employment opportunities.

Data Analysis

I used an inductive analysis approach, as suggested by Kostere and Kostere (2022) to identify common themes across participants in this study. To prepare for data analysis, I manually transcribed each interview in Microsoft Word. Then, I read each transcript five times to familiarize myself with the participants' words. Due to the small number of interviewees, hand coding was my preferred method for analyzing the transcripts. During my first cycle of coding, I used hand coding to help me establish a basic framework for the next round of coding. It helped me identify themes obtained from the respondents' answers, tone of voice, and their choice of word. However, to complement my hand coding, I also used the qualitative data analysis software, Quirkos, for subsequent coding cycles as a convenient and efficient way to organize and manage the transcript data, establish an audit trail, and create useful illustrations of the output.

Before I began my first cycle of hand coding, I organized my interview questions into groups, which reflected general ideas or concepts, which were embedded in the research purpose of the study (see Table 1). Consistent with basic qualitative research inquiry and as explained by Koster and Kostere (2022), aside from those general concepts, I did not attempt to fit the data into preexisting categories. Then I used Quirkos to further analyze the participant transcripts to refine the initial codes. I uploaded each interview transcript into the Quirkos database to begin the analysis process. I arranged the transcripts on the right side of the Quirkos screen and an empty “canvas” (a blank workspace within the Quirkos platform) on the left side of the screen. As I read participant responses to the interview questions, using the computer mouse I highlighted then dragged sections of text which were relevant to the various common themes or ideas. In Quirkos, these themes or ideas are called quirks and are visually represented as a colored bubble on the Quirkos canvas. As I dragged relevant phrases from the interview transcripts onto the corresponding quirk on the canvas, the colored bubbles expanded in size.

Table 1*Interview Questions and Embedded Concepts Related to the Research Purpose*

General concepts	Corresponding interview question
Basic or fundamental needs of economically disadvantaged	Q1: What do you think are the socioeconomic needs of San Bernardino residents? Q3: Describe the needs of the disadvantaged and low-skilled residents of San Bernardino
Experience with public transportation	Q2: How would you describe your experience using public transportation? Q12: Describe the role transportation plays in the lives of those looking for a job. Q13: What changes to the availability of public transportation would you suggest the transportation authority of San Bernardino do in order for the disenfranchised and low-skilled residents of San Bernardino benefit from?
Access to public transportation	Q6: Describe changes, if any, that could be made in public transportation that could help with the employability of the disenfranchised residents of San Bernardino? Q10: Explain how public transportation public transportation could help the disenfranchised and low-skilled get to their job opportunities.
Employment and job opportunities for economically disadvantaged	Q4: Describe how a disenfranchised and low-skilled resident of San Bernardino can reach areas of employment. Q5: What in your opinion and could improve the underemployment prevalent in San Bernardino? Q7: Explain what you think job seekers in San Bernardino need to help get work. Q8: How, in your opinion, can people of your community need to keep a job? Q9: What changes do you think have to be made in San Bernardino's public transportation to get to employment opportunities? Q11: Describe potential hardships in securing employment? Q15: Explain what people looking for a job need to get a job.

Using this process of reviewing and rereviewing transcripts in conjunction with the interview question categories, my data analysis moved inductively. My data analysis moved from coded units to larger representations, including categories and themes, as follows.

At the outset of my first cycle of coding, given the research focus of the study on access to public transportation, I anticipated that transportation would be the most commonly occurring word in the transcripts. As a result, in my first cycle of coding I simply highlighted the number of times (294) the word “transportation” appeared. Next, I went on to my second cycle of coding to look for refinement and found that many participants emphasized the concept of cheap transportation. As a result, I created an additional code to reflect instances where participants mentioned cheap transportation either explicitly or implicitly. I considered implicit instances of cheap transportation to be times when a participant mentioned the specific phrase public transportation and coded those terms/phrases as cheap transportation. For example, Participant 13 pointed out that “The low skilled and disadvantaged need all the help they can get to rise out of poverty and by this I would say they need cheap public transportation and reliable pick and drop of times.” Similarly, I regarded public transportation as being the cheaper alternative to private. After refining the initial code “transportation,” I coded for cheap transportation 97 times of the 294 initial codes for transportation.

Further refinement of the code “transportation” resulted in coding for the term bus. I applied this code when respondents specifically referred to a bus or bus stop, such

as when Participant 11 stated that “I have to walk in addition to ride the bus to make it to work since the bus stop is not that close to work.” Or, when Participant 4 stated,

I find it hard missing out on going to job on time because I couldn’t make the connection. Also, it would help if buses were there when you need them. Our buses are not around all the time when work wants us to report.

After this round of refinement, the code bus accounted for 77 of the original 294 codes for transportation. After refining the initial coding for transportation, the resulting frequency for transportation in general was 120 codes.

As I continued to code interview transcripts, I listened to the word usage and what my interviewees were referring to. I coded for “needs” when my participants explicitly used the word “needs” regardless of the context or type of need (such as employment, transportation, childcare, and so forth). For example, Participant 11 said they “will need a good resume if their work is an office type work.” Likewise, Participant 13 observed the “need to have and be able to present their knowledge and skills to potential employers.” These two answers reflect some of the job-related needs that were identified by the participants. Other coding examples of needs were reflected when participants identified basic needs, such as Participant 6’s observation that “we need more services, for example we need transportation, childcare, elderly care and low income homes.” I also coded transportation-related needs as needs, such as when Participant 10 pointed that “A reliable bus schedule, more bus routes and definitely more bus times are needed.”

When I was coding for the term “access,” I applied it to instances when the respondent specifically mentioned the word “access” or variations such as “accessible,”

such as Participant 10's statement that residents need "accessible public transportation." Similarly, when participants implied access or accessibility, I coded phrases such as "close proximity" as access. For example, Participant 13 suggested that "Changes could include transportation that not only is timely but would transport people within close proximity to work."

When exploring participant responses to the I coded for jobs when participants explicitly mentioned the words "jobs," "employment," or "work" or phrases related to those terms, such as when Participant 16 pointed out that "people of San Bernardino need better employment opportunities." Participant 15 added that "we have jobs that are open for 24 hours/day and yet we don't have public transportation to take us to those jobs."

During the first few cycles of coding, I focused primarily on noticing and identifying the general ideas and concepts embedded in the research purpose statement. Subsequently, I noticed that some participants raised concerns related to issues that were not the primary focus of my study, specifically safety and childcare/elderly care support. Even though these concerns did not arise frequently, I considered them potentially relevant given that much of the needed public transportation was during late night or very early morning hours when existing public transportation was not available to residents who needed it. For example, Participant 4 said they "require security in transportation", while Participant 9 expressed the desire for "a bus stop that is well illuminated."

I was not expecting participants to raise concerns about childcare and elderly care in response to interview questions that primarily focused on transportation and job

issues. However, clearly those considerations were salient for some participants who observed the need for themselves or recognized it in others. For example, when asked about the socioeconomic or job-related needs of San Bernardino residents, Participant 12 said “We need better access to all job opportunities as well as better service to help out with childcare and the elderly while we work.” Similarly, Participant 9 suggested that “Childcare and elder care would help people feel more comfortable in accepting all positions they can get.” Although I took note of these three unexpected concepts, I did not further analyze them because they did not relate to my research question.

Both manual coding and coding with Quirkos resulted in four major themes and two subthemes across the participants’ responses (*transportation, cheap transportation, bus, needs, access, jobs*) which are summarized in Table 2. These themes facilitated data interpretation, lessened the potential for biased results, and increased the comprehensiveness, credibility, and accuracy of research. In this way, I was able to better understand what residents of San Bernardino identified as the employment accessibility needs of San Bernardino’s economically disadvantaged individuals. This degree of investigation helped produce precise, tenable, exhaustive, comprehensive, and unprejudiced discoveries of themes that were common to both methods of analysis using hand coding and Quirkos coding. I reached data saturation with the 16 respondents, after which no new themes emerged.

Table 2*Coding Frequency of Key Quirks*

Quirk (theme)	Frequency of occurrence (after final coding cycle)	Percentage of occurrence of code	Example quote
Transportation (in general)	120	22.1%	“Public transportation is my only way of getting to work.”
Cheap transportation	97	18.0%	“...need cheap public transportation and reliable pick and drop of times.”
Bus	77	14.2%	“I have to walk in addition to ride the bus to make it to work since the bus stop is not that close to work.”
Needs	75	13.8%	“...need transportation that would take me to the job I need to go to, when I need.”
Access	56	10.3%	“It’s hard when the jobs are not close to our bus stops.”
Jobs	117	21.6%	“People of San Bernardino need better employment opportunities.”
Total codes after all coding cycles completed	542	100%	

Ultimately, four major themes (transportation, needs, access and jobs) and two subthemes (cheap transportation and bus transportation) emerged from the participant interviews (see Table 2). Table 2 summarizes the most common quirks as well as the number of occurrences of the corresponding codes. This degree of investigation helped produce precise, tenable, exhaustive, comprehensive, and unprejudiced discoveries of themes that were common to both methods of analysis using hand coding and Quirkos coding.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

In Chapter 3, I drew attention to the importance of measures used to ensure trustworthiness. To demonstrate trustworthiness in this study, I used four criteria, specifically, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility

Credibility is when there is a conscious description of a phenomenon and the production of believable research findings (Liao & Hitchcock, 2018). To demonstrate credibility, I shared quotes taken directly from participants' own words. By doing this, according to Chenail (2011), researcher bias is minimized. I observed repetitive patterns of consistency amongst my codes. Due to the small sample size, I was able to use both hand coding and the software Quirkos. Hand coding initially helped me analyze the data obtained from the interviews. Quirkos helped me refine and confirm codes and identify common themes. These themes facilitated my data analysis, lessened the potential for biased results, and increased the comprehensiveness, credibility, and accuracy of research.

Transferability

Transferability reflects that there is sufficient information provided such that this research study could be replicated elsewhere. To attain transferability, I made sure that I provided a clear description of my research in Chapters 2 and 4, that I also provided my data collection steps and interview questions (see Appendix B), and my audit trail of work on Quirkos, which included the logical steps I took to derive and analyze my codes. Transferability was obtained by ensuring that my interview questions and answers to these questions have a common theme which helped my method of analysis be easily followed. Transferability was further enhanced by using manual coding, in conjunction with Quirkos qualitative data analysis software, to code common themes which could easily undergo peer review.

Dependability

I anticipated that the data collected from my interviews would help me answer my research question. I expected my process of analysis to be aligned with my research design. These two elements helped to assure dependability. These methods used in this study were expected to be sufficient to collect the needed data to answer my research question.

Confirmability

Research objectivity is important (Lawton-Sticklor & Bodamer, 2016; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I ensured confirmability of the data by using my reflective journal, manual coding and coding with Quirkos, to identify common themes which were and could easily be examined along with my journal. This journal helped me identify potential bias that

could occur throughout the data collection and data analysis process. Remaining neutral is critical for demonstrating confirmability and was evident in my decision making process, and how I managed my data and the resulting findings (Korstjens & Moser, 2017). The journal also held me accountable and helped to ensure the transferability of my research. Additionally, I used direct quotes from my participants which supported the answers to my interview questions. By using these direct quotes during my data analysis, I limited the potential for researcher bias and captured the data from the firsthand description of the participants.

Results

Consistent with a basic qualitative study research design, I organized the results of the analysis according to the overarching themes, which emerged from the participants' responses to the interview questions. These questions were designed to answer my research question, How do economically disadvantaged resident of San Bernardino perceive access to public transportation during times when they need it for employment opportunities?

Theme 1 and Subthemes: Transportation (Including Transportation, Cheap Transportation, and Bus)

Transportation-related codes comprised 294 of the total number of codes applied during the data analysis. While the codes *transportation*, *cheap transportation* and *bus* are separate codes, they have the same overriding purpose of getting residents and employees to similar destinations of employment.

Participants emphasized the necessity of transportation running 24 hours per day to get them to places of employment, like “Amazon which is open 24 hours and public transportation is not”, as Participant 4 pointed out. Participant 4 further elaborated on the requirement that the “bus (be) on time to get you to work when you need.” Given that the cost of transportation is higher for some residents, participants such as Participant 5, resonated the specific need for “cheap public transportation like buses that [they] can take to go to work.” Furthermore, some participants did not have a car or other means of getting to work, such as Participant 11 who fully relied on “better public transportation which has more routes, more stops, and closer stops to work and also to homes.” Participant 4 also offered the need for “better bus stops with seat covers if there is a wait for the next bus.” Participant 11 wanted “to see public transportation offered at longer hours.” Due to restricted transportation hours, Participant 13 shared, “I had to either go to work earlier or return from work later as I had to walk from the bus stop to my work.”

Participant 13 succinctly captured what all the other respondents expressed in one way or another: “The low-skilled and disadvantaged need all the help they can get to rise out of poverty and by this I would say they need cheap public transportation.” To fulfil this need, the general consensus seemed to be that the operating time of public transportation should align with the operating times for all employment opportunities.

All forms of transportation, public transportation, cheap transportation and the bus were identified by San Bernardino residents as the prime requirement for economically disadvantaged residents to get to employment opportunities. According to Participant 1, “Basically transportation, whether it’s public or private. We don’t have or can afford

having our own vehicle. Our city is not up to standard to get to and from work.”

Participant 4 resonated the same concern that “Public transportation is my only way of getting to work.” All forms of transportation, which were mentioned by participants serve a common good that each and all participants benefit from.

Theme 2: Needs

All of the participants identified at least one “need.” Across all interviews, “needs” was coded 75 times. These needs varied yet were pronounced. Participant 4 emphasized that “We need work, work, work” because “I have a family that needs me so working here is very important for me”. Participant 4 added that “we need to find a job that’s close to us and find a way of getting to work on time”. I coded “need” whenever the word “need” was mentioned.

Participant 2 stressed the need for “more bus running times” which I interpreted as a need for improvement or accessibility to busses. Participant 2 echoed the need for “More public transportation. More accessibility to stops, quicker time to Public Transportation”. Participant 5 said they “need jobs that pay” to “get to wherever they want”. A lot of participants’ needs centered around work. Participant 10 shared that “more reliable and accessible public transportation” was needed “to getting to work on time.” Participant 13 pointed out that “ job seekers need the convenience of getting to work in a dignified manner.” Participant 14 stated that “We need more and better accessibility to jobs”. When asked to clarify, they added “transportation that would take me to the job I need to go to, when I need.” Similarly, Participant 4 voiced that what people looking for a job need in order to get a job “is a bus to take them where they want

to go and bring them back on time.” Participant 15 agreed that “We need public transportation to provide longer terms of service” and added that it is because they “need public transportation that operates at all hours of employment opportunities.”

Participant 15 also mentioned the “need to have the skills needed for a job to be able to compete for the job”. Participant 16 similarly suggested that residents “need more jobs, better education, affordable housing and public transportation” and went on to add “More public and transportation to get to the more affluent areas that have the higher paying jobs.” Participant 1 acknowledged the need for “opportunities which are employment, and employment needs to be good wage paying employment to live and survive off.” Participant 8 disclosed that “low skilled need training” to facilitate being marketable. According to Participant 11,

We need public transportation to operate longer hours, for example if should operate when employment is open, such as Amazon that’s open 24/7 while public transportation isn’t. It makes no sense why city would have services that don’t really go all the way of living up to their name.

When I asked Participant 11 to clarify what they meant by services “living up to their name”, they clarified “public transportation should at the very least offer us with transportation to our places of employment.”

The participants agreed on the need for employment opportunities in general and the affordable means of reaching such opportunities. However, they also acknowledged that they may not even have sufficient qualifications for some job opportunities and therefore agreed that there is also a need for education opportunities to meet their

employment needs. There is a call for transportation service that operates 24 hours a day, in light of employment that operates for 24 hours/day, such as Amazon.

Participants agreed that they could not afford to supplement transportation with other modes of transportation such as a private car, taxi or Uber. They disclosed the need for the transportation service to be affordable. When I asked participants “What do you think are the socioeconomic needs of San Bernardino residents?”, almost all the respondents mentioned the need for some form of transportation. These lower income residents of San Bernardino all attested to the influence of the availability of transportation. These needs resonate with the concepts of the common good theory as each of the disclosed needs of the participants reflected a basic and common need.

Theme 3: Access

The theme of “access” was based on 56 coded instances of access-related responses. I coded “access” when the term was used explicitly by a participant, when it was implied by the participants or when I inferred that the participant was referring to “access,” such as when Participant 10 expressed being “let down when the bus doesn’t drop me off close to my work and I have to either take an uber or taxi to ensure I get to work on time”.

Residents need “more access to routes,” according to Participant 2, because as Participant 4 shared, “It’s hard when the jobs are not close to our bus stops.” Participant 9 added “We have public transportation but it doesn’t take me where I want and need to go for work.” Participant 9 elaborated that “Bus stops have to be easy to get to and not be located in an unsafe area which could deter the disadvantaged from accessing.” In

general, all participants voiced the necessity for better accessibility to transportation to go to the job they need to go to at the required times of employment. The participants shared with me the hardships they faced in terms of access to and from employment opportunities. According to Participant 3, San Bernardino's employees need "more accessibility" and "more accessibility to stops". Being able to get to work at a decent time to ensure they kept the employment, would be difficult if the residents did not have access to transportation. Without access to where the participants need to reach their needed transportation or areas of employment, they are being denied access to a basic common good that is otherwise accessible to residents who can afford alternative transportation.

Theme 4: Jobs

The participants shared that jobs are one of the most significant needs for the city and economy of San Bernardino and its residents.

The code "job" appeared 94 times across all interviews. Participants shared job-related concerns, including a lack of available jobs, inability to access existing jobs, insufficient training to qualify for existing jobs. Participant 4 admitted that it they "need jobs that pay and that we can get to whenever (we) want. It's hard not being able to go to work and not get the money we need to live." They do not want to go somewhere else looking for a job because it takes time to get there and that they need to find a job that is close to them. Residents need "jobs, close jobs and plenty of ways to get to those jobs," according to Participant 5, who also noted that their "jobs will remain lower paying if

they can't get to better paying jobs". According to Participant 10, they find that some residents are unable to claim availability to employment opportunities because the

People in my community could keep a job if the transportation they take doesn't fail them. I mean, if the transportation is predictable, cheap, and actually is there to make sure it's respectful of their time. If extra routes need to be added to secure pick up and drop off times are within reason of when work is open and when work closes, members of my community would be more likely to keep a job.

They have to take into account when the bus is running, and therefore cannot accept employment when they cannot guarantee transportation to employment opportunities at the operating hours of public transportation. Some participants mentioned the need for employment opportunities for which they are skilled and that are open for longer hours. As Participant 14 shared, "Not having a way of getting to employment opportunities on time is a potential hardship in securing employment." Employment and the means of getting to work is something that the interviewees were concerned about. In fact, when explicitly asked what job seekers in San Bernardino need to help get work, Participant 11's response captured that common concern when they said San Bernardino residents "need a cheap way to get to work whenever there is work...cheap or free public transportation that works for 24 hours if there is work opportunity." Participants indicated that the economically disadvantaged residents of San Bernardino need employment to survive and care for their dependents. This need resonates with the concepts of the common good theory that everyone is entitled to a job.

Summary

The research question for this study was, How do economically disadvantaged residents of San Bernardino perceive access to public transportation during times when they need it for employment opportunities? I used basic qualitative inquiry and research design to explore participants' responses to open-ended questions about fundamental needs, experience with public transportation, ideal changes to public transportation, and access to employment and job opportunities. Using both hand-coding and qualitative analysis software to code and analyze interview transcripts, I identified four primary themes and two subthemes. I presented evidence of trustworthiness throughout my data analysis procedure as seen in my efforts taken to ensure credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of data. In Chapter 5, I provided my interpretation of the findings of Chapter 4, limitations of the study, my recommendations for future scholars and finally the social change implications I foresee of the study.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand public transportation access needs of economically disadvantaged San Bernardino residents seeking job opportunities. I examined how the existing transportation system is meeting access needs of all members of a community at all times of employment operation. I used a basic qualitative research approach for this study because I was able to understand experiences from the interviewee's point of view, which I then used to generate themes about inequitable access to public transportation in San Bernardino, California. Previous studies supported that the accessibility of public transportation would help those of low salary to get to employment opportunities (Blumenberg & Pierce, 2016). My research confirmed that transportation is an essential component to assist San Bernardino's disenfranchised population access potential job opportunities.

I conducted qualitative open-ended interviews with members of the San Bernardino community to understand what they perceive as needs of San Bernardino's disenfranchised community. I collected my data from 16 participants through open-ended interviews on the accessibility to public transportation (see Appendix B). I used the results of this qualitative study regarding the effect of accessibility of public transportation in San Bernardino to answer the research question of this study: How do economically disadvantaged residents of San Bernardino perceive access to public transportation during times when they need it for employment opportunities?

These participants also disclosed how employment needs were met or could be facilitated with public transportation. They highlighted how transportation could be a

vital component of a socioeconomic problem because the availability of work opportunities is expanding for low-skilled and jobless people in San Bernardino, yet the methods for getting to such jobs are either insufficient or not available at all. Regardless of the expansion in employment opportunities, which would benefit the disenfranchised population of San Bernardino, many residents did not have the money needed to access potential job opportunities, which was substantiated by members of my study who revealed this shortcoming.

My goal was to describe and make meaning of the personal accounts of the participants who directly described access issues with public transportation during the times of day when economic opportunities are available to them. Researchers have not been successful in identifying the role of accessible public transportation in improving the socioeconomic wellbeing of San Bernardino. In this study, I filled this gap in scholarly research. I used a basic qualitative methodology to inquire and gain an understanding of the needs of this population. I use the common good framework to demonstrate the shared benefits that communities will attain when working together for a common socioeconomic objective. Respondents voiced how transportation would facilitate or open opportunities for employment. Implications for positive social change include the recognition of methods to help alleviate a socioeconomic problem affecting a city and a population.

Interpretation of the Findings

Theme 1: Transportation (With Subthemes Transportation, Cheap Transportation, and Bus)

All forms of transportation, but specifically public transportation, cheap transportation, and the bus were identified by San Bernardino residents as their prime need. In fact, Participant 10 pointed out that, “The low-skilled and disadvantaged need all the help they can get to rise out of poverty and by this I would say they need cheap public transportation.” Without transportation, economically disadvantaged residents in San Bernardino cannot reach employment opportunities. San Bernardino residents especially need cheap and timely transportation and a way to reach that transportation. Some participants did not have a car or other means of getting to work. Participant 11 stated that what was needed was, “better public transportation which has more routes, more stops, and closer stops to work and also to homes.” Transportation that is accessible to all is a common good that would help some more than others but nevertheless is a common good for all in a society. By having the disadvantaged partake in transportation services that they use for their socioeconomic benefit, society as a whole will benefit.

Transportation is a service that is beneficial to all members of a community (Mele, 2009, as cited in Albareda & Sison, 2020), and as such is a common good supported by the common good theory.

Theme 2: Needs

The interview revealed many needs of San Bernardino residents. These needs were primarily centered around jobs. Participants needed better transportation to “get to

wherever they want,” according to Participant 4. They also were cognizant of their need for employment opportunities which they felt they could not partake in as a result of insufficient transportation at the time that they needed it and as noted by Participant 9, felt that “there’ll be a need for a supplemental transportation option, such as private car, train, or bus service.” Economically disadvantaged residents of San Bernardino are unlikely able to afford the extra cost of transportation, which was implied by my research participants. There is a fear, concern, or uncertainty of not having predictable transportation system for something basic and essential as transportation for the common need of employment opportunity. Many participants who had to take care of their elderly family members or children had a difficult time managing this hardship with their jobs. It is not only a common need of residents who have to take care of children or elderly family members but also a common good for the entire working population who rely on public transportation to transport them away from their families to their places of employment to be financially contributing members of society.

Theme 3: Access

To reach their final work destination, San Bernardino residents need access to an effective and efficient means of transportation that would take them there. Participant 15 shared that, “getting to the bus stop or work shouldn’t have to involve uber or the like because it would just not be realistically practical.” Participant 15 further lamented that “it’s hard being dropped off by the bus and not being able to find a seamless and timely connection to the train.” This similar lack of access created a problem for Participant 14 who “can’t fully rely on public transportation alone to drop me close enough to work or

even on time.” Participant 13 noted that disadvantaged residents of San Bernardino require accessible public transportation that would take them “to and from work in the least amount of time.” The disadvantaged residents do not want to be further compromised by having to wait long hours for public transportation and still need additional time to walk long distances before reaching their final destination.

The community of San Bernardino clearly is facing hardships that the more affluent/not disenfranchised members of San Bernardino do not face (Allen & Farber, 2019). Transportation in a community would create more access to employment opportunities and would result in a community that is able to manage its socioeconomic needs. Transportation is a common good that governments need to provide for the benefit of the whole society and residents of San Bernardino.

Theme 4: Jobs

All members of a community require employment opportunities to support their basic needs. Participant 4 expressed that it is “hard not being able to go to work and not get the money we need to live.” There was a common concern among participants that low wage employment is a consequence of not being able to get to higher paying jobs.

Participant 8 was even more poignant, noting that,

transportation plays an important role, it allows you to get back to work, job interview and school. That’s why people without transportation have a more difficult time keeping and securing employment. I know people who lost work because couldn’t get to work on time. So (lack of) public transportation gives a myriad of problems.

When San Bernardino's disadvantaged community is employed, the reward of this employment would extend to their dependents. Employment is a common good that will result in a better socioeconomic community for all to enjoy its rewards. Society requires all of its members to contribute to and benefit from the common good. Better transportation services will likely help the disenfranchised community of San Bernardino attain employment opportunities. The attainment of job opportunities is a common good, which people can reach with transportation, the benefits of which is a common good to the whole of society.

Limitations of the Study

Limitations of this research included the choice to employ a basic qualitative research study. Basic qualitative inquiry is a relatively new method of research with limited methodological guidance and does not have a well-defined structure (Mohamed Shaffril et al., 2021). This limitation of basic qualitative research made this research approach not as methodologically robust as other major qualitative research approaches such as case studies, narrative inquiry, phenomenology, and ethnographic research. I also had no prior experience conducting qualitative interviews, which resulted in my preference for conducting individual semistructured interviews.

I analyzed the entire data were analyzed alone and, as such, was not influenced by another person's perspective. As a researcher who is employed in the California Department of Transportation, it was critical that I continually kept potential bias in check by using a reflexive journaling technique and coding of data to address this potential limitation.

The socioeconomic welfare of the San Bernardino community is unique to that community and could be a result of its history and political circumstances. The potential difficulty in applying this research in other metropolitan areas is therefore a limitation of this research. Furthermore, as is common with most qualitative methods of inquiry, my study involved a small sample size, which further limits generalizability.

Finally, I conducted this research during the COVID-19 pandemic, which restricted participation to virtual data collection. I was not permitted, by Walden's IRB, to conduct in-person interviews. Instead, I provided participants with alternative interview settings via a social media platform such as Zoom, by phone, or by email. Had there been no COVID-based restrictions and participants were interviewed in person, it is likely that the interviews would have resulted in more one-on-one engagement with the participants, lasted longer and potentially resulted in more in-depth responses.

Recommendations

This study provided insights on what economically disadvantaged San Bernardino residents perceive as needs of their city. Although these needs are specific to San Bernardino residents, they may be similar to most other urban cities that have experienced dire economic hardships. Based on these insights, which were evidenced in participants' responses, recommendations were made and four key themes were identified. The research question was centered on perceptions about public transportation access in a specific context, i.e., available transportation that coincided with available job opportunities for which economically disadvantaged San Bernardino residents qualified. I used all my themes to answer my research question: How do economically disadvantaged

residents of San Bernardino perceive access to public transportation during times when they need it for employment opportunities?

Theme 1: Transportation (With Subthemes Transportation, Cheap Transportation, and Bus)

Participants shared that transportation was essential for them in the pursuit of their financial well-being. Transportation that was cheap, available, accessible to them and their jobs was pivotal to the economically disadvantaged participants. Many economically disadvantaged people did not have an alternate way of accessing their areas of employment opportunities. They required cheap transportation which was in the form of public transportation and bus which operated on a timely basis. To operate at all hours of employment opportunities, employees had to feel safe in using transportation at all of its hours of operation.

Theme 2: Needs

The general concept of needs was interwoven throughout participants' responses. Residents expressed the need for jobs, for education/job and skills training, for affordable housing, for accessible, affordable and safe transportation, and for child and elderly care. The specific need upon which this study was based, access to public transportation, seemed to be integral to all of those general needs that residents desire and which are embedded in the general concept of the common good framework.

Theme 3: Access

The results of this research suggest that participants perceive access to satisfactory public transportation is pivotal to accessing employment, which subsequently

will position them to address many of the other needs they expressed. If they have access to reliable and affordable public transportation they can access job opportunities, which will enable them to meet their other needs.

Theme 4: Jobs

Respondents said that needed jobs to pursue their financial well-being.

Transportation that was cheap, accessible, and that ultimately took employees to their jobs was a very significant consideration of the respondents. They needed accessible transportation that would ultimately take them to their job opportunities.

I took these key themes into consideration and offered these three practical recommendations:

1. Improved transportation operating times. Interviewees voiced the need for transportation which operates 24 hours per day to get them at work which operates at similar hours. The transportation in a city must meet the needs of its residents especially when its residents are financially marginalized and cannot afford to supplement public transportation with other sources of transportation.
2. Safe transportation and safe access to transportation. Participants not only expressed the need for better and reliable transportation but also for safe transportation, particularly around bus stops. This concern was voiced by many who expressed the need for well-lit streets to help all potential employees get to their job destinations and also to help the elderly. The disabled or those of poor vision would also benefit from well-lit streets.

3. More access points of transportation. More access points would ensure that using public transportation would not pose unnecessary hardships on those trying to get to work on time. Residents need to be able to make seamless trips without transportation gaps that leave them stranded before reaching their final destination, whether that destination is their job or their home.

Implications for Positive Social Change

Understanding the public transportation problem in San Bernardino as it affects the economically disadvantaged can help create positive social change highlighting other necessities affecting San Bernardino's residents. Positive social change will come when government bodies recognize the methods that could help alleviate a socioeconomic problem affecting San Bernardino and its residents.

Using the common good framework, I identified the shared benefits that communities can attain when working together for a common socioeconomic objective. San Bernardino residents shared their need for employment opportunities, and the transportation that would take them to these opportunities.

The public transportation accessibility problem that San Bernardino's residents highlighted, when addressed, could help them secure employment opportunities and in doing so could care for the most vulnerable, the elderly and children. These are shared benefits that will lead to positive social change when communities and their governing bodies work together for a common socioeconomic objectives.

This study laid the foundation for future scholarly studies to build and benefit from. I am optimistic that the socioeconomic conditions of San Bernardino will improve,

driving the need for the updated scholarly studies that better pertain to San Bernardino's socioeconomic condition.

Conclusion

There is a goal that communities all over the world strive to reach. This is a universal common good, explored one community at a time. The interest of communities all over the world encompass employment that communities can have an equal opportunity in partaking in.

Employment falls short of providing community members with a sense of accomplishment, when the employment is not available or the means of reaching the areas of employment are not accessible. This does not have to be the case when the problem is understood and acted on to improve it. San Bernardino suffered the closure of areas of employment which had sustained the residents of San Bernardino and left many unemployed. Unfortunately, this came hand in hand with the city filing for bankruptcy. Now, new employment opportunities are opening in the San Bernardino area and the community is eager to pursue these opportunities. The results of this research revealed that San Bernardino residents want employment availability and access to employment opportunities. They need transportation that will take them there at all the hours of employment. This is in synergy with the socioeconomic well-being of not only the residents but with the city as a whole which will derive the needed financial security in the form of taxes from both the employers and also the residents of San Bernardino.

Addressing the needs of one community at a time will result in the common good of an even larger scope. There is a chance in San Bernardino to use the call of its

residents for a common good. This is the right time for San Bernardino to take advantage of the common call of its residents with the job opportunities that have identified San Bernardino as their operating base. An improvement of public transportation that meets the needs of employers and commuters could not come at a better time. The San Bernardino residents who participated in this study identified how employment needs could be facilitated with adequate and accessible public transportation. Their perceptions and experience illustrated that transportation could be a vital component of a socioeconomic solution because the quantity of work openings is expanding for low-skilled and jobless people in San Bernardino, yet the means for getting to such job are lacking or insufficient. Regardless of the expansion in employment opportunities, which would benefit the disenfranchised population of San Bernardino, numerous residents simply do not have the money needed to access potential job opportunities. When the needs of communities are understood and acknowledged, addressing them will be simplified. It will be the common good not for one individual or community but for the entire society.

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Appendix A: Participant Recruitment Advertisement

My name is Maggi Elgeziry and I am a doctoral candidate at Walden University. I am conducting dissertation research on the availability and accessibility of public transportation and whether it addresses the needs of the community in San Bernardino, California. I am interested in hearing what you have to say with regards to the aforementioned topic.

If you experience that lack of access to public transportation has made it difficult to reach job opportunities, I would be very interested in conducting a web-based interview with you. This interview would last approximately 45- 75 minutes.

Please contact me at your earliest convenience to schedule a date and time that we can meet to conduct an open-ended interview. My telephone number is XXXX. You can also email me at XXXX. I look forward to hearing from you.

Maggi Elgeziry

Doctoral Candidate

Walden University

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Specific aims: To obtain a better understanding of the needs of San Bernardino's disenfranchised community.

Date: _____

Sex: F__M__

Introduction and interview: Share with me how much you know about the availability and accessibility of public transportation and whether it addresses the needs of the community in San Bernardino, California

Questions:

1. What do you think are the socioeconomic needs of San Bernardino residents?
2. How would you describe your experience using public transportation?
3. Describe the needs of the disadvantaged and low-skilled residents of San Bernardino
4. Describe how a disenfranchised and low-skilled resident of San Bernardino can reach areas of employment.
5. What in your opinion and could improve the underemployment prevalent in San Bernardino?
6. Describe changes, if any, that could be made in public transportation that could help with the employability of the disenfranchised residents of San Bernardino?
7. Explain what you think job seekers in San Bernardino need to help get work.
8. How, in your opinion, can people of your community need to keep a job?
9. What changes do you think have to be made in San Bernardino's public transportation to get to employment opportunities?

10. Explain how public transportation public transportation could help the disenfranchised and low-skilled get to their job opportunities.
11. Describe potential hardships in securing employment?
12. Describe the role transportation plays in the lives of those looking for a job.
13. What changes to the availability of public transportation would you suggest the transportation authority of San Bernardino do in order for the disenfranchised and low-skilled residents of San Bernardino benefit from?
14. What is your experience using public transportation to get to work?
15. Explain what people looking for a job need to get a job.