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Walden University

College of Education

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LaShan M. Lovelace

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
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Walden University
2022

Abstract

Exploring the Role of Student Conduct Administrators in Holistic Student Development and Student Success

by
LaShan M. Lovelace

Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Education

Walden University
June 2022

Abstract

Student conduct is a critical element of student development. The problem investigated by this study was that monetary fines as a punitive sanction tend to be overly represented in the student attrition group at the study site. The purpose of this study was to investigate how students and student conduct administrators (SCAs) at the study site perceive monetary sanctions and explore possible consequences of monetary sanctions on holistic student development and student success. The conceptual framework that guided this study was the model of transformational change for moral action. This study utilized a basic qualitative research design with research questions that explore how student conduct participants perceive the consequences of punitive monetary sanctions and how they perceive monetary sanctions as promoting holistic student development and student success. This study utilized semistructured interviews with 12 total participants (*n* = 12) comprised of eight students and four SCAs. Thematic analysis of the interview transcripts were analyzed to discover codes, common themes, and patterns linked to the research questions. Four major themes were identified, revealing that punitive monetary sanctions hold no educational value, do not transform relationships with administration, do not promote holistic development, and create barriers for holistic student development and student success. The results of this project study led to a position paper elucidating study outcomes and recommendations for professional development and assessment programs for SCAs. These programs could lead to positive social change by increasing SCA awareness, advocacy, and accountability through transformational leadership, further solidifying the role of SCAs in holistic student development and student success.

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Dedication

While I had known for years that I wanted to pursue a doctoral degree, I had no idea the sacrifice it would take. I have spent over five years of my life as a doctoral student. There are no two greater people to dedicate this dissertation than my “rib” Stacy and daughter Nasia Lovelace. I am forever grateful for the love, encouragement, and sacrifices to get to this point.

Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge my family, friends, and relatives who have encouraged me throughout this journey. I could not have achieved this goal without a strong support system. I am indebted to Dr. Nancy Walters for her guidance, support, and encouragement throughout my doctoral journey. I would also like to acknowledge several mentors who helped nurture, challenge, and support me over the years, offering feedback, advice, and stern guidance as I developed my skill set as a higher education professional finding my place in academia.

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Section 1: The Problem

Introduction

Since the inception of higher education in the United States, concerns about student misconduct have been part of academia. The problem investigated in this study was that monetary fines as a punitive sanction tend to be overly represented in the student attrition group at a mid-sized, 4-year, predominately White, public institution of higher education in a southeastern state. Exploring the impact of monetary sanctions was imperative due to the unknown ramifications these sanctions have on student conduct participants. Student conduct administrators (SCAs) are responsible for the administrative functions of the student disciplinary process while concurrently fostering the growth and development of students who come in contact with the student conduct process (Waryold, 2013). This dual responsibility is concerning at the local level due to the perceived lack of autonomy that SCAs have within the conduct process. A qualitative research study approach was utilized to gain insight into how student conduct participants, both students and SCAs, view current student conduct practices and how monetary sanctioning can affect holistic student development and student success. As the problem was explored, the multidimensional model of transformational change for moral action provided a grounded framework that aligned theory-driven, evidence-based methods of practice that stimulates holistic student development and student success. Findings from the study informed a position paper that included the recommendation for creating and implementing professional development and assessment programs focused on SCAs.

Students not only attend colleges and universities to acquire educational credits but to develop holistically (Kuh, 2018). The institution has a responsibility to invest in the development of the whole student. That includes helping them create a moral compass and to understand actions and consequences. With the need to create a branch or section of higher education that dealt with the “other” aspects of the student experience, such as the cocurricular and the social, student affairs was incepted (Lancaster & Waryold, 2008, p. 7). In Educating the Whole Student: The Growing Academic Importance of Student Affairs, Arthur Sandeen (2004) provided readers with the genesis of the division of student life: “What is now called student affairs formally began in 1890 when President Charles Eliot was busily transforming Harvard College into a university” (p. 30). As faculty interests shifted to scholarship, and as Eliot engaged in institution building, someone was needed to look after the undergraduates. Thus, Eliot asked LeBaron Russell Briggs, a young and popular English instructor, to serve as “student dean” (Sandeen, 2004, p. 30). Briggs was responsible for nonacademic duties on campus, including student discipline (Rentz, 2004). Even the founders of the United States chimed in on the importance of the conduct system at colleges and universities. Thomas Jefferson attributed issues of student conduct and adherence to rules and expectations to the age and maturity of students: “Premature ideas of independence, too little repressed by parents beget a spirit of insubordination, which is the greatest obstacle to science with us, and a principal cause of its decay since the revolution” (Stoner & Lowery, 2004, p. 1).

Conduct is a critical element of student development (Clark, 2014). With student conduct programs residing in higher education institutions, there is generally an expectation that students will learn both in and out of the classroom (Karp, 2019), which includes the services and programs in which they interact. Furthermore, with changing trends in activism testing boundaries as a developmental expectation with students and defining ways in which students explore and create their own value systems, students are still expected to adhere to certain codes of conduct inside and outside the classroom (Lancaster & Waryold, 2008, p. 33). The decision to separate social conduct from academic integrity required the hiring or appointing of qualified administrators to sanction students and provide educational and, in some cases, restorative practices. The need and desire to control or at least manage student conduct had very different implications at these institutions' inception.

As a result of the shift in the student–institution relationship and legal challenges brought by students, college administrators on most college campuses developed highly specific codes of conduct and judicial processes that mirrored the United States court system (Dannells, 1997). Student discipline was meted out by whatever means the president, or a designated faculty member deemed appropriate, which may have included corporal punishment or sending a student home. Thus, institutions of higher education have policies in place that set the expectation for student behavior and institutional standard. After college administrators had developed systems that so closely resembled the processes found in courtrooms across the United Stated, these same administrators found it increasingly difficult to explain that college student discipline was educational in nature and yet that the rules found in United States courts do not apply (Martin &

Janosik, 2004). Furthermore, mirroring the United States court system removed educational intentions and created an adversarial discipline relationship (Gehring, 2001).

Most postsecondary institutions in the United States have sense developed their disciplinary system, often collectively called the student conduct code, with focused goals of student development and deterrence through the application of sanctions (Schuck, 2017). Institutions prior to racial integration were homogenous in population. During that timeframe, punitive measures used to discipline students did not rise to inadvertent consequences, including student debt and, in some cases, the inability to return to campus for financial reasons. The landscape of student conduct practices in higher education changed significantly in 1961 when a federal court rendered a decision in *St. John Dixon et al. v. Alabama State Board of Education*. The outcome of this case required public institutions of higher education to grant students due process rights, including a notice of a violation and an opportunity to be heard in student conduct proceedings (Kaplin & Lee, 2014).

The St. John Dixon decision was paramount because it forced higher education administrators to bring a level of professionalism, transparency, and engagement to student conduct. Furthermore, this case's outcome established a framework for administrators providing oversight to the student conduct process; a framework that administrators were required to implement and follow. Unfortunately, the evolution of higher education policies and procedures regarding conduct and student behavior lags with little consideration to the change in demographics, including racial, gendered, and socioeconomic differences (Lancaster & Waryold, 2008). The lack of course correction and adherence to the shift in institutional make-up has had a negative impact on student conduct systems (Stimpson & Stimpson, 2008).

The role of the SCA is significant in the development of the whole student. Findings from four-year public institutions reveal that 95% of institutions allow student conduct administrators (SCAs) to accompany students through the conduct proceeding (Rohrbacher, 2016). Therefore, the role of the SCA encompasses the educational, procedural, and closing of a case. This individual spends a significant amount of time interacting with a student and could enhance or mar the student experience. An SCA's daily work includes meeting with students after a violation of the student code of conduct has occurred. In those meetings, which can be either informal or formal, a decision of responsible or not responsible generally has to be determined. If the student has been found responsible, sanctions will be assigned to the student (Haug, 2018). Additionally, under best practices SCAs are required to play the role of an adjudicator and developmental specialist. With this expectation, SCAs are required to consider the totality of their sanctioning and how it may impact the students' ability to remain at an institution.

The Local Problem

The problem investigated by this study was that monetary fines as a punitive sanction tend to be overly represented in the student attrition group at a mid-sized, 4-year, predominately white, public institution of higher education in a southeastern state. Student conduct systems vary, but considering the repercussions of punitive conduct sanctioning outcomes, student conduct systems should be assessed for effectiveness and the impact on the entire campus community. According to Adams (2019), punitive systems are typically focused on deterring students from violating university policies by focusing on monetary penalties or community service. This study addressed the gap in practice in which SCAs are mandated to administer monetary sanctions for predetermined conduct violations at the study site. At the study site, the gap in practice was identified when multiple student affairs administrators indicated concern about the number of adjudicated cases resulting in excessive monetary fines having adverse effects on student retention, persistence, and graduation (Director of Student Standards and Conduct, personal communication, March 30, 2021). To this end, Schuck (2017) calls for further exploration of disciplinary practices that influence student achievement.

Unfortunately, it is difficult for SCAs to conceptualize the domino effect monetary sanctions have on student development and success. Still, there is no other area in Student Affairs that offers a more significant opportunity to impact students' growth and development than student conduct (Horrigan, 2016). There are a number of higher education departments such as student success and retention, student life, and student engagement that contribute to the goal of holistic student development and success. Yet, the contributions, ethos, and approaches to retaining students are not considered when determining conduct standards.

A student conduct policy is developed to create community standards and expectations. These policies are often created and implemented in a vacuum, with few stakeholders providing feedback. Student Conduct Administrators (SCAs) provide guidance to students faced with violations of the student conduct policy (Waryold, 2013).

Although student conduct policies vary, common conduct violations include disregarding the institution’s alcohol, drug, and academic dishonesty policies (Denisova-Schmidt, 2017; Karp, 2019). The divide between the academic and the co-curricular side of college life is an example of splintering the student's experience. While alcohol and drug violations are often addressed through monetary sanctions, issues of academic integrity are not (Grasgreen, 2012). At the study site, academic integrity violations are primarily handled through a multi-layered process that provides an opportunity for alternative resolution methods, none of which include monetary sanctions. Furthermore, individual academic departments often address academic integrity issues, allowing some students to avoid a formal student conduct process altogether. It is unknown how this impacts the explicit and implicit messaging around social infractions versus issues of integrity that affect the student experience.

The creation of conduct policies and procedures offers some signs of intent to address student misconduct. Still, there is a lack of understanding of how these decisions made within the conduct process impact students. The conduct process assumes students will learn some lesson from their experience with the office of student conduct; however, there is scarce research on the types of lessons or skill sets students may learn (Stoner & Lowery, 2004). Suppose there is inadequate effort or articulation to the student body regarding the philosophical ethos towards sanctions and conduct. In this instance, it is unclear how students know what they are supposed to learn. Furthermore, students do not understand why their behavior violates community standards and could offend or impact other community members or how their actions shape their moral compass. Students on an individual campus should be able to look to their student conduct code to clearly understand the institution’s expectations of them as citizens of the campus and to see outlined plainly the punishments involved for violating those expectations. Additionally, and more importantly, those expectations and punishments should reflect the stated values on that individual campus. While holistic student development could be a muse to conduct education, there lacks a direct relationship between monetary sanctions and promoting growth.

The study site is comprised of a student population that is 30% first-generation, with 43% being Pell Grant eligible with a mean income of $30,389.00 (Director Institutional Research, personal communication, March 30, 2021). Research indicates that students from low-income and first-generation families, who are disproportionately African American and Latino rather than White or Asian, are less likely to complete college (Fry & Lopez, 2012; Kim & Conrad, 2006; Roderick et al., 2009). Compounding this systematic issue with a conduct system with punitive sanctions, in the form of monetary fines ranging from $250-$950, contribute to the financial distress of recipients with intersecting identities which include first-generation, low socioeconomic status, and Pell Grant eligible students. Although students acknowledge and agree to adhere to the student code of conduct, students generally do not understand the implications and financial impact of violating the student code of conduct.

Sanctions are disciplinary consequences imposed on students who have been found responsible for violating the code of student conduct (Karp & Sacks, 2014). The guiding principle of university regulations is to promote student development through an educationally developmental process focused on responsibility and accountability while protecting the community (Kagel, 2018). It is hard to fulfill the university’s guiding principle of development when students who matriculate through the student conduct process are negatively impacted.

Benchmarking student conduct sanctioning outcomes at the study site and peer institutions looks vastly different. At the study site, conduct outcomes with a monetary sanction include fines ranging from $250-$950 (director of student standards and conduct, personal communication, February 9, 2019). At one peer institution, monetary fines as sanctions are capped at $300 (Associate Director Student Conduct, personal communication, February 18, 2020). Another peer institution reported monetary fines as sanctions are not used as a part of their conduct outcomes (Assistant Dean of Students, personal communication, February 18, 2020). The vast difference in conduct philosophy is glaring and contributes to the broader problem regarding guidance and cohesiveness in handling student disciplinary issues.

Considering the demographics of the student population, in which 30% are first-generation, and 43% are Pell Grant eligible, the unique population of students at the research site overly represents the student impacted by these fines. Punitive systems typically focus on deterring students from violating university policies by focusing on monetary penalties. In turn, institutions are culpable in their failure to retain diverse populations because of financial sanctions (Liguori & Lonbaken, 2015; Merrill, Carey et al., 2013; Phillips et al., 2015). A more meaningful question is what lessons do students learn from monetary fines; and do these methods yield a modification of behavior or exacerbate the students’ ability to matriculate and thrive? These fines may be impacting positive outcomes for holistic student development (i.e., moral, social, and emotional dimensions of student development) and student success (i.e., retention, persistence, and graduation).

Furthermore, these policies and practices may be more exclusive than inclusive and appear to compound positive institutional outcomes. Little research has been produced on the effects of monetary sanctions (Grove, 2016). It is unclear how punitive monetary consequences impact student behavior, student development, and retention of first-generation, low socioeconomic, and Pell Grant eligible students. This study addresses gaps in practice within the current conduct system structure, hindering SCA's autonomy from utilizing alternative conduct sanctioning methods.

The notion of fairness is compromised when sanctions are given across the board regardless of a student’s economic status or stability. Disregarding the ramifications of a student’s ability to pay fines for violations makes students vulnerable and susceptible to not being retained and graduating, which is the overarching goal for higher education institutions. Additionally, students’ lack of understanding of the repercussions of student misconduct and how paying fines can impact their college experience contributes to the problem (Bonner, 2017).

For this study, SCAs perceived inability to utilize holistic student development measures due to the use of punitive monetary sanctions will be explored. Over the last three years, 1,250 students at the study site were sanctioned fines equaling $491,900.00 (director of student standards and conduct, personal communication, February 9, 2019). It is unknown how funds acquired through sanctioning are distributed or their educational value. Study site administrators have indicated support for holistic student development from campus implemented student conduct sanctions (director of student standards and conduct, personal communication, March 30, 2021)

At the study site, data from the 2016-2017 academic year indicated that 23% of students who were not retained had a monetary fine as a conduct sanction. Additional data disaggregation indicated that 27% of the students who were not retained had intersecting identities as first-generation and Pell Grant eligible. Similarly, in the 2017-2018 academic year, 32% of students who were not retained also had a monetary fine as a conduct sanction; additional data disaggregation indicated that 30% of the students who were not retained had intersecting identities as first-generation and Pell Grant eligible (director of student success and retention, personal communication, February 9, 2019). Mullet (2014) highlighted that punitive sanctions hinder healthy decision making and halt holistic student development. Likewise, it is suggested that strict disciplinary actions resulting from conduct proceedings are received as unfavorable for students (Roch et al., 2018). While it is suggested through previous works (Howell, 2005; Stimpson & Stimpson, 2008) that the punitive student conduct process influences student development, additional research needs to be conducted.

Further research needs to be conducted focused on underrepresented and vulnerable populations and the punitive monetary conduct system. The research site is an ideal location to conduct such research because of the identified problem of over-representation of students from these populations who have received sanctions and have not been retained. This qualitative study investigated how students and SCAs at the study site perceive monetary sanctions and explored the possible consequences of monetary sanctions on holistic student development and student success at the study site.

Rationale

In reviewing the role of student conduct administration, an essential responsibility of SCAs is to intervene in issues of student misconduct from a developmental standpoint (Karp & Sacks, 2014). At the study site, current student conduct policies and procedures stipulate sanctioning outcomes, potentially hindering developmental opportunities that SCAs can employ to address student behavior holistically (director of student standards and conduct, personal communication, April 11, 2022). As described, within traditional conduct systems, administrators primarily focus on assigning punitive sanctions that lack developmental opportunities (Dina, 2018). This approach to addressing conduct is often to the detriment of those students who would benefit from developmental, thought-provoking conversations that challenge them to reflect on their personal values and how their behavior does or does not align (Glassman, 2021). The dissonance between the idealized work of helping students to make better choices and the actual impact of punitive sanctions creates a precarious operational model. The rationale for this study was to illuminate how the student conduct experience can serve a greater purpose in holistic student development and success. The rationale for this qualitative research study is linked with the Association of Student Conduct Administrators (ASCA) ethical principles and practices in student conduct administration.

The ASCA is a professional organization whose mission is to provide direction and guidance to those in the field of student conduct (Bennett, 2014; Karp & Frank, 2016). The ASCA (n.d.) outlined five principles and practices for SCAs to implore: autonomy, nonmalfeasance, beneficence, justice, and fidelity in assisting members in shaping their behavior and professional practice. While student conduct professionals are expected to exercise reflective judgment in the conduct of their own daily practice, they are ethically obligated to consider the collective impact of their work. Janosik and Stimpson (2017) identified a need for additional research on the role of SCAs in student development. Through this study, I endeavored to close the gap in practice at the local site.

Conduct outcomes with punitive monetary sanctions and SCA's perceived inability to utilize alternative sanctioning methods may be influencing holistic student development and student success (i.e., moral, social, emotional dimensions of student development, student retention, persistence, and graduation) in a myriad of ways. Student development and success cannot be maximized by conventional justice proceedings. "The disciplinary process on campuses has been too procedural and mirrors an adversarial proceeding that precludes student development" (Gehring, 2001, p. 466). Rethinking a monetary punitive student conduct system and its adverse effects on holistic student development and student success could provide administrators at colleges and universities with opportunities to review their approaches to positive student development and identify strategies to assist every student in becoming successful (McCarthy, 2015; Stimpson & Janosik, 2015).

The demographics of the SCAs can also play a role in how open and receptive a student is to implementing new values or modifying their behavior. Staton (2019) indicated that diversity in administrator demographics influences the personal, behavioral, and academic success of the population they serve. Beyond representation, how SCAs communicate with students interpersonally or organizationally through oral, written, or digital communication can impact a student's conduct experience. Communication is viewed as a social act involving not only the conveyance of information but also complex epistemological and cultural knowledge (Hora et al., 2019)

SCAs have to be willing to connect and engage with the students they encounter through the conduct process. Student engagement should offer transparent and empathetic communication that is not assumptive or biased based on the student's identity. Roch et al. (2010) stated that administrators operate under one standard code, yet the implementation or execution of those codes through teaching methods and interpersonal interactions varies substantially by instructor demographic. These factors impact how sanctions are deployed and the types of services and resources provided to students throughout and even after the adjudication process.

Higher education is faced with a bewildering array of complex challenges, including shifts in demographics, enrollment changes, and an aging workforce. Additional assessment of SCA demographics and representation and reimagining aspects of the current conduct system play a significant role in holistic student development and student success. The conduct system structure at the study site mandates monetary sanctions for predetermined conduct violations, which SCAs are responsible for administering. The purpose of this study was to investigate how students and SCAs at the study site perceive monetary sanctions and explore possible consequences of monetary sanctions on holistic student development and student success at the study site.

Definition of Terms

The following is a list of terms as defined in the study:

Diversity: Diversity encompasses individual differences and group/social differences. These may include but are not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, class, learning style, country of origin, disability, political ideology, religion, and cultural perspectives. (Riggs, 2012).

Equity: Equity is the opportunity for historically underrepresented populations to have equal access to and participate in educational programs capable of closing the achievement gap in student success (Riggs, 2012).

Inclusion: Inclusion is the active, intentional, and ongoing engagement with diversity (Riggs, 2012).

Holistic student development: Holistic student development is the moral, social, and emotional development of a student (O'Flaherty & McCormack, 2019).

Student success: Student success are the measures, policies, programs, and practices that enhance student achievement encompassing student retention, persistence, and graduation (Jackson & Bridgstock, 2018).

Professional development: Professional development is the continued training and education of an individual regarding their career, keeping one up to date on current trends, and developing new skills for the purpose of advancement in the field (Brill, 2015).

Standards of student conduct: Standards of Student Conduct are the values and principles that student members of an institution's community are expected to uphold and abide by (Ely et al., 2014).

Student conduct administrator(s): Student conduct administrator(s) are student affairs professionals responsible for investigating and adjudicating student discipline and is the area responsible for the student disciplinary process's administrative functions while concurrently fostering students' growth and development who contact the student conduct process (Waryold, 2013).

Punitive conduct sanctions: Punitive Conduct Sanctions are disciplinary outcomes intended as punishment imposed on students who have been found responsible for violating a university student code of conduct (Bailey, 2019).

Significance of the Study

This qualitative research study investigated how students and SCAs at the study site perceive monetary sanctions and explored the possible consequences of monetary sanctions on holistic student development and student success at the study site. This study is significant because many students impacted by monetary fines as a punitive conduct sanction are often members of unrepresented populations including but not limited to students of color, students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, Pell Grant eligible, and first-generation students (Belser et al., 2016, p. 252). Monetary fines as a sanctioning outcome may contribute to financial hardship and hinder the retention of students, which may have a more significant impact on less privileged students, despite their being sanctioned at rates similar to the rest of the student population.

This study's outcomes may contribute to the application of improved practices supporting holistic student development and student success at the study site. In addition, components of a possible professional development training program could contribute to conversations surrounding equity, diversity, inclusion, and access. A module focused on equity, diversity, inclusion, and access within the professional development framework has the potential to expand the breadth and depth of this subject matter and may prove useful to institutions (Smith, 2009). This study had a specific focus on the role of SCAs in holistic student development and student success. A student's interaction with the campus conduct system and how SCAs navigate the engagement could influence a student’s development. Student development is vital to SCAs and other campus administrators for several reasons, including addressing recidivism, student retention, persistence, and graduation rates. An SCA’s interaction with students within conduct situations and the outcome of those situations could impact the student experience with the potential of hindering holistic student development and student success.

SCAs within the student conduct system are tasked with the duty of enforcing the code of student conduct of the university. There is an expected goal that SCAs are knowledgeable of university practices to address student conduct but also understand the implications the selected practices can have on holistic student development. Exploring autonomy or lack of autonomy among SCAs in the decision making process can provide insight into their ability to serve as genuine change agents.

SCAs are critical leaders during a time when students embark on new and unknown college experiences with a primary responsibility to support students through difficult experiences engaging in authentic leadership behavior promoting holistic development (ASCA, n.d.). It is unrealistic to expect neutrality in the decision making process, but SCAs are individuals with social prints and experiences that inform their decision making. Applying a theory of implicit bias states that all people have biases that they are largely unaware of (Woods, 2018). Promoting this sense of bias awareness could be instrumental in understanding what contributes to the decisions by SCAs to deploy monetary sanctions on some and not on others within the conduct process. Implicit bias can influence their behaviors and decision making. Additionally, this study is significant because every facet of a student's interaction with representatives from the university population influences students' development and tenure at an institution (Silvera & Stocker, 2018).

To gain a clearer understanding of the SCA's role in administering punitive monetary sanctions and their impact on holistic student development and student success, the current SCAs' experiences, insights, and suggestions were documented. According to Dannells (1997), an appropriate model for student conduct should be based on principles that prevent harm, uphold student freedom, and foster community. Student attitudes about receiving sanctions are unknown. It is also unknown whether they are harmed, restricted in freedoms, or excluded or stigmatized within a community because of these sanctions. It is also largely unknown how these ramifications may vary among students given social class, gender, or race/ethnicity. Outcomes from this study can potentially inform decision-makers relative to a new, different, and more positive student conduct model, provide real opportunities for student decision making, decrease recidivism, and increase student retention. The more information gathered pertaining to the demographics, biases, and students most impacted by monetary sanctions can contribute to a more meaningful training and professional development model for student conduct administrators.

Research Questions

The following questions were explored to gain insight and gather data about how students and SCAs at the study site perceive monetary sanctions and to explore possible consequences of monetary sanctions on holistic student development and student success at the study site. The research questions address the problem of monetary fines as a punitive sanctioning outcome and how they may hinder the role of SCAs in holistic student development and student success at the research site. The following research questions explored by this study include:

RQ1: How do student conduct participants (students and SCAs) perceive to be the consequences of punitive monetary sanctions?

RQ2: How do student conduct participants (students and SCAs) perceive monetary sanctions as promoting holistic student development and student success?

Review of the Literature

Conceptual Framework

The model of transformational change (MTC) for moral action serves as the guiding conceptual framework for this project study. MTC offers a grounded framework that collegiate disciplinarians can apply to have a more significant influence on students (Neumeister, 2017). MTC integrates moral development theory, the transtheoretical model of behavioral change, and transformational leadership. Furthermore, the MTC for moral action provides conduct officials with a framework for aligning their practices with theory-driven, evidence-based methods to produce positive behavior change and moral development (Neumeister, 2017). MTC was utilized to guide the questions and analysis about perceptions and experiences, including the role of SCAs in holistic student development and student success.

Conduct is not an issue of law but values. Institutions create policies and practices that align with their core values but often fail to articulate these values to students. Students sign or agree to adhere to codes of conduct but are not always briefed or presented with the spirit or philosophy behind the policies and practices. The moral development of students cannot exist within a vacuum. Applying MTC to this study provides a framework that centralizes moral and ethical dilemmas. MTC is comprised of three components, but the primary component applied to this study is transformational leadership. Transformational leadership develops change agents, transforming followers into change agents and influential leaders (Zhu et al., 2011).

Higher education is designed to instruct students in an academic discipline but also shapes their leadership development (Deal et al., 2020). MTC offers a multilayered and multidimensional model, which is necessary when thinking about holistic student development and success outcomes. It is just as crucial for a student to know why they violated a code as it is to admit to violating a conduct code. The transtheoretical model proposes that individuals move through five distinct stages of change when modifying their behavior (Nuemesister, 2017). Students and staff benefit when their interactions, specifically around conduct, allow space to reflect on the lessons learned and create possible new methods of approaching issues that have potential consequences for a student's matriculation.

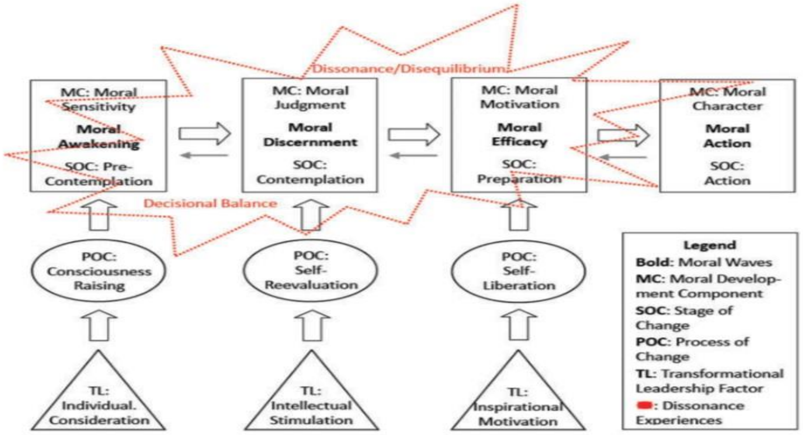
Transformational leadership provides a more inspirational and practical set of practices to guide student conduct administration. Traditional student conduct practices have been premised on the same underlying practices as transactional leadership (Neumeister, 2017). Incorporating MTC creates a more holistic approach to addressing challenges SCAs face during conduct meetings and empowers SCAs to use their moment of influence to shape the way a student distinguishes their behavior and the impact it has on their community. The research questions presented derive from the problem of monetary fines as punitive sanctioning outcomes and how they may hinder the role of SCAs in holistic student development at the research site. Prior to MTC, there was a dearth of research on the effectiveness and yields from conduct sanctions in a student's holistic development.

Additionally, relationships between SCAs and students are often transactional, so interactions tend to remain superficial, and students remain guarded towards conduct officers. Neumeuster (2017) stated that many students attempt to expedite the conduct process by only superficially engaging with student conduct administrators due to lack of engagement. The notion that student engagement is transactional and superficial could be attributed to SCAs administering conflict resolution tactics instead of conflict transformation as a holistic student development measure. Conflict resolution seeks to solve immediate problems by bringing an end to hardship through a solution, therefore, concentrating heavily on “the substance and content of the problem,” while conflict transformation seeks to explore underlying causes of conflict, simultaneously addressing both the source and its manifestation (Lederach, 2003, Chapter 5). Additionally, Neumeister indicated research on the conduct process focuses more on the institutional and administrative managing of the process with little information on the outcomes of conduct and how these experiences shape the remainder of their tenure at an institution.

The component of MTC that guided this study was transformational leadership. Transformational leadership guidelines include looking for potential motives in decision-makers, seeking to satisfy organizational needs, and engaging the decision-maker's full potential. The result of transforming leadership is a relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation that converts decision-makers into moral agents (Andersen et al., 2018).

Figure 1

The Model of Transformational Change for Moral Action


Dissonance/Disequilibrium
MC: Moral Sensitivity
Moral Awakening
SOC: Pre-Contemplation
MC: Moral Judgment
Moral Discernment
SOC: Contemplation
MC: Moral Motivation
Moral Efficacy
SOC: Preparation
MC: Moral Character
Moral Action
SOC: Action
Decisional Balance
POC: Consciousness Raising
POC: Self-Reevaluation
POC: Self-Liberation
TL: Individual. Consideration
TL: Intellectual Stimulation
TL: Inspirational Motivation
Legend
Bold: Moral Waves
MC: Moral Development Component
SOC: Stage of Change
POC: Process of Change
TL: Transformational Leadership Factor
🟥: Dissonance Experiences

By aligning evidence-based practices, the MTC shifts conduct officials into moral agents promoting holistic development, centers the developmental needs of students, harnesses dissonance to encourage positive change, and ultimately converts student-offenders into moral actors (Neumeister, 2017).

Review of the Broader Problem

An in-depth search and literature review focused on the broader problem of student conduct practices was derived from the Walden University online library. The Walden University educational database, EBSCO, Educational Resource Information Center (ERIC), and Google Scholar were influential in discovering additional sources related to student conduct systems, high impact student conduct practices, and holistic student development. The following search terms and combinations thereof were explored: *holistic student development, student success, identity development, implicit bias*, *student conduct, student conduct practice, punitive conduct sanctions*, *restorative justice, student conduct system, student affairs, and student engagement.* I gave preference to literature published from 2018 to 2022, although I included seminal works published before these dates. Little research is available on punitive conduct systems with mandated predetermined outcomes in higher education, and therefore, I had to consult older works.

Relevant research studies and published scholarly articles were studied for a deeper context of the subject matter. Additionally, published doctoral studies through Walden University databases, Laerd dissertation, and ProQuest were researched with a focus on conduct systems, holistic student development, student success, student conduct and sanctioning practices, and SCA development. I sought out peer-reviewed studies, as well as articles and papers highlighting high impact practices in holistic student development, student conduct practice, and student conduct administration practices at institutions of higher education.

A review of over 60 research studies and scholarly articles focused on student conduct and SCA practices. Each abstract and title were examined to select items that empirically studied holistic student development and student success as a result of the student conduct processes. I utilized information from 25 sources with a broad focus on holistic student development and student conduct sanctioning practices which have been infused throughout the project study. I narrowed the search to focus on punitive conduct systems and the use of monetary fines as a sanctioning methodology. Research findings indicate lower retention rates for students who have violated conduct policy when compared to their peers who have not participated in the student discipline process (Tabacchi, 2017). Unfortunately, there is a lack of research on the impact of punitive conduct systems in higher education. Due to the findings generated from the literature review, a qualitative methodology was applied to this project study. According to Creswell and Poth (2017), qualitative methodology is studying things in their natural setting, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them. As a qualitative researcher, I sought a comprehensive and systematic understanding of the prevailing student conduct paradigms, sound sanctioning methodology, and transforming student conduct practice. The following discussion provided the study's literature review focused on the student conduct system, holistic student development, and student success.

Multiple scholars (Adams, 2019; Karp & Sacks, 2014; King, 2015; Shook & Neumeister, 2015; Stimpson & Janosik, 2015) connect the importance of student conduct administrators and their need to evaluate punitive conduct systems and the effect these systems have on holistic student development and student success. Shook and Neumeister (2015) highlight that colleges and universities face heightened scrutiny regarding their effectiveness in addressing student misconduct and administering campus discipline. For these reasons, further research on this phenomenon was warranted.

The effects of punitive conduct practices are a complex problem, and addressing the problem requires the use of multiple perspectives to determine possible combinations of contributing factors. Scholars conducted studies to address issues within student conduct systems and the lack of restorative justice and student developmental measures in practice; however, little research addressed the issues related to the effects of punitive monetary sanctions on student conduct participants. Existing literature provides an inadequate evidentiary base from which to conclude that student conduct systems can maintain these crucial standards of care and consistency (Bittinger et al., 2018). Most empirical literature examining the developmental outcomes of the conduct process has focused on the responding student (e.g., Dannells, 1997; Stimpson & Stimpson, 2008). Lancaster (2012) stated that student conduct systems in U.S. higher education should have some manner of moral development for students, whether labeled as such or not. However, limited research examines the impact of student discipline on postsecondary completion (Schuck, 2017). Reason (2009) concluded retention is a multidimensional problem with the primary influences being the internal organizational context, peer environment, and individual experiences. These influences are present to varying degrees in the postsecondary student conduct process.

Previously published literature does not answer the research questions related to the problem that monetary fines as a punitive sanction tend to be overly represented in the student attrition group at the study site. This review suggests that perhaps the only meaningful point of agreement in the literature is that students should learn something from SCAs. Additionally, students should refrain from future misbehavior due to engagement with SCAs, and some learning should occur. There is sparse agreement on what they should learn, how best to support that learning, or how to measure that learning (Nelson, 2017). King (2015) highlighted the limited data that have been generated directly from adjudicated students to better understand whether they consider their discipline experiences as educational. Stimpson and Janosik (2015) stated that a student's interaction with a conduct system in the university is an opportunity for a student to learn. Intentional practice requires SCAs to engage in a timely, fair, explanative, respectful, and facilitative process that fosters student learning. Suppose SCAs feel they have little agency or control over the sanctioning outcomes. In that case, a question arises on how positive and capable are SCAs at being change agents and influencers in a student's development and growth.

Student Conduct System

Karp and Frank (2016) identified student misconduct as a broad issue within higher education. Adjudication of incidents involving student misconduct is one of the oldest functions related to the student affairs profession (Howell, 2005; Lowery, 2001). Codes of conduct are based on federal and state legislation, which outlines criminal behavior and includes expectations for students unique to each institution that detail policies for everything from academic integrity to use of campus facilities to how and where to protest (Glassman, 2021). As a result, colleges and universities are now operating in a highly litigious social climate in which "parents and attorneys are far more involved in the current conduct process than they have been in the past" (Brown-McClure & Cocks, 2020, p. 30). To this extent, student conduct systems have to be versatile to address student misconduct.

Unfortunately, colleges and universities have received limited guidance regarding handling student disciplinary issues (Chun & Evans, 2016). Moreover, guidance is theoretical because student conduct codes vary from institution to institution. According to Boyd et al. (2020), student conduct experiences are unique based on how participants identify with their personal conflict culture, level of self-awareness, and personal development intersecting with the culture of the campus community. Additionally, these factors directly affect how a student will experience, respect, comply with, and engage or not engage in the conduct process.

While student misbehavior can be displayed in several forms, student misconduct is not the sole issue. The adjudication and sanctioning of student misconduct issues contribute to a student's overall higher education experience (Miller & Salinas, 2019; Starke & Porter, 2019). Unfortunately, there is a lack of research on punitive conduct systems in higher education and the ramifications punitive monetary sanctions have on conduct participants (Zocharski, 2021). How student misconduct intersects with student development from the outcome of adjudicated cases presents a problem. Additionally, the broader problem within many student conduct systems is that there is no distinct focus placed on the students' holistic development (Rosbook, 2019). Moreover, conduct systems that use punitive monetary sanctions add to the inequitable experiences minoritized identities face (Gopalan & Nelson, 2019).

To this extent, people with strong student engagement skills were charged with addressing student conduct and discipline with the responsibility of enforcing policies. Furthermore, this understanding was used as a catalyst to develop the role of student conduct administrators. Students who matriculate through the student conduct system can encounter the constraints placed on SCAs, including hierarchical and bureaucratic structures (Tabacchi, 2017). SCAs are considered agents of the institution that play a role in the decision making process within the student conduct system. However, Haug (2018) stated that each student conduct administrator must reconcile the evolving landscape of higher education with the guiding principles of the student conduct administration, which include autonomy, non-malfeasance, beneficence, justice, and fidelity. Additionally, legal issues, case law, and attorneys have impacted the practice of student conduct administration significantly over the last decade (Horrigan, 2016; Miller, 2018; Shook & Neumeister, 2015; Waller, 2013). In managing these external pressures, student conduct administrators “must be grounded in their policies, ethics, and values” in order to maintain an equitable and developmental disciplinary process (Brown-McClure & Cocks, 2020, p. 31).

SCAs are a part of a larger ethos charged with educating and developing students they encounter. Unfortunately, student conduct systems often fail to achieve their educational and developmental aims due to the absence of a developmental framework (Neumeister, 2017). Additionally, DeMatthews et al. (2017) indicated that many systems reflect systematic disparities through punitive policies. Moreover, research has signaled that Black and Latinx students experience disproportionate punitive discipline contributing to systematic disparities (Skiba et al., 2016). Furthermore, Carey et al. (2016) indicated that punitive sanctions do not enforce student learning and development outcomes. This concept of student learning and development is reinforced by Lustick's (2017) work, which stated that there is increasing pressure to shift from punitive discipline to alternative nonpunitive models of practice. Nonpunitive models create a structure of fairness that promotes development and growth (Neumeister, 2016). Student conduct protocols should have an overarching goal of student development through developmentally appropriate systems rather than punitive punishment (Kagel, 2018; Horrigan, 2016; Karp, 2019; Kuh, 2018; Schuck, 2017; Janosik & Stimpson, 2017).

Current research indicates that to make the student conduct experience more effective; student affairs professionals should see student conduct as a developmental tool while also considering how individual identity and environment influence students’ actions (Nelson, 2017). This concept aligns with McCarthy (2019), who indicated that

SCAs have to exhibit a level of cognizance in understanding the various aspects of access, identity, and security available to students throughout their interaction. Less punitive models for student conduct promote mutual respect and courtesy to all stakeholders (Karp & Frank, 2016). According to Spivey (2020), the student conduct process should lead to enhanced learning, provide closure to the misconduct incident, and prevent the student conduct process from becoming an insurmountable obstacle for conduct participants.

Additional studies indicate that to be an effective SCA in today's higher education environment, it is imperative that SCAs possess a multiplicity of skills and be adept at utilizing these skills when investigating and adjudicating cases (Dowd, 2012; Waller, 2013). Yet, within some student conduct systems, the role that SCAs provide in the decision making process can reflect a lack of autonomy, which limits the opportunity to impact a student's holistic development if sanctioning outcomes are predetermined. Restricting the opportunity to impact a student's holistic development creates a barrier for SCAs to blend personal and social development with academic progress (O'Flaherty & McCormick, 2019). Additionally, when predetermined outcomes guide SCAs, the organizational demands can hinder students' broader learning experience, including their moral, social, and personal development of the "whole person" (Gleeson & O'Flaherty, 2016).

At the study site, SCAs can make decisions in every aspect of a student's interaction within the student conduct process except the sanctioning of certain violations. For example, SCAs review, investigate, and administer sanctioning outcomes in each case. SCAs within a punitive conduct system lack autonomy because their interactions do not allow them the ability to deviate from the established punitive conduct sanctioning guidelines or parameters. The opportunity to make decisions within conduct practices is limited; therefore, administrators lack the ability to influence student development. SCAs who believe that a student could benefit from community service or some other conduct improvement actions are unable to provide these options within punitive systems.

When SCAs exhibit transformational leadership, they examine each interaction with students from an engagement and developmental framework. Additionally, as moral agents, SCAs engage in a process that offers the best solution for the student at the university. When outcomes are predetermined, SCAs cannot operate from a lens of transformational leadership. More importantly, the model outlines the ways in which the student conduct process can become a transformative experience that converts student offenders into moral actors and conduct officials into moral agents (Neumeister, 2017). Attempting to address the broader problem by employing the MTC framework could benefit the SCAs and the student by allowing the SCAs' interventions to align with actions that enhance moral development and support holistic development in students.

Holistic Student Development

Holistic student development is defined as the moral, social, and emotional development of a student (O'Flaherty & McCormack, 2019). Furthermore, Patton et al. (2016) defined student development as a philosophy with "a concern for the development of the whole person" (pp.7-8). Holistic student development is an important educational goal for institutions of higher education because they are tasked with developing students both inside and outside of the classroom (Hershkovitz et al., 2019). Yet, institutions are struggling with how to design a supportive learning environment that helps all student populations they serve (Lawton & Toner, 2020). Karp and Sacks (2014) highlighted six student development goals that conduct systems should address. These developmental goals include a just community/self-authorship, active accountability, interpersonal competence, social ties to the institution, procedural fairness, and closure. None of the developmental goals include punitive monetary fines promoting holistic student development or success. Instead, punitive monetary fines are applied as a subgoal under active accountability and procedural fairness. Assuming punitive monetary fines promote accountability and procedural fairness could be considered erroneous and bombastic. Student conduct policies are necessary to ensure schools remain safe, but punitive policies are often enacted in inequitable ways that reflect systematic disparities (DeMatthews et al., 2017).

According to Porter (2020), student conduct proceedings should be proactive and focused on holistic student development centered on guiding students to achieve educational and social goals. Traditionally holistic student development has been prioritized in assessing student success. A more expansive, rounded, and ontological perspective of the student conduct experience that takes into account who and what students are becoming is required (Bowden et al., 2021). Creating an intentional focus on holistic student development can increase the likelihood of a more equitable, inclusive, and intentional approach to student conduct practices. Moreover, focusing on holistic student development has the ability to transform not only individuals but also institutional practices and policies (Abes et al., 2019, p. 10).

Student Success

Student success is defined as the measures, policies, programs, and practices that enhance student achievement encompassing student retention, persistence, and graduation (Jackson & Bridgstock, 2018). Student success includes not only strong retention and degree completion rates, but also high-quality learning. It means that students are prepared for success in their personal, civic, and professional lives (Millea et al., 2018). The notion of a conduct process aligns with the goals of holistic student development and student success; specifically, the "tenets of actions and consequence enforce" decision making and boundaries for young adults.

From a lens of student success focused on equity and access, it is problematic to attach fairness to just conduct policies to a population of students with diverse backgrounds, needs, and financial resources. If all students receive the same sanctions based on similar violations, the assumption is the system is operating in fairness. A student paying the fines and continuing in their studies could indicate that there is a level of active accountability. Assuming a student who does not pay their fine is not actively accountable for their actions is a leap, particularly if a student cannot afford to pay their fines. This assumption places a heavier burden on students who lack financial resources to "behave and conduct themselves" more circumspectly than an affluent student that can afford to "misbehave," potentially hindering student development and success.

McCarthy (2015) indicated that to make the student conduct experience more effective; student affairs professionals should see student conduct as a developmental tool while also considering how individual identity and environment influence students' actions. Furthermore, Karp (2013) stated that student conduct administrators are not employed to find new and more efficient ways to dismiss students; the goal is to help students that violate codes of conduct to make amends and stay enrolled. This goal is accomplished by keeping a fresh and open mind to creative education strategies. Creating a professional development curriculum concentrating on the administration and practices in student conduct aligns with Glick and Degges-White's (2019) work that highlighted approaches to colleges and universities' conduct systems as a creative strategy. Furthermore, a professional development program can reinforce the need for SCAs to have a level of specialized training, stay up to date on current trends, and master specific skills that impact holistic student development. By assessing current student conduct practices for their effectiveness and educational value while providing SCAs with ongoing developmental resources to be successful, the role of SCAs in holistic student development can be solidified.

Implications of the Project Study

The purpose of this qualitative project study was to investigate how students and SCAs at the study site perceive monetary sanctions and explore possible consequences of monetary sanctions on holistic student development and student success at the study site. A position paper was identified as the project study deliverable. Implications of the project study suggest that the findings may be important for policy review and new practice implementation. Additionally, the implications of this project study identifies data supported findings that showcase an interpretation of results. The implications of the project study’s position paper can create a strategic focus on role and scope of responsibilities for SCAs and resources necessary to support the evolving role and enhance the student conduct participant experience.

The study captured participants' personal perceptions of student conduct were used to create a blueprint for successful strategies that can foster systematic change within the student conduct process. Study implications include data highlighting the impact of punitive sanctions and why focusing on holistic student development and student success is critically important. The identified strategies provide an impetus for change for SCAs and student conduct participants at the study site and in a broader population.

This study is critical because the study site and literature lack documentation on the gap in practice in which SCAs are mandated to administer monetary sanctions for predetermined conduct violations. Further research is needed to evaluate the role of SCAs in holistic student development and student success. The findings from this project study could serve as a pathway to encourage the study site to review and strengthen the conduct process by adding components that address the needs of SCAs as practitioners. Historically, student conduct systems within higher education addressed student behavior (Dannells, 1997). History shows that conduct codes are rooted in the "legacy of the student rights movement of the 1960s and 1970s" (Dannells, 1997, p. 13) and tend toward legalistic rather than educational intentions. Addressing student behaviors does not necessarily correlate to student success, retention, and persistence. The implications of this study shift traditional conduct practices of punitive outcomes and focus on holistic student development and success.

Additionally, implications of the project study include outcomes that could be used to create and implement professional development and assessment programs focused on SCA's development as transformational leaders. Furthermore, implications for addressing the role of SCAs in holistic student development and student success include improving the retention, persistence, and success rates of students who have matriculated through the conduct process. Further implications include creating a sense of student belonging, decreasing recidivism rates, and advancing the education of student conduct participants; thus, increasing the study site’s graduation success rate and promoting holistic development through learning and promoting student success. Moreover, the study's information can assist SCAs, and the study site with an awareness of barriers punitive conduct sanctions create and the needs of students impacted by a punitive conduct system.

Summary

In this section, I outlined the local problem of punitive sanctions in the form of monetary fines as conduct sanctioning outcome may be influencing SCA's role in holistic student development (i.e., moral, social, and emotional dimensions of student development) and student success (i.e., retention, persistence, and graduation). The expectation for conduct officers to create holistic student development opportunities can only occur when mechanisms that cause divisions, barriers, and financial insecurities are eliminated from the adjudication process. I also discussed the rationale and significance of this study, including a review of background literature that guides the research study. This section concludes by highlighting implications for this study, indicating a potential gap in practice due to the current conduct system structure hindering SCA's autonomy from utilizing alternative conduct sanctioning outcomes at the local research site. Section 2 of this proposal includes an in-depth analysis of the proposed research design to include discussion of the methodology for data collection and analysis. Section 3 offers a project in the form of a position paper recommending a professional development program with a policy recommendation that infuses high-impact practices. The policy recommendation includes alternative student conduct sanctioning outcomes that focus on SCAs and how student conduct outcomes influence holistic student development and student success. In Section 4, I discuss the strengths and limitations of this study. This section also included recommendations for additional research and reflective analysis.

Section 2: The Methodology

A holistic understanding of a research topic can be studied through the methodology of qualitative research (Baxter & Jack, 2008). A basic qualitative research study methodology was selected as the research design for this study, focusing on punitive conduct sanctions, holistic student development, and student success at the study site. This section contains the descriptions and explanations of the methodology utilized for this study, gaining insight and exploring the depth, richness, and complexity inherent in the phenomenon. The qualitative research design and approach, the participants, data collection, data analysis, and limitations in preparation for the final study are presented. The purpose of this study was to investigate how students and SCAs at the study site perceive monetary sanctions and explore possible consequences of monetary sanctions on holistic student development and student success at the study site.

A qualitative methodological approach gives a voice not only to the students and their experiences during and after the conduct process but also to the SCAs who administer the student conduct process. Institutions often create policies in a vacuum or do not update their policies, practices, and procedures with changing trends and demographics of the community they serve (Stoner, 2008). Providing an outlet for them to articulate and express their ideas, beliefs, and opinions regarding the conduct process helped develop a position paper recommending the creation and implementation of professional development and assessment programs for SCAs.

Section 2 focused on the research methodology and research design of the project study and rationale. Furthermore, this section also provided an overview of the project study, design, and research methodology. Lastly, Section 2 solidified participant selection and sampling methods, data collection, and data analysis. According to Creswell (2007), qualitative researchers begin with assumptions and then study research problems by collecting data and establishing patterns and themes. This study aimed to investigate how students and SCAs at the study site perceive monetary sanctions and to explore possible consequences of monetary sanctions on holistic student development and student success at the study site. The insight gleaned from this research could invoke systematic change within the study site's current student conduct system. Outcomes could also provide information that guides the development and implementation of a professional development training program focused on high impact practices and policy recommendations.

Qualitative Research Design and Approach

A basic qualitative research study methodology was selected as the research design for this study, focused on punitive conduct sanctions, holistic student development, and student success at the study site. A basic qualitative research methodology refers to an approach in which researchers are simply interested in solving a problem, effecting a change, or identifying relevant themes rather than attempting to position their work in a particular epistemological or ontological paradigm (Mihas, 2019). Some topics for qualitative research are unsuitable for or cannot be adapted to the traditional qualitative designs such as case study, grounded theory, or phenomenology (Percy et al., 2015).

An in-depth analysis of multiple qualitative research methods contributed to selecting and utilizing a basic qualitative methodology. This study did not use a case study, grounded theory, or phenomenology for the following reasons. A case study encompasses an intensive study about a person, a group of people, or a unit, which aims to generalize over several units (Gustafsson, 2017). According to Mihas (2019), grounded theory is comprised of several approaches, including objectivist and constructivist traditions, and commonly invites researchers to theorize a process and perhaps identify its contexts and consequences. A phenomenological study seeks to understand how people with a shared experience view the world around them (Creswell, 2013; Kaufer & Chemero, 2015). Studies of this sort are focused on the individual’s subjective experience and attempt to reduce it to a universal truth (Creswell, 2013). Additionally, a phenomenology approach is designed to “open up” a phenomenon and make sense of its invariant structure and identifiable essence across all narrative accounts. This study was not identified as a case study, grounded theory, or phenomenologically focused. A basic qualitative research methodology was the most appropriate research method for understanding the lived experience of student conduct participants. Moreover, a basic qualitative methodology was chosen due to the nature of the study, reviewing and comparing alternative qualitative research methods. It was utilized to capture the participant's subjective opinions, attitudes, beliefs, and reflections on their experiences, of things in the outer world.

This basic qualitative research study aimed to gain insight and explore the depth, richness, and complexity inherent in the phenomenon. Data was collected from students who have matriculated through the current student conduct process and received a punitive monetary sanction as an outcome. Additionally, SCAs who adjudicate, administer, and enforce the current conduct practices were also interviewed for data collection. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) stated that qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, construct their worlds, and make meaning of their experiences. Additionally, qualitative researchers are concerned with the meaning people attach to things and are central to the phenomenological perspective in understanding people from their own frame of reference and experiencing reality as they experience it (Taylor et al., 2016). Lastly, qualitative researchers explore several areas of human behavior for the development of organizations (Mohajan, 2018).

In selecting the research method for this study, both qualitative and quantitative methods were reviewed comprehensively. Sullivan and Sargeant (2011) stated qualitative research generates a hypothesis within research, while quantitative research tests a hypothesis. A quantitative research methodology is used to quantify behaviors, opinions, attitudes, and other variables and make generalize data from a larger population (Davies & Hughes, 2014). Additionally, this type of research method involves using statistical and mathematical tools to derive results (Martin & Bridgmon, 2012). While quantitative methodology could lean towards a larger pool of participants and chart a trend in populations most impacted by monetary sanctions, it would not leave room to nuance personal experiences. Furthermore, a quantitative methodology would not be suitable for this study because the methodology does not align with the research questions, the local problem, or the purpose of this study in capturing the phenomenon from a lens of participant experiences. For these reasons, a quantitative research methodology does not align with the study's premise since the study did not examine trends, prove a hypothesis, or utilize a standard survey instrument to collect measurable data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Qualitative researchers conducting a basic qualitative study are interested in three themes, which include how people interpret their experiences, how people construct their worlds, and what meaning people attribute to their experiences. The overall purpose is to understand how people make sense of their lives and their experiences (Merriam, 2009). Furthermore, this study sought to understand and gain greater insight into the local problem, which could not be derived primarily from numerical data. Qualitative methodology is ideal for this study to gain a richer understanding of current conduct practices, in-depth data analysis, and frame participants' experiences through a comprehensive interview process.

Basic Qualitative Research Study

This basic qualitative research study aimed to investigate how students and SCAs perceive monetary sanctions and explore possible consequences for holistic student development and student success at a mid-sized, 4-year, predominately White, public institution of higher education in a southeastern state. A basic qualitative research study approach could elucidate the complexity and scope of SCAs' role in holistic student development and student success. Studies have consistently shown that conduct processes and interventions have little to no impact on student's future behavior or decisions (Gehring et al., 2013; Kompalla & McCarthy, 2001). This qualitative research study was positioned to gain insight into the identified problem and elevate student and SCA voices and perceptions around current student conduct practices and strategies to address student engagement, which may improve holistic student development outcomes at the study site.

A basic qualitative research study methodology was selected for this study because it has been principally used in the social sciences and has been found to be especially valuable in practice-oriented fields such as education (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2013). Additionally, the qualitative research methodology creates a pathway for detailed data gathering that considers the opinions and perspectives of participants (Butin, 2010). Furthermore, a basic qualitative research study methodology aligns with the problem statement, purpose, as well as research significance. This methodology was utilized to guide and inform the investigation of how students and SCAs perceive the application of punitive monetary conduct sanctions. The basic qualitative research study approach has the potential to deal with simple though intricate situations. Additionally, a basic qualitative research study can expose effective practices, strategies, and techniques for administrators in the field of education (Merriam, 2009).

This basic qualitative research study captured and described in-depth the participants' experience and the student conduct climate at the study site. Stake (2010) reinforced this by viewing a qualitative research study as an approach to researching the particularity and complexity of a study unit. Additionally, a basic qualitative research study can be used to uncover strategies, techniques, and practices (Worthington, 2013). According to Neuman (2014), the basic qualitative research study approach enables the researcher to answer questions focused on “how” and “why” while taking into consideration how a phenomenon is influenced by the context within which it is situated. Due to the nuanced and intricate nature of student conduct systems, a basic qualitative research study is best aligned for this project study.

Participants

Utilizing purposeful sampling, the researcher intentionally picks potential participants who have experienced the phenomenon of interest (Palinkas et al., 2015). This basic qualitative research study selected twelve participants from the study site. Guest et al. (2006) proposed that saturation often occurs with approximately twelve participants who are similarly situated (i.e., students, administrators, teachers). For this study, twelve participants were identified to enhance saturation. Their responses yielded sufficient data for the qualitative research study. Creswell (2007) explained that all participants must have experienced the phenomenon being researched. All participants in this study have an identifiable connection to the conduct system. This basic qualitative research study utilized SCAs and students as participants using individual semistructured virtual interviews as the data collection strategy.

Criteria for Selecting Participants

For this basic qualitative research study, twelve participants were selected from the study site. Participant demographics included eight students and four SCAs who participated in some capacity in the overarching student conduct process. The students selected to participate have matriculated through the current student conduct process and received a punitive monetary sanction as an outcome. A list of eligible student participants was provided by the Office of Student Standards and Conduct for review and selection. Throughout the selection process, student participants had an opportunity to self-identify as the following: first-generation, low socioeconomic status, Pell Grant eligible, or not applicable. SCAs chosen to participate were employed at the local site and provided leadership within the current conduct system. SCA participants included two administrators who facilitated the conduct process and determined sanctioning outcomes that concluded with a punitive monetary sanction and two administrators who provided oversight to the sanctioning appeal process.

The criteria for selecting students for the study included (a) students who are enrolled full-time; (b) students who have received a punitive monetary conduct sanction; and (c) students who self-identify as first-generation, low socioeconomic, Pell Grant eligible, or not applicable. The criteria for selecting SCAs included (a) SCAs that facilitated and determined sanctions throughout the student conduct process and (b) SCAs that provided oversight to the student conduct appeal process. The emailed invitation to participate included the recruitment flyer and consent to participate form. The flyer outlined the purpose of the study, the level of involvement required of participants, and the benefits of participating in the study. Lastly, I entertained all the questions that potential participants had regarding the study.

Once responses to the invitation to participate in the qualitative research study were received, I employed purposeful sampling to identify and select participants for the most effective use of limited resources (Palinkas et al., 2015). Due to the intricacies of the student conduct experience, purposeful sampling allowed the researcher to make an informed judgment when selecting members of the population to participate in the study. Purposeful sampling in a qualitative evidence synthesis has often been promoted as a solution for pragmatic constraints of time, resources, access to information, and expertise (Charlotte et al., 2016). Furthermore, this sampling method provided enough variation to glean an understanding of the problem while delivering answers to the research questions that are illustrative and thorough.

Access to Participants

This basic qualitative study utilized purposeful sampling as a strategy for selecting participants. I was in ongoing communication with multiple administrators at the local research site. To this extent, I submitted an informal proposal to the Vice President of Student Affairs and the Director of Student Standards and Conduct at the study site. The informal proposal outlined the research purpose, aims, confidence of credible findings, data collection methodology, accessibility, and researcher familiarity. Theprocedure for gaining access to participants and data set at the study site involved Institutional Review Board (IRB) applications to Walden University upon receipt of proposal apporoval. Once approval was obtained from the Institutional Review Board at Walden University (07-23-21-0569740), I submitted a letter for review and authorization to conduct research to the Vice President of Student Affairs.

I completed the study site's process for gaining approval from the Vice President for Student Affairs. The study site approved participation and provided access to the participants once Walden University IRB approval was obtained. This approval granted permission to conduct the project study at the study site with student and SCA participation. Upon receiving final approval, an individual email was sent to potential participants asking for their participation. Additionally, I developed an invitational flyer to request participation in the qualitative research study that was disseminated to students who have received a punitive monetary sanction as a conduct outcome through email communication.

The participants who responded and agreed to participate were emailed a consent form for participation and an online demographic survey. The consent form provided a clear explanation of the research purpose and participant expectations. The participants were informed that this study would be voluntary in nature, and their identities would not be revealed at any stage of the project study. Additionally, participants were numerically, and color coded to protect their identity and confidentiality in this study. Furthermore, I reviewed the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) guidelines to ensure student participation did not violate federal law that governs access to educational information and records. Since students willingly shared their personal student conduct experience, no additional requirements are warranted.

The next phase of participant recruitment focused on SCAs. For this study's purpose, SCAs were identified by their role within the student conduct process. SCAs received an invitation to participate in the research study through their university email. I provided the recruitment flyer and information outlining the research. If I had received more interest in participation than required, I would have contacted SCAs that were not selected and informed them that I reached the study's maximum number of participants.

Researcher-Participant Working Relationship

The expectations of this researcher-participant collaboration were to create a professional yet comfortable environment, be open to questions from participants, and assure participants of their privacy. I clearly outlined and explained the data collection methods, including analysis and data storage procedures. For data collection and analysis, each participant’s identity was protected with a color-coded categorizing system. Participants were assured that, in no case, was their personal information released, made available, or accessible to any person, agency, institution, or social platform. The key concept at this stage of research was transparency. A basic definition of transparency holds that researchers must disclose all relevant research processes via an honest detailing of every aspect of the data collection process and the rules used to analyze data (Tuval-Mashiach, 2017). I wanted all participants to clearly understand the project study's aim, extent, and purpose.

Protection of Participants

Once the study participants were identified, I sent a communication email highlighting the approved research process with applicable attachments. The attachments included an informed consent document and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) guidelines for student participants. This information was provided to reinforce and ensure that student participation did not violate federal law that governs access to educational information and records. I also explained that the coding system, names, and/or personal identifying information about the participants were stored at a secured location only accessible by secured swipe access. All physical copies of documentation collected were locked and stored in a secured office, and digital documents were stored in a secure, password-protected online web server. The physical and digital documents will be destroyed after five years (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). An explanation of the benefits and risks involved in participation was provided to participants. The steps identified ensured participant confidentiality and informed consent (Sanjari et al., 2014).

The email communication also provided a welcome and outlined the time commitment required to participate actively in the project study. I then offered each participant blocks of time to schedule a tentative time and date for the semistructured virtual interview. I reiterated the confidential disposition of the study and informed participants that they would not receive any form of compensation (i.e., material or financial) for this study. Lastly, I sent a reminder email forty-eight hours prior to the time identified and agreed upon to conduct the semistructured interview for confirmation. The detailed email communication served multiple purposes: (a) to ensure that students and SCAs had copies of all forms, (b) to establish participant commitment to the study, (c) to schedule appointments for individual virtual interviews, and (d) to begin building understanding around establishing a trustworthy and tranquil working relationship.

Data Collection

The data collection methods utilized for this qualitative study included semistructured virtual interviews, interview field notes, and an online demographic survey. Although each identified collection method provided substantial data, the semistructured interviews were the primary data collection source. Hawkins (2018) indicated that the selected interview tactic for data collection is appropriate for a qualitative, descriptive study with a small number of participants, such as the one proposed. Using these three methods for data collection, I achieved triangulation. Triangulation can enrich research as it offers various datasets to explain different aspects of a phenomenon (Noble and Heale, 2019).

The data collection process took approximately two months. Within this timeframe, I interviewed the twelve identified participants, initiated the online demographic survey, and logged interview field notes. I organized and guided the semistructured interviews utilizing an interview protocol template that reminded the participants of the purpose of the study, verified the consent to participate, reinforced that the interview would be recorded, interview confidentiality reminder, and discussed the agenda for the interview.

The semistructured interviews of eight students and four SCAs were conducted virtually on a one-on-one basis and recorded. Smith et al. (2009) explained that qualitative interviews are a conversation with a purpose, where the researcher focuses on research questions to guide the conversation. To achieve optimum use of interview time, I utilized an interview guide for this study. The purpose of the interview guide was to engage participants systematically and comprehensively while keeping the interview focused on the desired line of action (Jamshed, 2014). Additionally, the interview guide utilized the identified research questions to direct the discussion through semistructured interviews.

According to Walker (2013), qualitative researchers increasingly use technology to collect research data more efficiently and economically. I utilized the communication technology Zoom to conduct virtual interviews. Zoom is a video conferencing platform with several unique features that enhance its appeal to qualitative researchers (Archibald et al., 2019). For this study, Zoom video conferencing allowed me to conduct virtual face-to-face interviews, gather insights in real-time, and ensure that all responses were collected accurately. This virtual platform was also utilized to record the virtual interviews and save interview transcripts for review. Ultimately, this tool increased efficiency, enhanced interpretations, and further the reach of scholarship (Moylan et al., 2015).

The virtual interviews that were conducted consisted of eight students and four SCAs. The students that were interviewed have matriculated through the conduct process and received a punitive sanction. These interviews focused on the participant's conduct experience, lessons learned, and financial implications. Next, I interviewed four SCAs who determine sanctions throughout the conduct process. The interviews focused on conduct background, conduct experience, opinion of conduct process, and student development philosophy. The virtual interviews with SCAs were used to gain knowledge of institutional policies and procedures connected with the student code of conduct and better understand how the implementation of the student code of conduct can be more influential on holistic student development and student success. Additionally, these interviews were used to gather information on SCA's level of freedom within the student conduct process and determine whether they have the autonomy to deviate from established protocols to yield better results for holistic student development.

In addition to collecting data through semistructured interviews, I took field notes during the virtual interviews to ensure information was being captured in its entirety. The field notes were utilized to document needed contextual information (Phillippi & Lauderdale, 2018). The information documented in the field notes included the overall observation of the interaction with participants, researcher impressions, preliminary coding, and reflection. These interview field notes were evaluated from each interview to inform data analysis. Lastly, an online demographic survey was deployed. The online demographic survey contextualized the intersectionality of participant representation in the student conduct process.

Since data was collected in a myriad of ways to achieve triangulation, implementing sound measures of tracking data was critical. For this study, I used Microsoft Excel as a cataloging system to keep track of data. The data was cataloged based on participant responses to the semistructured interview questions and the demographic survey. This program allowed me to utilize spreadsheets to capture outcomes and log research from participant interactions, infuse field notes, and categorize and document emerging themes from research. The information documented via data tracking was eventually exported to NVivo for detailed coding data analysis. Themes derived from the semistructured interviews, researcher interview field notes, and the demographic survey was compiled utilizing thematic analysis and coding to identify and communicate similar observations from the data collected.

Role of the Researcher

I have worked in Student Affairs in a professional capacity for over ten years. Throughout that timeframe, I have worked as a student conduct practitioner and with SCAs within multiple conduct systems. In all of my roles over the years, I have always had a passion for high impact practices and methods to enhance the student conduct experience by removing self-imposed barriers that stall development and success. My passion and long-standing interest in the effects of student conduct practices may present bias. The potential bias was addressed by utilizing proper credibility measures. I am not currently employed by the institution that is the focus of this study. I previously held multiple roles within Student Affairs at the research site, so I have a professional association with senior administration, faculty, staff, and students. Although I have a connection to the research site, no conflict of interest exists concerning myself, the study site, or the research participants. Within this study, I sought to investigate, analyze, and elevate the voices of participants. This sentiment aligns with Sutton and Austin (2015), who explained the researcher's role in qualitative research is to attempt to access the thoughts and feelings of study participants.

This qualitative research study focused on the perceptions and experiences of twelve selected participants. The demographics of the participants included eight students and four student conduct administrators at the research site. I intend to understand the research participant's experiences and perceptions related to the use of punitive monetary fines as a sanctioning outcome within the current conduct system at the research site. This study's findings may contribute to a deeper understanding of monetary fines' effects as punitive conduct sanctions on holistic student development. Additionally, findings could contribute to a further understanding of the role of SCAs and offer a high impact practices model for SCAs to employ alternative means to address student conduct behavior.

Data Analysis

Data Coding and Analysis

According to Elliott (2018), coding is an almost universal process in qualitative research; it is a fundamental aspect of the analytical process and the way in which researchers break down their data to make something new. Furthermore, Creswell (2015) highlights that coding is a process in which the researcher takes qualitative data apart to see what it yields before putting the data back together in a meaningful way. For this study, I utilized NVivo, a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software for data coding and analysis. NVivo technology was utilized to guide the process of coding and discovering themes and patterns in the data. According to Moylan et al. (2015), advances in web-based technology have created new opportunities for analyzing qualitative data.

Although the data could be considered manageable due to the number of participants, a computer software program streamlined coding and thematic data analysis. The advantages of the computer software program included organizing, coding, annotating, retrieving, and analyzing documentation collections. Basit (2013) explained that the researcher must clearly understand that the computer software program does not do the researcher's analysis. Additionally, I was able to create the categories, execute segmenting and coding, and decide what data to retrieve and collate.

Upon collecting the initial data from semistructured interviews, interview field notes, and a demographic survey, I coded and analyzed each transcript for themes and characteristics. Data is broken down into smaller chunks during the data coding phase, compared, and grouped in categories based on their similarities (Walker & Myrick, 2006). I assigned codes to words and phrases derived from interview responses to help capture the context of the response, which helped better analyze and summarize the results. Codes were collapsed into overarching themes to determine the most dominant themes in each participant's interview. These overarching themes were described in the analysis of the qualitative research study. Qualitative data analysis is a process wherein researchers systematically organize data on topics and discover and interpret specific meanings, themes, and rules from that data (Shin et al., 2009). This pathway illuminated themes discovered and made meanings of the perceptions of participants regarding punitive monetary sanctions.

Data Analysis: Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is a qualitative research method to identify patterns or themes within a given data set (Miller, 2020). The analysis is independent of any specific theoretical framework, so it provides researchers the flexibility to apply any paradigm to their analysis. This notion is reinforced by Braun and Clarke (2006), who stated that thematic analysis is a flexible and valuable research tool that can potentially provide a rich and detailed yet complex account of data. Furthermore, Peel (2020) suggested that the stages of thematic analysis are interactive to provide the required flexibility, complexity, and structure for researchers to scrutinize comprehensively and interpret systematically from the qualitative data.

As a researcher new to the various concepts and applications of sound data collection and analysis, the use of thematic analysis provided guidance in identifying patterns or themes. Braun and Clarke (2006) identified a six-stage approach that offers a cohesive framework to address data, including familiarizing yourself with the data, generating codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining themes, and writing outcomes. Moreover, the objective of thematic analysis in this qualitative research study is to identify patterns in the data. This approach helped in determining themes that were frequently referred to, recurred across virtual interviews, elevated through the demographic survey, or recorded in my interview field notes as a themed response that was passionately expressed.

Research Credibility and Accuracy

Qualitative research is more concerned with trustworthiness than reliability and validity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Diane (2014) explained that researchers should adhere to the following criteria of credibility, dependability, transferability, authenticity, and reflexivity to evaluate and achieve trustworthiness in qualitative research. This study utilized the suggested criteria to achieve proper quality measures.

Credibility is the first factor described to ensure trustworthiness. Credibility refers to the data's truth or the participant's views and the researcher's interpretation and representation (Polit & Beck, 2012). One strategy I utilized to assure credibility is triangulation. Casey and Murphy (2009) described triangulation as the process of using multiple sources to draw conclusions. Additionally, through the use of triangulation methods, the researcher identifies and uses various data collection methods to gain an articulate and comprehensive view of the phenomenon. For this study to achieve triangulation, the multiple data collection methods included semistructured virtual interviews, analysis of interview field notes, and an online demographic survey. The various data collection methods identified strengthened the design and increased my ability to interpret findings.

Dependability is the second factor described to ensure trustworthiness.Shenton (2004) explained that the researcher must include a detailed report of how the study was conducted so that another researcher could repeat the study with similar results. This study offered a detailed report that includes how the participants were selected, the interview questions used to guide the semistructured virtual interviews, and how the data was analyzed to identify themes. This strategy showcases the measures taken to ensure the trustworthiness of the study.

Transferability is the third factor described to ensure trustworthiness. According to Korstjens and Moser (2018), transferability is the degree to which qualitative research results can be transferred to other contexts or settings with other respondents. Furthermore, Shenton (2004) explained that transferability is achieved when the researcher communicates the environment in which the research will be conducted. For this study, transferability was achieved by utilizing thick description. According to Korstjens and Moser, thick description describes not just the behavior and experiences but their context so that the behavior and experiences become meaningful to an outsider.

I collected thick data, which, according to Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2007), corresponds to data that is detailed and complete enough to maximize the ability to find meaning. I clearly explained and provided detailed information so that the reader has a panoramic view and can transfer information to other settings and contexts. This strategy showcased the measures taken to showcase transferability and ensure the study's trustworthiness.

Authenticity is the fourth factor described to ensure trustworthiness. Schwandt et al. (2007) argued that authenticity is an extension of the trustworthiness criteria. It enables questions to be asked about how interpretations are made and how the research process has evolved. Furthermore, the authenticity principle recognizes that inquiry and understanding are a process of learning, changing, negotiating, and ultimately acting. Qualitative research affects the researcher and research participants' consciousness to the extent that it can change how they understand the truth(s) (Johnson & Rasulova, 2017). I ensured study authenticity by elevating the research participant's authentic voices regarding their experience within the student conduct process and aligning responses with identified themes derived from the interview process to capture participants' views and lived experiences.

Reflexivity is the fifth factor identified to ensure trustworthiness. Reflexivity is considered the process of critical self-reflection about oneself as a researcher. It identifies one’s own biases, preferences, and preconceptions, including the participants' research relationship and how they affect participants' answers to questions (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Reflective journaling is a strategy that was utilized to achieve reflexivity. Reflective journals are beneficial for qualitative researchers and are tools for critical self-reflection and evaluation of the research process and design (Mays & Pope, 2000). This step is considered an integral part of ensuring the transparency and quality of research, acknowledging the importance of self-awareness (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Following these practical quality measures ensured the study's credibility and accuracy.

Discrepant Cases

Once the data was collected and analyzed, I ran a search for discrepant cases. Maxwell (1997) identified discrepant cases as instances that cannot be accounted for by a particular interpretation or explanation that can point out essential defects in an account. Additionally, there are times when a discrepant instance is not persuasive, as when the understanding of the discrepant data is itself in doubt. According to Bashir et al. (2008), to address discrepant data, researchers should actively search for, analyze, and report negative or discrepant data that is an exception to patterns or that modifies patterns found in data. If discrepant cases are identified, I will rigorously examine both the supporting and discrepant data to assess whether it is more plausible to retain or modify the conclusion.

Data Analysis Results

This study aimed to investigate how students and student conduct administrators (SCAs) at the study site perceive monetary sanctions and to explore possible consequences of monetary sanctions on holistic student development and student success at the study site. The local problem that compelled this study was that monetary fines as a punitive sanction tend to be overly represented in the student attrition group at a mid-sized, 4-year, predominately white, public institution of higher education in a southeastern state. Data was collected through semistructured virtual interviews, interview field notes, and an online demographic survey. The semistructured virtual interviews produced the most substantive data for the study. The virtual interviews were recorded and transcribed utilizing the Zoom platform for findings.

Additionally, the demographic survey was used to gather background information on participants. After each interview, I gathered field notes from observations of each engagement with participants capturing mannerisms, phrases, and descriptions. This section contains the results from the thematic analysis of the 12 interview transcripts analyzed to discover codes, common themes, and patterns linked to the research questions.

The interview responses are password protected and were kept confidential on my cloud drive, which only I had access to review. By utilizing the qualitative data analysis software NVivo each participant was assigned a participant number and color code as a unique identifier. This step was done to protect participant identities and alleviate the chance of research bias (Russell-Bennet et al., 2020).

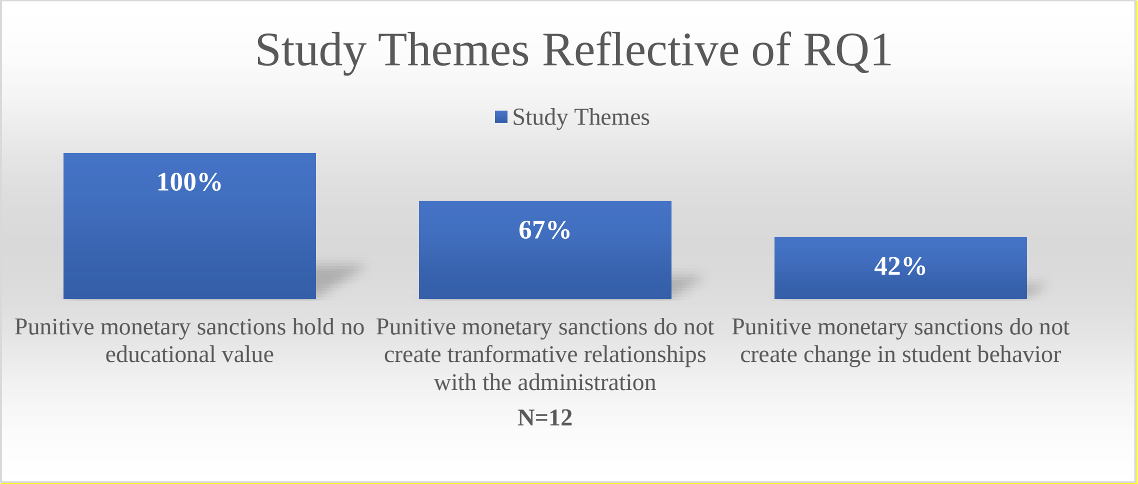
Themes were identified through in-depth data analysis. The themes that are referenced the most by participants are considered the major themes of the study. Furthermore, the themes that received fewer references from participants were identified as minor themes. This study generated four major themes and two minor themes derived from the research questions. Additionally, subthemes were identified to expound on the major and minor themes of the study to capture the essence of the participant perceptions.

RQ1: How do student conduct participants (students and SCAs) perceive to be the consequences of punitive monetary sanctions?

The first research question focused on how student conduct participants perceive punitive monetary sanctions. Figure 1 references the themes identified reflective of Research Question 1.

Figure 2

Study themes for RQ1



Two major themes emerged from the thematic analysis of the interview responses for this research question. All 12 of the participants described punitive monetary sanctions as holding no direct educational value. Participant 1 added, “fines teach individuals responsible for violating conduct policies nothing tangible, particularly if the individual has the financial means to simply pay the fee.” Participant 12 also added, “punitive monetary sanctions are intended to dissuade students from violating the code of conduct, but no data supports direct educational value or shifts in behavior.” The second major theme discovered was punitive monetary sanctions do not create transformative relationships with the administration. These participants shared how punitive monetary sanctions directly impacted their student experience and professional experiences at the study site. Additionally, one minor theme derived from the first question was that many participants did not believe punitive monetary sanctions create change in student behavior. Table 1 reflects the themes identified in response to the first research question of the study delineating the study's major and minor themes, as well as subthemes.

Table 1

Themes for RQ1

Theme	Major/Minor Theme Designation	Subthemes	Number of Participant References	Percentage of Participant References
Punitive monetary sanctions hold no direct educational value	Major	1: Lack learning goals 2: Reactive vs. proactive	12	100%
Punitive monetary sanctions do not create transformative relationships with the administration	Major	1: Transactional engagement 2: Predetermined sanctioning outcome	8	67%
Punitive monetary sanctions do not create change in student behavior	Minor		5	42%

Note: RQ1 = Research Question 1.

Major Themes Reflective of RQ1:

Major Theme 1: Punitive Monetary Sanctions Have No Direct Educational Value

The first major theme of the study is reflective of research question one, which was the perception that punitive monetary sanctions hold no immediate educational value. All twelve of the study participants identified negative aspects of punitive monetary sanctions highlighting that from their experience, punitive monetary sanctions hold no direct educational value to the recipient. This perception is significant due to participants representing two different demographics at the study site. Participant responses generated the following subthemes: (a) lack of learning goals, (b) reactive vs. proactive. The 12 participants revealed that the punitive monetary sanction administered or received did not create an identified learning outcome that directly addressed the behavior that violated the student code of conduct.

Subtheme 1: Lack learning goals. The first subtheme that emerged was the lack of learning goals due to the automatic administration of punitive monetary sanctions when certain conduct violations are adjudicated. The participants expressed a range of emotions and how punitive monetary sanctions do not create an opportunity to learn from a mistake holistically but have a reverse effect on the overall conduct experience. Participant 1 was an employee at the study site adjudicating conduct cases for over one year and noted they could never align a punitive monetary sanction to a theory-supported learning goal. Additionally, cases that required a punitive monetary sanctioning outcome created the most strain on student engagement with no direct learning outcome. Participant 1 stated:

> Some administrators and students know that a monetary sanction will automatically be administered due to the type of case, not the circumstances that lead to the outcome. Although there is an understanding about violating the conduct policy, many students do not know the cost affiliated with a violation which does not create a learning outcome for holistic student development.

Participant 2 corroborated Participant 1's realization from a student perspective and said, "I didn't know a poor lapse in judgment would be so expensive." Participant 2 explained that they were in a dorm room that was searched, and drug paraphernalia was identified. Although they did not reside at the location, they were still reported and found responsible for violating the code of conduct, leading to a punitive monetary sanction. Participant 2 added that the conduct process was direct, and no learning goal was identified throughout the process. The experience exacerbated the fact that the administration has a blind spot regarding the effects of punitive monetary sanctions on the student experience, financial strain, and mental toll.

Participate 3, a student, complained that they lost faith in administration due to no identified significant learning goal. Additionally, Participant 3 identified from their experience that the punitive monetary sanction compounded the financial and emotional strain of making a poor decision with no learning outcome other than getting caught is expensive. Participant 3 added:

> I know I made a poor decision, but the punitive monetary sanctioning outcome only highlighted not getting caught, not education, and learning from my mistake.

Participant 7 was an employee at the study site for three years, adjudicating a range of conduct cases. This participant firmly remarked that the lack of learning goals hinders students' overall engagement and development. Participant 7 stated, "I cannot quantify what a student learns when I am expected to administer an extensive fine which does not address the behavior or decision making." Participant 7 showcased disappointment in the administration of hefty fines as punitive monetary sanctions and no alignment with educational goals hindering holistic development.

Finally, Participant 12 reinforced, "establishing learning goals would contribute to the growth and development of students. As it stands right now, when I adjudicate a conduct case, everyone in the room knows a punitive monetary sanction will be administered. With this being the expectation, there is no pathway to learn from a mistake. The primary outcome is to accept what is given and deal with the additional consequences of applying the monetary sanction to a student's account.”

Subtheme 2: Reactive vs. Proactive. The second subtheme was the administration of punitive monetary sanctions seems reactive vs. proactive and does not contribute to holistic student development and student success. Many participants identified that the lack of proactive education regarding the overall conduct process promoted gaps in understanding the ramifications of conduct violations. Participant 4 was employed at the study site for two years and adjudicated conduct cases. Participant 4 narrated:

There is no true educational pathway to create an in-depth understanding of the conduct process prior to students making poor decisions. Students are expected to review the code of conduct and sign a consent form. Still, there is no actual context for students to understand how a poor decision can shift the trajectory of their educational experience.

Additionally, Participant 4 stated that a punitive monetary sanction should be administered once all educational resources for better decision making are exhausted, not simply in response to a violation.

Participants 8 and 10, both students who participated in the study, shared that they recall hearing information regarding the student conduct process during new student orientation but did not know about the punitive monetary fining system.

Participant 8 stated, "if I had known I would receive a fine just for having alcohol in my room, I would have made a different decision." Participant 10 added, "assuming the entire conduct process is understood from the brief interaction with the administration is irresponsible and makes students think the administration is simply out to capitalize from student mistakes."

Participant 9 admitted they did not have a working knowledge of the conduct process since they were classified as a transfer student. Their encounter with the student conduct office was for violating the student conduct policy for a controlled substance. This participant felt the punitive monetary sanction was reactive due to the lack of direct education regarding the conduct process to transfer students. Participant 9 stated the following:

> I didn't know the institution had jurisdiction to adjudicate and charge students for incidents that did not occur on campus, which led to both fines from the court system and the institution. It seemed as if I was being punished twice for one mistake while coming to the realization the institutional fine was more than the court fine, which created an additional lens of confusion.

Major Theme 2: Punitive monetary sanctions do not create transformative relationships with administration. The second major theme of the study, reflective of research question one, was punitive monetary sanctions do not build transformative relationships with the administration. Both student and SCA participants offered rich context that shed light on the theme. Eight of the twelve participants identified the fact that punitive monetary sanctions created barriers generating the following subthemes: (a) transactional engagement, and (b) predetermined sanctioning outcomes.

*Subtheme 1: Transactional engagement***.** The first subtheme identified was the issue of the student conduct experience seemingly felt like a transactional engagement without room to address the myriad of reasons behind poor student decision making. Student participants strongly identified that through their experiences with the current conduct system, the engagement with student conduct administrators was disingenuous and that they had no authentic voice and agency through the conduct process. Participant 6 stated, "I felt that I would not get a fair opportunity when engaging with student conduct administration." Adding that the engagement seemed forced, and the outcome was disclosed before any accurate detail of the incident that triggered a conduct meeting was discussed, creating a disconnect throughout the conduct process. Furthermore, Participant 3 shared this same concern, sharing that their experience was not ideal, adding they had a history of substance abuse. The participant added:

> I disclosed aspects of my past struggles, which were not considered in the conduct case outcome; I was still given a large monetary fine and told I needed to pay in the allotted timeframe to avoid future ramifications.

Participant 1 gave the following feedback from an SCA perspective, adding,

> I'm use to enforcing "zero-tolerance" discipline: That's what I knew, but it doesn't work. One of the best things I ever did was open my eyes to the importance of

> student engagement and good working relationships. We don't need punitive monetary sanctions that do not sustain student engagement or promote holistic student development. Most of us got into student affairs leadership because of an ideological belief that we could positively impact society. This belief brings us back to why we went into education in the first place.

Aspects of this shared belief was presented by another participant. Participant 12 offered the following feedback:

> As administrators, we must deter misbehavior while developing positive relationships; we must instill both fear and trust, and at times we must impose sanctions that we do not necessarily believe in–and that are not necessarily effective–because we do not have access or support to better alternatives. Negotiating these contradictions and making uncomfortable compromises sometimes results in feelings of demoralization and failure.

Subtheme 2: Predetermined sanctioning outcome. The second subtheme identified was the issue of the sanctioning outcomes for certain conduct violations being predetermined when other conduct violations did not have a set sanctioning outcome. Both student and SCA participants shared strong opinions regarding the sanctioning outcomes for drug and alcohol sanctions. Participants 5 and 11, both students, shared similar perspectives, highlighting that the accusation of drugs or alcohol itself was enough to know a punitive monetary sanction would be administered as a case outcome. Participant 5 stated: "Although the drugs and alcohol were in my roommates' possession, the assumption was I knew about it due to us living together, and ultimately I received the same fine. It felt like finding me responsible and giving me the monetary fine was more important than the facts." Participant 11 added: "I knew going into the conduct meeting that regardless of the truth, I was going to get a fine due to being in possession of alcohol."

Participant 12 elaborated on the conduct process and how decisions are based on the preponderance of the evidence that views case adjudication from a lens of "more likely than not," which leads to outcomes of responsibility regardless of direct or indirect involvement. Viewing conduct cases from this lens can affect the overall outcome regardless of direct evidence and creates barriers to student engagement.

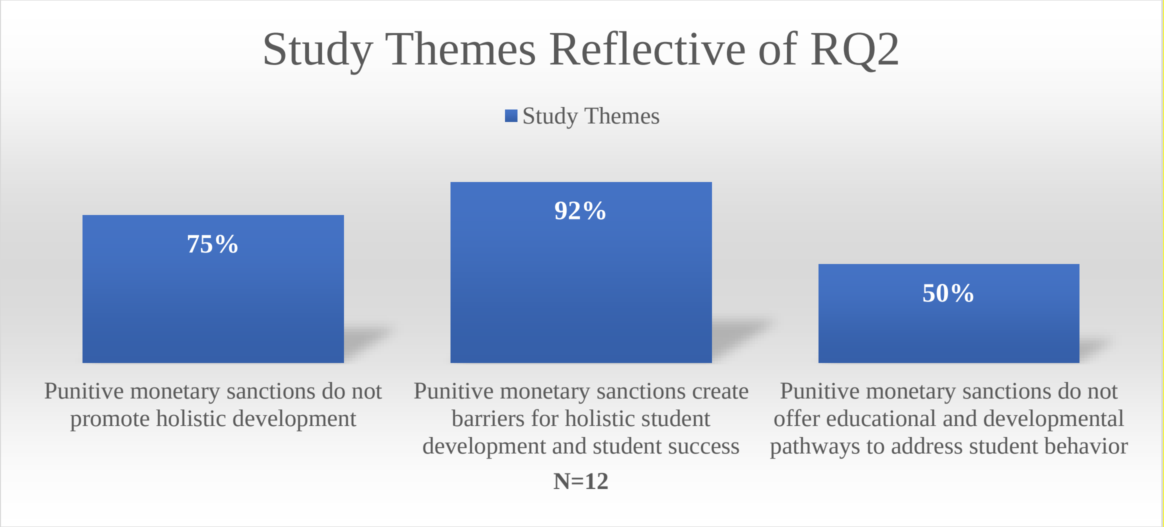
Minor Theme 1: Punitive monetary sanctions do not create change in student behavior. The first minor theme that followed the second major theme of the study was that punitive monetary sanctions do not create change in student behavior. Five of the twelve participants reported that the punitive monetary sanction was detrimental to their behavior rather than creating change. Participant 11 added although he was caught with marijuana and received a punitive monetary sanction, the only way he could pay for the fine and not place an additional burden on his family was to sell marijuana to individuals within the community. The participant stated, "it was my only option at the time; my back was against the wall. Instead of helping me change how I handled my issues, it added fuel to the fire that this path was the only way out of the situation; by any means necessary." SCA Participants 1, 4, 7, and 12 all confirmed that there is no identified mechanism in place to quantify changes in student behavior based on administering punitive monetary sanctions. Additionally, many students are repeat offenders, and monetary fines are still issued in those cases. Considering the gaps in practice and effectiveness, new measures for addressing student conduct outcomes could contribute to changes in student behavior.

RQ2: How do student conduct participants (students and SCAs) perceive monetary sanctions as promoting holistic student development and student success?

The second research question focused on how student conduct participants perceive punitive monetary sanctions as promoting holistic student development and student success. Figure 2 references the themes identified in correlation to research question two.

Figure 3

Study themes for RQ2



Two major themes emerged from the thematic analysis of the interview responses for this research question. Nine of the twelve participants believed punitive monetary sanctions do not promote holistic development. Participants shared how holistic development was not an area of focus when punitive monetary sanctions were administered as a sanctioning outcome and, in many cases, hindered overall development.

Additionally, eleven of the 12 participants perceived that punitive monetary sanctions create barriers to holistic student success. These participants shared how punitive monetary sanctions directly impacted their student experience and professional experiences at the study site. One minor theme was derived from the second research question, highlighting the perception that punitive monetary sanctions do not offer educational and developmental pathways to address student behavior.

Table 2 reflects the themes that addressed the study's second research question delineating the major and minor themes, as well as the subthemes.

Table 2

Themes for RQ2

Themes	Major/Minor Theme Designation	Subthemes	Number of Participant References	Percentage of Participant References
Punitive monetary sanctions do not promote holistic development	Major	1: Emotional development 2: Moral development	9	75%
Punitive monetary sanctions create barriers for holistic student development and student success	Major	1: Educational pause 2: Stress & anxiety 3: Financial strain 4: Lack of trust in the conduct system	11	92%
Punitive monetary sanctions do not offer educational and developmental pathways to address student behavior	Minor	1: Lack of restorative measures 2: Establish learning goals with alternative sanctioning outcomes	6	50%

Note: RQ2 = Research Question 2.

Major Themes Reflective of RQ2:

Major Theme 3: Punitive monetary sanctions do not promote holistic student development. The study's third major theme, reflective of research question two, was that punitive monetary sanctions do not promote holistic student development. Nine of the twelve participants identified how punitive monetary sanctions could hinder the full development of students both socially and academically, generating the following subthemes (a) emotional development, and (b) moral development.

Subtheme 1: Emotional Development. The first subtheme identified focused on the emotional development of students that receive a punitive monetary sanctioning outcome. Neumeister (2017) stated that the student conduct process should be developmental. Many conduct participants do not acquire the capacity to understand, experience, express, and manage emotions within the current parameters of the student conduct process. Participant 5 added to this theory by stating, "the monetary fine created an internal rage due to the magnitude of the fine that didn't make space for understanding and development." Additionally, Participant 8 added that they did not feel heard throughout the conduct process, which did not lead to tangible understanding to create changes in behavior. Participant 8 stated:

> Student conduct administrators do not grasp how detrimental the current conduct process and monetary sanctioning outcomes do to the mental psyche of those going through the process. I do not feel the conduct process was focused on my

> emotional development. I felt that fining me was more important than my development and the sanction's emotional toll on my overall well-being.

Additionally, Participant 11 contributed by sharing the same sentiments as other participants but added:

> I was told to be transparent and truthful when going through the conduct process. Additionally, I was told the purpose of the conduct process was to address the incident and potential violation of the code of conduct, but the goal was to help my overall student development. There was no perceived focus on my development or the emotional state I was navigating at the time of the incident. The significant takeaway was a $750 fine and a feeling of emotional defeat for being transparent to no avail, not that I shouldn't have been held responsible, but the outcome seemed excessive.

Participants 7 and 12 offered that although emotional development is quantifiable, no trackable measures were in place to create a tangible pathway. Adding the conduct process as it stands is focused on swift case adjudication and assuring community safety. Developing ways to add focus to student emotional development would require a shift in institutional culture and a commitment to resources beyond the scope of the student conduct administration.

Subtheme 2: Moral Development. The second subtheme identified focused on the moral development of students who received a punitive monetary sanction. Both student and SCA participants stated that the punitive monetary sanction does not create an ethos for moral development. Participant 1 added, "the goal of the conduct process is to help students see that choices have consequences and not to make the same choices in the future, but there is no data to support attaining moral development by administering a monetary sanction. Data supports through recidivism rates that applying a monetary fine does not create a shift in decision making and moral development for some students." Participant 12 supported this stance by adding, "moral development is a spectrum. Currently, there are many constraints that do not allow administrators to know if a student is being developed morally by administering a monetary fine. Furthermore, without the application of a framework that supports student development, the work is solely to adjudicate cases and administer sanctioning outcomes that may or may not enhance a student's moral compass."

Student participants gave in-depth insight addressing this subtheme and responded by stating they were not morally developed when going through the conduct process. Participant 2 added, "getting charged with a drug violation is never viewed in a positive light. I knew there were risks in possessing drugs and getting caught, but morally I do not think the usage of marijuana is wrong." Participant 3 stated that their experience going through the conduct process and receiving a monetary sanction went by so quickly that there was no space to address the incident and outcome from a moral lens. Participant 5 added, "there is no moral compass to address when a bad decision was or wasn't made. I know people who have been charged with violations simply from being in the same space where a violation occurred; that doesn't make them morally wrong or creates an opportunity for moral development."

Major Theme 4: Punitive monetary sanctions create barriers for holistic student development and student success. The fourth major theme of the study, reflective of research question two, was that punitive monetary sanctions create barriers for holistic student development and student success. This theme was elevated by 92% of the participants that described a myriad of identified obstacles that students face when monetary fines are administered as a sanctioning outcome which includes (a) educational pause, (b) stress and anxiety, (c) financial strain, (d) lack of trust in conduct system.

Subtheme 1: Educational pause. The first subtheme focused on the realization that the punitive monetary sanction created a barrier that put the student's educational experience on pause. The SCA participants offered examples from their experience adjudicating cases where some students could not pay their monetary fine(s) and were not retained at the institution. Participant 1 gave an example of a student who matriculated through the conduct process and received a fine of $750 in violation of the drug and alcohol policy. The student was classified as first-generation, low-socioeconomic status, and struggled to find a space of belonging in being new to the collegiate setting. This student never recovered from the outcome of the conduct experience. Participant 1 added, "unfortunately, some students have many barriers they have to navigate just to be at the same threshold as other students. Adding a punitive monetary sanction on top of other struggles does not create pathways for development or success." Participant 4 added that the monetary fine is the primary barrier that does not relieve students already trying to figure it out. Participants 2 and 3 offered a perspective from the student lens, stating that the monetary fine was a way for the institution to charge students significant amounts of money with no return in student support. Participant 2 said they had no clue where the funds go or what resources it supports to better the student experience or help students make better decisions. Participant 8 stated that if it wasn't for them receiving a refund check, there was no way they could work enough hours in a work-study job to pay the fine in a timely manner to register for classes and meet individual financial needs.

Subtheme 2: Stress and Anxiety. The second subtheme focused on the stress and anxiety the administering of monetary fine(s) created for both students and SCAs. SCA participants 1, 4, 7, and 12 mentioned a level of stress they carry, realizing that they have to administer a sanctioning method that does not promote holistic development and pathways for student success. Additionally, each SCA participant added that the monetary sanction increases stress and anxiety for many students. In this landscape where many students struggle with mental health, a new lens of cognizance is necessary. Student Participant 10 added that they felt the monetary fine as a sanction contributed to their stress and anxiety due to already being stretched thin financially just to attend college. Participant 10 explained:

> I accept my mistake and the consequences, but I was already taking an anti-depressant for a mental health diagnosis. The monetary fine added to my stress and anxiety because I was already working two work-study jobs just to pay my tuition balance. My mother has multiple health issues and only provides little financial support. I had to deal with the stress and anxiety of not knowing if I would be able to continue pursuing my collegiate dream created a lens of stress

> that was hard to navigate. Now, I had a major fine that I had to figure out how to pay.

When asked if this information was disclosed during the conduct process, Participant 10 stated that although mental health was discussed, the only relief they were offered was that the hold placed on their financial aid account could be removed to register for classes. Otherwise, the fine needed to be paid before they could return the following semester.

Subtheme 3: Financial Strain. The third subtheme focused on the financial strain that punitive monetary sanctions add to students found in violation of student conduct policies. SCA Participant 12 added that many students must find employment both on and off-campus to pay their fine(s), adding, "it’s hard to see students struggle to pay a fine you had to administer.” SCA participant 1 added, “listening to the stories and knowing I can’t indeed decide what can help the student course correct and waive the fine associated is disheartening.” SCA Participant 7 correspondingly explained, “I know if I were a student going through the same conduct experience, I would struggle to try to figure out how to pay the fine. College is already hard enough to navigate, and adding large-scale fines contributes to many students' financial strain and uncertainty.”

Several of the student participants mentioned having to find alternate means to pay the fine. Participants mentioned having to use refund checks to pay the fine, and others mentioned having to find employment to pay the fine. Participant 3 recalled using their refund check to pay the $500 fine they received. This participant stated, “it was the only option I had to pay the fine and not hinder my educational journey even though that money was supposed to go to books." Participant 5 stated, "I had to get an off-campus job just to pay the fine. In navigating that process, I had to find transportation to work, work long hours after going to class all day, and my grades suffered, ultimately causing me to repeat a class." Participant 11 added that they approached paying the fine from a mindset of "by any means necessary," in which they decided to sell drugs to pay the fine they received for being held responsible for violating the drug and alcohol policy. Recalling that it was a dark space to navigate emotionally because they wanted to succeed as a first-generation student. Still, the risk was necessary to continue on the pathway to graduation.

Subtheme 4: Lack of trust in the conduct system. The fourth subtheme focused on the lack of trust both student and SCA participants have in the conduct system. Six of the eight student participants discussed the topic of this subtheme. These participants believed that the conduct process did not consider them individually when addressing their respective conduct cases. Additionally, these participants added that the student conduct process should not be one-size-fits-all. There are a multitude of factors to consider when viewing the proper sanctioning outcomes. Participant 2 stated, "I felt like the system only benefits the institution and burned me to the extent I didn't think I would be able to come back to school."

Participant 6 expressed that the conduct experience was a lot like navigating a system that is in place for you to fail. "Yes, I made a mistake, but how can you say you are here to help me make better choices and development in and out of the classroom, and the system that is in place is the very thing hindering me from achieving those goals.” Participant 9 expressed the same concerns adding, “I didn’t feel in any way that the conduct process was in place for my development. The only thing I learned was not to get caught again, but the issues I faced due to the conduct process and mandatory monetary sanctioning were present for an extended time following the outcome.

Minor Theme 2: Punitive monetary sanctions do not offer education and developmental pathways to address student behavior. The second minor theme of the study addresses the perception that punitive monetary sanctions do not provide educational and developmental pathways to address student behavior. Both student and SCA participants offered valuable context that shed light on the minor theme. Six of the twelve participants identified that punitive monetary sanctions do not provide pathways to address student behavior educationally or developmentally which generated the following subthemes: (a) lack of restorative measures, (b) establish learning goals with alternative sanctioning outcomes.

Subtheme 1: Lack of restorative measures. The first subtheme was the lack of restorative measures infused in the overall conduct process and punitive monetary sanctions taking precedence in certain cases. Participants acknowledged that the current conduct practices do not offer restorative measures when addressing student behavior. SCA participants 1 and 12 agreed that when a punitive monetary sanction is administered, there is nothing restorative being conveyed. Participant 1 added, “when a punitive monetary sanction is administered, it sends a message that this is solely the punishment for violating the conduct policy. In no way does it generate a restorative outcome to address the harm to the offender, the community, and those interconnected.”

Participant 12 elaborated by adding, “I’ve seen how the monetary sanctions directly affect students and their families. I’ve received calls from parents pleading for the fine to be waved due to the financial strain. Unfortunately, the conduct process as it stands does not afford the opportunity to address harm and find pathways to build relationships based on respect and help students take responsibility for their actions and repair because the monetary fine generally takes precedence.”

Responses from the perspective of student participants included a need to have a process that helps address conduct violations and how students can learn from a mistake rather than receiving a punitive monetary sanction. Participant 11 offered, “If I had been given the opportunity to address my case as a learning opportunity with restorative measures, I wouldn’t have continued to violate the conduct policy to pay the fine.” Participant 9 added, “if there was an opportunity to address my violation with a restorative outcome, I believe my collegiate experience wouldn’t have been interrupted.” Both students and SCA participants spoke to a need for restorative measures for a mission-critical comprehensive conduct process for student development and success. Participant 12 stated, “when the monetary fine becomes the highlight of the conduct process, we have missed a rich opportunity to meet the student where they are and provide outcomes that build them up, not create more heartburn.”

Subtheme 2: Establish learning goals with alternative sanctioning outcomes. The second subtheme was the current conduct practice does not offer learning goals with alternative sanctioning outcomes. From the participants' responses, learnings goals and alternative sanctioning outcomes could go a long way in the development of students and offer SCAs pathways to help students take ownership and shift behaviors. Additionally, the fact no learning outcomes are identified when addressing violations of the conduct process elucidates a gap in practice within the spirit of the process. Participant 2 added, “as a first-generation student who knew nothing about college upon arrival, I would have benefited from a mentorship program or guidance on ways to get connected in a positive manner. Instead, I was given a $500 fine for a mistake that followed me throughout my collegiate journey.”

Participant 4 added, “the ability to outline the learning outcomes of conduct case adjudication would give everyone involved agency in the engagement. Learning outcomes that focus on navigating social settings and decision making with resources like support groups, reflection papers, and decision making training offer a tangible lens of development that is transferable beyond the mistake a student made to end up in the conduct office.” Participant 12 had the same perception as Participant 4, saying, “identifying learning goals going into a conduct meeting creates a path for students to see that choices and decisions affect the entire community. Additionally, using measures other than monetary fines allows a trustworthy relationship to be developed where a student can see you care and want them to be successful long-term.”

All of the research questions for this study were answered through the responses of the semistructured interview questions with student conduct participants. The data analysis revealed that both student and student conduct administrators had negative perceptions of a conduct system with a heavy focus on punitive monetary sanctions as conduct outcomes. Participants also indicated the need for alternative measures to be considered for authentic holistic student development and success. This insight emphasizes the philosophy that holistic student development and success are closely related to the theory, learning, and democratic outcomes (Gurin et al., 2002).

Accuracy and Credibility

To ensure the accuracy of interpretation of the research findings, I executed member checking with participants (Creswell, 2015). Member checking is used to validate, verify, or assess the trustworthiness of qualitative results (Doyle, 2007). Member checking was achieved by utilizing a respondent validation checklist. This checklist consisted of directed questions that focused on the transcript review of each participant, giving them the opportunity to change, add, or clarify information captured to ensure the reliability and authenticity of the data for the research project. Researchers use member checking when the data and interpretations from the study are tested or reviewed by the participants from whom the information was initially obtained (Birt et al., 2016). Executing sound member checking allowed each participant to review, add to, clarify, and make corrections to their responses from the interview to ensure the accuracy and credibility of the findings. Additionally, member checking was executed in dual phases, including (a) initial transcription check for accuracy and correctness and (b) participant checking of data interpretation at the conclusion of the coding and thematic analysis.

According to Noble and Heale (2019), triangulation can enrich research as it offers various datasets to explain unique aspects of a phenomenon. Additionally, triangulation is viewed as a qualitative research strategy to test validity by converging information from different sources. Triangulation was achieved in this study through the data obtained via the semistructured virtual interviews, interview field notes, and the online demographic survey. Multiple sources of data collection methods can be utilized to form a deeper understanding of data outcomes (Heale & Forbes, 2013). Each aspect of triangulation informed the themes of the study, which enhanced the studied accuracy and credibility.

Discrepant Cases

According to Creswell (2015), discrepant cases in research are cases that disagree with, contradict, or do not support patterns or explanations that are emerging from the data. In this study, all of the data was adequately analyzed and rigorously examined for both supporting and discrepant data outcomes. All data was reevaluated to identify any inconsistent findings from the interviews and no discrepant case emerged.

Research as a Deliverable Project

A position paper was selected as the project for the outcome of this study focused on the role of student conduct administrators in holistic student development and student success. Information from the literature review, interview questions, and data analysis answered the research questions by providing insight into student conduct participants' perceptions and personal experiences. The research was designed to investigate how students and student conduct administrators perceive monetary sanctions and to explore possible consequences for holistic student development and student success. A position paper is the most appropriate format to provide the findings and possible solutions to the identified issue. For sustainable change to occur within the student conduct system, a position paper could be a valuable tool to elucidate the problem, provide data that supports the issue, and implore support from institutional leadership to promote change. Position papers typically argue a specific position or solution to a problem. Additionally, they can be powerful advocacy tools to help key decision-makers and influencers justify implementing solutions (Kashatus, 2002). This position paper will serve as the mechanism to transfer knowledge and understanding of the research and provide information to aid in decision making from a professional perspective.

Summary

Section 2 provided an overview and justification of the research design and methodology chosen for this study. I presented how a basic qualitative research study methodology was identified, selected, and utilized, which focused on punitive conduct sanctions, holistic student development, and student success at the study site. Additionally, in Section 2, I discussed my role as the researcher, participant selection and access, protection of participants, data collection, data analysis, credibility, and accuracy. This section concludes with an in-depth review of the results of the data analysis, which captured participant ideas, beliefs, and opinions regarding the conduct process. The analysis of the data revealed a total of four major themes and two minor themes. Additionally, twelve subthemes were identified, further capturing rich data. All of the themes identified were derived from semistructured interview questions focused on the study's research questions. The themes highlight the effects of punitive monetary sanctions on conduct participants. The data analysis informed the study's outcome, which could invoke systematic change within punitive conduct systems.

The purpose of this study was to investigate how students and student conduct administrators (SCAs) at the study site perceive monetary sanctions and explore possible consequences of monetary sanctions on holistic student development and student success at the study site. Based on the literature review and the data analysis from the participants that generated the themes of the study, Section 3 provides an overview of the project that was developed to address the problem of monetary fines as a punitive sanction that tends to be overly represented in the student attrition group at a mid-sized, 4-year, predominately white, public institution of higher education in a southeastern state. Additionally, Section 3 identified factors that influence high-impact student conduct practices by providing additional research specific to the needs of SCAs and their role in holistic student development and student success. Considering the research, I trust that SCAs and executive leadership recognize the importance of understanding the perceptions and experiences of student conduct participants to infuse alternative measures that provide a more restorative and autonomous path for development and success. Due to the nature of the study, a position paper was identified as the best pathway to present research findings to SCAs and executive leadership.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

The project chosen was a position paper that presented the study findings, supporting the recommendation of a professional development and assessment program for SCAs. The position paper outlined a framework for SCA development and process improvement focused on holistic student development and student success at institutions of higher education. Student conduct administrators often meet with students who have violated their university's policies or code of conduct. These students often feel like bystanders throughout the conduct process and do not have a voice or agency during the conduct process. This lack of engagement can create a barrier that further hinders student development and student success.

I performed a basic qualitative, interview-based study of students and SCAs at a mid-sized, 4-year, predominately white, public institution of higher education in a southeastern state. This study aimed to investigate how students and student conduct administrators (SCAs) perceive monetary sanctions and explore possible consequences for holistic student development and student success. The MTC for moral action served as the guiding conceptual framework for this project study. MTC offers a grounded framework that collegiate disciplinarians can apply to have a more significant influence on students. MTC is comprised of three major components integrating moral development theory, the transtheoretical model of behavioral change, and transformational leadership. The primary component applied to this study was transformational leadership which focuses on the potential motives in decision-makers, seeking to satisfy organizational needs, and engaging the decision-makers full potential.

The MTC for moral action provides conduct officials and stakeholders with a framework that aligns their practices with theory-driven, evidence-based methods to produce positive behavior change and moral development with the students they engage. The result of transformational leadership is a relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation that converts decision-makers into moral agents (Andersen et al., 2018). Transformational leadership tends to transform followers to perform tasks and achieve the group's vision, the organization, and the leader. Transformational leaders set examples while providing coaching and mentoring; as Burns (1978) stated, “Leaders are a particular kind of power holders. Like power, leadership is relational, collective, and purposeful.” (p. 18).

The project chosen was to develop a position paper that provided an overview of the study. The position paper sheds light on the experiences of those engaged in a punitive conduct system and evidence that new practices within student conduct programs at higher education institutions focused on holistic student development and student success are critical. Results from the qualitative thematic analysis of the interviews revealed the firsthand perceptions of student conduct participants concerning the factors that affected their experiences within a punitive conduct system. The outcome of my project study resulted in a position paper that provided information on developing professional development and assessment programs for student conduct administrators, elevating their role in holistic student development and student success.

Rationale for the Project Genre

The position paper was chosen as the project genre to present the finding of my study to the local study site and stakeholders, including a recommendation for professional development and assessment programs. As a result of the gap in research identifying SCA's perceived inability to utilize alternative sanctioning methods may be influencing holistic student development and student success. A position paper elucidates the knowledge gap, followed by an evidence-based review of options, leading to an endorsed position (Newsom & Haynes, 2018). This pathway was selected to address the gap in research surrounding the factors that contribute to the role of student conduct administrators in holistic student development and student success. As a result of the gap in research, the research study was designed to address the local problem by capturing the perceptions of students and SCAs and how they view current punitive outcomes within the student conduct system. Capturing how monetary sanctioning can affect holistic student development and student success contributes to the effectiveness and ineffectiveness of SCAs in holistic student development and student success.

A position paper was determined to be the most appropriate format to provide the findings and recommendations to the study site and the identified stakeholders. Data derived from the literature review, semistructured interviews, and data analysis addressed the study's research questions by providing insight into the perceptions of students and SCAs within a punitive conduct system. In order to create a pathway to address the gap in practice, findings, and solutions, it is critical to consider the study site and the stakeholders involved. Therefore, a position paper was selected as the most appropriate tool to present the issues, provide the data supporting the problem, and recommend a shift in philosophy and practice.

Institutions expect students to maintain standards of personal integrity in harmony with their educational goals; to be responsible for their actions; to observe national, state, local laws, and college or university regulations; and respect the rights, privileges, and property of other people. Yet, the role and scope of SCAs have grown more complex, and several researchers have noted the challenges for student conduct officers to be both legal and policy compliance managers as well as facilitate the education and development of students (Bickel & Lake, 1999;

Lake, 2009; Lowery & Dannells, 2004). The issue of monetary fines as a punitive sanction being overly represented in the student attrition group is exacerbated while exploring the impact of monetary sanctions at the study site. Therefore, the information in the position paper can assist SCAs and student affairs leadership in addressing the current practice and consider removing barriers affiliated with holistic student development and success.

The problem of monetary fines as a punitive sanction being overly represented in the student attrition group has not been considered in factors of retention, degree progression, development, and success. At the study site, the problem of mandatory punitive monetary sanctioning is critical. In a series of personal communications with the director of student conduct within the last few years, students were sanctioned fines equaling $491,900.00. Yet, no identified learning goals or educational values are associated with this sanctioning outcome. The problem was addressed through the content of the position paper by highlighting research outcomes and recommending a professional development program of SCAs focused on transformational leadership and student conduct sanctioning outcomes focused on restoration, education, and mutual respect.

The position paper highlights the study findings with recommendations for a practical professional development and assessment program for SCAs. The professional development program utilizes sustainable tools focused on the SCA's role in holistic student development and student success. The research problems were addressed throughout the position paper, including recommendations to improve the efficiency and persistence of the SCA role. A distinct area of focus positioned within the position paper is that the student conduct process is intended to be a learning experience that can yield growth, behavioral changes, and personal understanding of one’s responsibilities, including the consequences and impacts of one’s actions. This process must balance the needs and rights of students with the needs and expectations of the larger community in the institutional setting. Students should be treated with care and respect while being afforded the opportunity to receive a fair hearing and equitable outcomes. Sanctions and interventions should be designed to be educational and restorative in nature, while promoting the institution’s mission.

When punitive sanctioning outcomes are the primary area of focus for individuals within the conduct process, it can create barriers for students and SCAs. Many students resent the punishment, become defiant, and form oppositional subcultures that ultimately make the punishment counterproductive (Karp & Frank, 2016). According to participants in the study, the problem was exacerbated when significant fines as a punitive outcome were administered. Due to the lack of process explanation and learning goals from this mode of sanctioning, students and SCAs felt uncertain about conduct outcomes. If holistic student development and success are to be achieved, a shift in conduct philosophy must be at the forefront. Aspects of growth and success can be obtained through the implementation of a sound professional development program focused on transformational leadership. This type of program can give SCAs the tools, agency, and lens of autonomy to be the conduits to shift culture.

Review of the Literature

Effective student conduct administration hinges on the professionalism and development of the individuals who carry out the responsibilities identified within the conduct system. The content of the position paper focuses on the findings of the project study and a recommendation to infuse a professional development program focused on transformational leadership and organizational assessment program of student conduct practices. The rationale for selecting these areas was due to an identified gap in research focused on punitive conduct systems and how they can affect the role of SCAs in holistic student development and student success.

An in-depth literature review was executed, which focused on ways in which SCAs can be developed professionally by improving their leadership skills, education, and conduct practice. The database searches included the Walden University educational database, EBSCO, Education Resource Information Center (ERIC), and Google Scholar were influential in discovering additional sources related to student conduct systems, high impact practices, and holistic student development. The following terms were explored: *The Model of Transformational Change (MTC) for moral action*, *transformational leadership, professional development, position paper, student conduct practices, restorative justice, student conduct system, and student affairs.* Relevant research studies and published scholarly articles were studied for a thicker subject matter context. Additionally, doctoral studies published through Walden University databases, Laerd dissertation, and ProQuest were researched with a focus on professional development, transformational leadership, and assessment in practice.

I sought out peer-reviewed studies, as well as scholarly articles, journals, books, and papers to inform the literature review. Furthermore, the literature review highlights critical practices for SCAs to incorporate to enhance skillsets concentrating on leadership and development. Moreover, the alignment of best practices for student conduct administration at institutions of higher education focuses on holistic student development and student success. The search included recent and older sources; the majority of the sources were published within the last five years. Subsequently, outcomes of the literature review supported a position paper as the project genre.

The literature review was conducted to identify ways that a position paper could be a practical pathway to capture the essence of the study. Position papers are regularly and generally published in academia, politics, and law (Kron et al., 2020). Additionally, position papers are aimed to establish a unified voice in areas where controversy occurs based on multiple practices (Bala et al., 2018). Furthermore, position papers can be used as a roadmap to recommend and guide future protocols, practices, and procedures (Myatt et al., 2022). This position paper outlines a foundational roadmap for sustainable practices through thoughtful conduct practices.

Additionally, the position paper presented the study's findings as evidence as to why professional development and conduct program assessment are recommended to expand the capacity for SCAs within their role in holistic student development and student success. Hansen (1998) highlighted that position papers serve to transfer knowledge and understanding to aid decision making. Moreover, position papers offer a sound pathway to disseminate study outcomes, address gaps in practice, and establish a position on a problem clearly and concisely (Avila et al., 2019).

Scholarly research has bolstered the notion that position papers create avenues to factually present outcomes of a study to solicit stakeholder support. In utilizing a position paper, it produces a factual study summary by providing background information, offering critical details of facts pertaining to identified issues, adding to the existing body of research, providing a solution to the problem, and adding credibility to the study (Sentieys, 2020; Martinsuo & Huemann, 2020; Reifenstein, 2019; Schmidt, 2019; Hisgen et al., 2020; Zelner et al., 2022). This type of paper creates the opportunity to present the information to study site stakeholders in a way that is not invasive. Yet, it demonstrates the gap in practice regarding the effects of punitive monetary sanctions potentially hindering the role of SCAs in holistic student development and student success.

Professional Development

Professional development refers to many types of educational experiences related to an individual's work (Mizell, 2010). Professionals participate in professional development to learn and apply new knowledge and skills that will improve their performance on the job (Bates & Morgan, 2018; McGill et al., 2021). According to Guskey (2000), successful professional development programs must have an impact on the participant's knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Leal Filho et al. (2019) stated professional development initiatives promote sustainable development in higher education. As institutions face increasing concerns about equity and access, student mental health, student safety, college affordability, and issues of inclusion, well-prepared professionals are needed to effectively and efficiently meet these challenges (Davis & Cooper, 2018). Recommending the need for a focused professional development program within the position paper is appropriate. It provides tools that enable SCAs to enhance their knowledge and skills to support the students they serve and offer pathways that promote holistic student development and success through their role. Students commonly base their perceptions of conduct experiences on interactions with administrators (Krskova et al., 2019). Thus, adequate competencies developed through professional development can positively impact the student conduct experience for all participants. Professional development provides exposure to effective, evidence-based strategies to enhance practices (Muller et al., 2018; Wynants & Dennis, 2018).

This project study is grounded using the model of transformational change (MTC) for moral action primarily focused on transformational leadership. Transformational leadership is focused on developing change agents by transforming followers into change agents and making them influential leaders. The position paper for this project study recommended a professional development program focused on transformational leadership. The professional development program creates a pathway for SCAs to use agency within the conduct process motivated on development and success. While SCA responsibilities include meting out sanctions for infractions of the conduct code, as required, the overarching purpose of student conduct administration in higher education institutions is to be educational, not punitive (Stoner & Lowery, 2004; Waller, 2013).

Glick and Degess-White (2019) studied the professional identity of conduct officers, including their training, skills, and experience, to see if the specialized training and practice defined student conduct administration as a unique career field. The researchers found that student conduct work meets eight out of the ten criteria to be identified as a unique career field. The authors identified four areas in which hearing officers must excel: investigatory skills, conflict resolution, legal knowledge, and developmental theory (Glick & Degges-White, 2019). Additionally, student development is identified as foundational knowledge for student conduct practice (Torres et al., 2019). Furthermore, this philosophy illuminates the need to develop transformational leaders who can exhibit the skills needed to meet the ever-changing student needs.

Bryant et al. (2018) argued that the preparation and training of conduct officers are necessary for the success of the residential community. The recommended professional development program goals outline topics pertinent to the role of SCAs in holistic student development and student success creating pathways to become transformational leaders. This professional development program seeks to raise awareness regarding the needs of SCAs.

Furthermore, identifying ways for student affairs administrators to positively implement change within the conduct system to impact the SCA role positively.

Conduct Program Assessment

Like all administrators and faculty members in American higher education, student affairs practitioners are asked to demonstrate how they affect student learning and development. Levy et al. (2018) added that student affairs assessment has become more prevalent in today's higher education assessment climate. Institutions are seen as unique communities, and thus institutions are encouraged to develop intentional systems to deal with conduct violations that promote learning and development (Krieg, 2018). Those involved in the work of student conduct offices have the opportunity to reinforce the values of their institutions and influence college student attitudes, beliefs, and behavior. It is critical to assess internal conduct practices to ensure they are aligned with outcomes that foster learning and development. Schuh (2013) stated that assessment is an essential element of professional practice in student affairs. Infusing assessment as a sustainable practice must be established within student affairs units where administrators "recognize that they must collect evidence systematically to demonstrate accountability to their stakeholders and that they must use that evidence to improve" (p. 89).

Assessment creates an opportunity for administrators to justify and inform campus educational outreach efforts, demonstrate the impact of the conduct system experience on learning outcomes, and justify the continued development of staff (Janosik & Stimpson, 2009; Pope et al., 2019; Kinzie & Hurtado, 2017; Elkins, 2018). Biddix et al. (2020) added that assessment informs scholarship, professional development, and community of practice in student affairs. The effectiveness of institutional programs and services can be determined through sound programmatic assessment processes, which assist student affairs units in determining how well they are meeting student needs (Groover et al., 2019).

Additionally, the assessment of the efficacy of student conduct systems should include measures related to the overall climate of the campus, student satisfaction and trend data, perception data about the university, and student development (Mauk, n.d). Assessment of the conduct system creates an opportunity for SCAs to make data-informed decisions. Miller and Salinas (2019) added that evaluating an institution's student conduct program, procedures, and outcomes should be conducted annually or biennial to safeguard best practices and equal opportunities for students. This focus on assessment creates the opportunity to modify or abandon practices that no longer meet student or institutional goals. Moreover, Schuh (2013) stated that student affairs administrators should not proceed with new ideas or initiatives based on hunches, intuition, or trends; they should rely on assessment and be data-driven.

Synthesis

As recommended in the position paper, the development and implementation of a professional development program are essential to an SCA's role. Equally important is the assessment of the program to determine its effectiveness. In the literature review focused on professional development, the topic of evaluation surfaced. Borg (2018) highlighted that professional development programs should be evaluated on their impact and how they can promote lasting or significant change. Additionally, Markiewics and Patrick (2016) identified six reasons professional development evaluation is essential, focusing on results, management, accountability, learning, improvement, and decision making.

To gain insight into the impact of the professional development program, a sound evaluation method has to be applied. Both formative and summative approaches are general methods to evaluate professional development programs (Houston & Thompson, 2017). Dolin et al. (2018) stated it is essential to recognize that formative and summative refer to different assessment purposes and not two different kinds or forms of assessment. For this proposed project, the identified method for evaluation is formative. Although a summative approach could be explored, the formative method was deemed more appropriate.

The formative method was identified primarily because it provides opportunities for participants to share their feedback in real-time, using that evidence to guide instruction. In contrast, a summative method evaluates input at the conclusion of instruction (Cisterna & Gotwals, 2018). Andersson and Palm (2018) added that formative evaluation offers hands-on practice, interactive feedback, and discussions focused on the impact of learning. Considering that the proposed professional development program will be ongoing, using a formative assessment method will offer instructors the flexibility to enhance learning outcomes for program effectiveness.

Project Description

The project is a position paper aimed to assist student conduct administrators and stakeholders at institutions of higher education with punitive conduct systems in place. The findings of this study included several major themes that illuminate the state of the problem at the study site. The goal of the qualitative analysis executed within the study was to identify the major themes to inform and guide recommendations. The recommendations that were developed can be tailored to the community being served with a focus on transferable skills and practices that promote holistic development and student success.

This study consisted of twelve participants from the study site. The participants consisted of both students and SCAs. Participant demographics include eight students and four SCAs who participated in some capacity in the overarching student conduct process. The students selected matriculated through the current student conduct process and received a punitive monetary sanction as an outcome. All of the student participants self-identified as either first-generation, low socioeconomic status, Pell Grant eligible, or more than one intersecting identity. The SCAs chosen to participate were all employed at the local site within the last three years and provided leadership within the student conduct system. Through semistructured interviews and thorough data analysis, the findings indicated dissatisfaction for participants regarding the use of punitive monetary fines as a sanctioning outcome. The results highlighted a vast differentiation in intent vs. impact of the conduct system.

This realization led to the suggested need for policy and practice modification in a position paper focused on the role of SCAs in holistic student development and student success through a professional development and assessment initiative. Student conduct administration is a functional area within the field of student affairs and central in developing community within the institutional setting. Student conduct outcomes can impact student success, graduation, and retention rates; it is critical to have well-trained SCAs due to the role a conduct office plays in a student’s college experience (Miller & Salinas, 2019). Professional development is a foundation of the student affairs field, and to stay current, practitioners use a variety of methods to learn about areas needed to master to be successful (Roberts, 2007). Additionally, the diversification of students enrolled at colleges and universities and the increased push for accountability have led to additional competency areas needed for student affairs professionals (Muller et al., 2018).

With SCAs being a part of the student affairs umbrella, it is imperative that SCAs have essential foundational competencies. Competency is defined as a capability or ability related to behavior organized around an underlying construct (Boyatzis, 2008). Additionally, Boyatzis (2008) stated that human talent can be developed to change behavior and practices. The data from the study supports the recommendation of a professional development program focused on SCA development through transformational leadership seeking to increase awareness, advocacy, and accountability through high-impact practices to enhance the conduct experience. These measures solidify the SCA's role with educational pathways that create intersecting learning opportunities focused on holistic student development and student success.

Proposal for Implementation

The position paper includes a suggested professional development program available to SCAs and stakeholders at the study site. The recommendations provided can be tailored to meet the needs of the study site. If stakeholders find the recommended program meaningful through assessment, it could be a catalyst for sustainable change at other institutions that utilize punitive sanctioning outcomes within their conduct system. The recommendations are not designed to be static or linear. The recommended professional development program outcomes are a shared responsibility of student affairs leadership and departmental units.

Implementation is considered a planning process in which mutual expectations for effective learning and maximized impact are at the forefront (Powell & Bodur, 2019). In consideration of this philosophy, a possible implementation pathway could follow the following format:

1. Assess skills and knowledge, identifying the strengths currently in practice. What areas are sufficiently developed, and what areas should benefit from additional learning?
2. Set organizational learning goals and timeline to accomplish in the short term, mid-term, and long-term.
3. Create an action plan highlighting the aspirational skills and knowledge to develop, then identify strategies or action steps to achieve goals.
4. Document development by tracking progress through the program and infusing learned skills into consistent practice.
5. Assess program outcomes to determine the impact on learning to ensure the professional development strategy has the intended effect.

Additionally, the potential implementation of the recommended professional development program could utilize the five competency pillars shown below:

- Transformational Leadership
- Practitioner Education
- Equity and Inclusion
- Restorative Practices
- Conduct System Assessment (CSA)

The position paper describes the five pillars as foundational competencies for high functioning SCAs. Due to the uniqueness in which student conduct is addressed from institution to institution, these areas are designed to be transferable regardless of an SCA's job responsibilities, knowledge, and experience within the student conduct arena. The position paper containing the recommended professional development program provides the same implementation aspects and factors and infuses the themes identified from data analysis.

Due to the recommended professional development program being considered a pilot at the study site, everyone involved will be viewed as a participant. A key component is for participants to build their knowledge base focused on the competencies and infuse them into conduct practices. Upon the completion of the program, trained individuals will be designated as professional development (PD) coaches. Professional development coaches will have the capacity to then engage with future cohorts and navigate the professional development program creating learning goals, action steps, and overall assessment.

It is critical that an intentional timeline for implementation is considered for the professional development program to achieve success. Leal Fiho et al. (2019) stated that a professional development timeline should be carefully addressed by considering multiple perspectives. Due to the nature of student affairs, the bulk of the professional development program will occur during the summer months and then move to quarterly meetings that align for scheduling. The expected time commitment is ten hours per academic year. The time commitment consists of identifying learning goals, building competency capacity, practice, and assessment. Coaches and participants will be asked to complete a survey at the completion of the program. Additionally, participants will schedule future check-ins with professional development coaches and student affairs leadership to track learning outcomes.

It has been highlighted that when professional development is actively followed by a departmental intervention, the learning outcomes are more likely to be sustained (Kalman et al., 2020). Professional development must be ongoing for learning outcomes to be maintained and engrained into organizational culture. Although professional development takes on many different forms with a range of quality and effectiveness, it must be persistent and sustained over time, focusing on subject matter content and how participants learn and providing opportunities for active integration (Tournaki et al., 2011). Additionally, Bates and Morgan (2018) stated that education is a profession that requires ongoing professional development and learning.

As a commitment to divisional growth, I have been afforded the opportunity to present my study. I will present the position paper containing the recommendations on the professional development program to the study site. SCAs and student affairs stakeholders will attend the engagement as I present the findings of the study, recommendations, and implementation measures. If feedback is favorable, I will work with leadership to share the results of this study with other institutions utilizing punitive sanctions to discuss the content and recommendations of the position paper. This pathway of enlightening SCAs and student affairs stakeholders about the potential rewarding outcomes of the professional development program creates a greater opportunity to engage other institutions. Ultimately, addressing punitive systems and strategically cultivating change within the field.

Potential Barriers

When a change or shift in practice is recommended, it is vital to assess the potential barriers that can impact the end goal. Irrespective of the reasons behind the change, how an organization responds to change can determine its success or failure (Wise et al., 2020). Considering that change can come slowly, addressing the proposed change from a strategic lens is imperative. Potential barriers for consideration is a lack of buy-in from student affairs stakeholders. Considering that the recommendations outlined in the position paper would shift the entire conduct system at the study site could create angst among stakeholders. This uncertainty can lead to difficulties in developing an understanding of the recommendations amongst the organizational leaders and stakeholders, ultimately stalling progress.

To eliminate this potential barrier, I illuminated that student affairs administrators play an integral part in educating their staff members. Ideally, senior student affairs officers can align their philosophy, expectations, and values that empower, educate, and meet the staff's overall needs (Roberts, 2005). Additionally, I provided distinct data points from the study focused on how punitive sanctioning practices hinder the experiences of students and SCAs. This approach intentionally and thoughtfully sheds light on the need to incorporate new business methods that are critical to meeting the ever-changing needs of the population being served.

Moreover, other barriers may include the commitment of financial and human resources to execute the recommendations. Roberts (2005) stated that financial and human resources need to be provided to develop quality programs. Punitive monetary sanctions create a financial pipeline at the disposal of student affairs stakeholders. Although it is unknown how these funds are utilized, proposing to remove that pipeline to focus on education, development, and restoration can create the need for budget reallocation. To eliminate this potential barrier, I will present this shift in practice as an opportunity for improvement instead of a threat. Focusing on practice improvement highlights that the shift in practice creates an authentic alignment with the mission and vision of the study site. Additionally, I will focus on organizational agility with the need for leaders to amend current practices to account for emerging internal and external forces.

My contribution to this engagement process is working in consultation with the study site, working in conjunction with SCAs and student affairs stakeholders to create a detailed understanding of the recommendations within the position paper. It is my understanding that the position paper will be used at the study site to address the gap in practice. Although I am not in a position to implement the recommendations, I believe a good faith effort will be made in considering the recommendations. I hope to use this collaborative engagement as a pilot and a pathway to potentially engage other institutions to highlight the need for sustainable change within conduct systems hyper-focused on punitive sanctioning outcomes.

Project Evaluation Plan

A simple evaluation approach would provide student conduct administrators and stakeholders with feedback and recommendations for the program. Early and Porritt (2014) discussed the importance of having an evaluation process focused on student learning and an evidential baseline to enable practitioners and school leaders to determine the impact of the professional development in which they are engaged. Sims and Fletcher-Wood (2021) revealed the need for a standard assessment model which includes mutually beneficial outcomes that promote awareness and competence of legal issues which affect decision outcomes, current best practices that address alternative resolutions to student behavior, and outcome data measurements of student behavior which is advantageous to the student, institutional administration, and the university as a whole.

A formative assessment approach will be used as the evaluation plan for student conduct administrators. For this proposed project, a formative evaluation method could be applied to engage SCAs and move them toward targeting learning outcomes, best practices, and capacity development. Additionally, this method provides necessary feedback and support as they implement the program and as a completion outcome. Utilizing a formative evaluation method allows practitioners to focus on what is currently affecting participants' needs, the satisfaction of autonomy, competence, and relatedness, and consequently, their autonomous motivation (Leenknecht et al., 2021).

The formative assessment could be completed in a myriad of ways, including conducting group discussions, one-on-one discussions, creating checklists, or a survey tool. To stay abreast of the climate and pulse of the program, a formative assessment approach would meet the greater need to evaluate conduct practices while providing information to the administration about the areas stakeholders are struggling with so that sufficient support can be put in place. Senior administration would be able to select the best formative pathway best suited for their needs. I propose to evaluate the professional development program formatively through a checklist and surveying.

It was not possible to compare this plan with others because of a vast number of philosophies pertaining to the professional development of student conduct professionals, primarily regarding the use of punitive monetary sanctions. Furthermore, I reviewed robust evidence in my literature searches of the overall value of professional development within student conduct programs that primarily focused on student development, restorative measures, and equitable processes. What seems to be lacking within student conduct programs is the need for ongoing professional development to ensure SCAs and other stakeholders can make data-informed decisions and have a working knowledge of the implications of their decision making.

Most of the SCA participants in this study remarked that figuratively that there is no autonomous pathway to promote significant change in the current conduct system. This perception is derived due to the embedded sanctioning philosophy regarding certain violations. The problem could be because of the general misconception that student conduct outcomes should be administered from a zero-tolerance methodology (Lustick, 2021). For sustainable change to occur, a more restorative approach to student conduct outcomes has to be implemented. Furthermore, it is recommended that preventative discipline practices, like restorative practices, are intended to facilitate stronger relationships and create a more caring community culture centered around understanding (Cavanaugh et al., 2014).

Project Implications

This project study focused on exploring the role of student conduct administrators in holistic student development and student success. The study's outcome has created a pathway for positive social change for student conduct participants. The recommendations derived from the study generate social change implications focused on SCA job sustainability through a lens of development and growth. In addition, the critical role of SCAs could be highlighted, showcasing that sustainable student conduct practices focused on holistic student development and student success offer SCAs the opportunity to be transformative leaders. SCAs can be utilized to enhance the student experience through education and development rather than defer by using punitive sanctions. SCAs must exhibit extensive transferable skills that implicate social change in conduct theory and practice. It would be valuable to dispel the misconception that SCAs do not have a stake in holistic student development and success. Furthermore, the pattern shown in the study’s thematic analysis identifies data-supported reasons why a shift in conduct practices that limit the autonomy an SCA has in decision making is vital to social change.

The social change implications create a ripple effect that gives SCAs the resources needed to connect, engage, and create impactful case adjudication outcomes focused on restoration and education rather than administering traditional punitive outcomes. This approach bolsters a pathway for social change by offering students involved in the conduct process a rich opportunity to address those harmed by their actions, learn from the conduct violation holistically, and restore their place in the larger community. Furthermore, students may be more likely to be retained, persist, and graduate while holistically learning from mistakes. This in turn may contribute to student quality of life, employability, employment prospects, and community stability. Moreover, this wraparound approach creates a pathway for social change for SCAs to thrive in their role and strongly impact the students being served. Every participant in the study stated that punitive monetary conduct sanctions hold no educational value, so a shift in practice has sustainable implications for social change. Furthermore, the social change implications of this study have a local and broader impact by potentially creating sustainable change within the overarching student conduct system, student retention and persistence, and SCA job satisfaction.

Local Implications

Through this study, social change may be accomplished by student affairs leadership utilizing SCAs as transformative change leaders at the study site. This pathway allows SCAs to apply best practices and strategies that support holistic student development and student success. It is critical that a theory-based methodology drives student conduct outcomes and sanctions rather than a one size fits all approach. This study sought to uncover the perceptions of student conduct participants regarding the use of punitive monetary sanctions. Locally, this study revealed a need for a restorative and developmental methodology to be applied throughout the student conduct program through SCA professional development. Infusing a methodology founded on education, growth, and development into conduct processes offers students and SCAs the opportunity to utilize their strengths and learn from the experience (Adams, 2019). Moreover, it opened up the possibility of discussion for restorative sanctioning rather than punitive sanctioning as means of cultural transformation at the study site. It further elevates the need to infuse restorative measures focused on holistic student development and promoting sustainable student success outcomes.

Broader Implications

The results of this study could reveal pathways to foster student conduct program assessment, specifically focused on learning outcomes for SCAs and their critical work in higher education. Moreover, a culture of assessment institutes a commitment to developing and measuring learning goals from student conduct sanctioning outcomes. Focusing on establishing a culture of assessment offers a multimodal pathway in developing learning outcomes focused on restoration and removing punitive sanctions. Additionally, a shared focus on SCA development through their role in holistic student development and success may be valuable in helping the student affairs industry and higher education professionals.

Section 4: Reflection and Conclusion

This section consists of my thoughts and reflections while conducting and completing the project, creating a position paper that encompassed recommendations for a professional development program for SCAs focused on highlighting their role in holistic student development and student success. The project provided specific recommendations for the study site derived from the themes presented through data analysis and results. Participant engagement directly proved to be an effective method of conducting research. A direct approach provided an organic connection, rich data, and captured the essence of participant perceptions.

Project Strengths and Limitations

The primary strength of the project was that I was able to connect and engage with participants directly about their perceptions of punitive monetary sanctions as a conduct sanctioning outcome. The results of the engagement generated the themes of the study, which highlight the lasting ramifications affiliated with punitive sanctioning outcomes. As a neutral observer, I was able to elicit their views in an unbiased way, removing barriers to authenticity and engagement. The participants disclosed several things that I expected, but I was often surprised at the depth in which their experience exposed gaps in practice within a punitive conduct system. An example of the latter was that all twelve participants, both students, and SCAs, reported that punitive monetary sanctions held no direct educational value. This response elevated the need to apply a theory-based methodology to student conduct programs focused on SCA professional development.

Although the study has strengths, limitations were present and were considered. A limitation that was present was a perceived lack of commitment from senior student affairs administration to shift the current conduct practice. A shift in culture and practice would have to occur for SCAs to be developed and given the autonomy to address student conduct cases and outcomes from a lens of development. This study was weighted heavily toward students and SCAs as opposed to senior administrators, who are often the decision-makers in shifting practice. Additionally, any shift in practice warrants pushback and barriers to buy-in. Implementers must be mindful of barriers and implement proactive pathways to address pessimists.

The deliverable of this study was a position paper containing a series of recommendations with the focus on creating a professional development program promoting transformational leadership within SCAs, solidifying their role in holistic student development and student success. The purpose of this professional development program aims to create pathways for SCA development and tangible practices through sharing insights, concerns, and recommendations for leadership development. This lens of engagement could generate sustainable goals, learning outcomes, and practices that create a more restorative conduct process. As a result, SCAs may reduce negative perceptions of the conduct system and attrition at the study site creating resolve with an in-depth focus on holistic student development and success.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

This project study aimed to investigate how students and SCAs perceive monetary sanctions and explore possible consequences for holistic student development and student success. In completing this study, I would offer the following alternatives to address the problem and purpose differently based on the work of the study:

- Implement theory-based methodology as a conduct framework to guide and direct the conduct process. This process will aid in the growth and development of students and keep student conduct practices educational and developmental instead of punitive.
- Formalize a professional development program that meets the ongoing needs and development of SCAs. Researchers have identified critical components necessary for effective student conduct investigations. Lowery (2006) discussed legal implications and individual due process related to student conduct processes. The conduct resolution procedures should provide outreach and education to students about university policies and procedures to prevent and deter violations.
- Implementing restorative measures such as mandating students who violate the Student Code of Conduct to complete a service-learning project; this can be done without difficulty by requiring students to take a service-learning course. Service-learning courses are classes that students can take in which the students get to partake in active learning, meaning the students learn concepts within a classroom setting. Then students go out into the community to experience the covered concepts. The service-learning courses teach students classroom concepts, social awareness, and responsibility. According to restorative justice measures, when students are engaged in the community, the students are more

likely to create bonds, learn positive behavior, and be active members of the community (Bazemore, & Schiff, 2015).

- Cultivate a culture of assessment to evaluate SCA and student experiences throughout the conduct process. This recommendation will delineate the relationship between perceived level of conduct system efficacy, institutional culture, and self-reported student learning. In the review of the literature, there is an absence within studies that investigate the learning outcomes of the conduct hearing process. Limited data have been generated directly from students who have experienced the conduct process (King, 2015).

These recommendations can be altered to meet the needs of student conduct administrators and other stakeholders. Moreover, the recommendations can be implemented by SCAs, and senior administrators involved in the oversite of the conduct process and professional development curriculum.

A position paper was the best option to present the information garnered from this study and to disseminate it to SCAs and senior student affairs administration at the study site. Alternative ways to present the research findings include submitting the study to professional student affairs and student conduct organizations, presenting the position paper at conferences, or a journal entry within a professional network. In reflection and consideration, those external formats would not have been the best pathway to provide outcomes of the study to the administration at the study site.

Scholarship, Project Development, Leadership, and Change

The process of designing and performing this research and creating the project was both informative and illuminating. The preparation and design of the study required intentionality and thoughtfulness. The nature of the problem drove the design of the research questions, and the research questions compelled the approach to the study. I learned that it is imperative that every aspect of the research is grounded in theory, practice, and methodology. Any missteps in this process can pose a risk to the study, including the stakeholders involved within the study.

In developing the project, I found that it was critical to infuse data from literature and elevate the data received from participant responses at each phase of the study. I was conscious not to make assumptions about the potential outcomes of the data. The organic discovery of what was essential to the participants was enlightening and not expected initially. Yet, I was also pleased with the data generated from thorough and prudent thematic analysis while capturing the true essence of authentic engagement throughout the study.

Additionally, I gleaned a deeper understanding of precisely documenting and clearly describing each aspect of the rigorous research. This realization was significant, creating awareness that an oversight in the study's design or execution can invalidate the data, study findings, and the project. Furthermore, the project outcome created value primarily due to the intentionality and strategic focus on SCA development stemming from meticulous research. I have great respect for those who have completed research studies and the work journey it takes to complete a project.

Reflection on the Importance of the Work

The importance of this work is vast and extends beyond the experiences at the study site. Many colleges and universities utilize punitive monetary outcomes as sanctioning measures. This study has identified that sanctioning outcomes within the student conduct process can have internal and external effects on students and their matriculation to completion and degree attainment. It is critically important to assess practices that have the ability to hinder the student it is supposed to serve. The potential benefit is found in the opportunity to invoke sustainable change while creating a pathway for SCA development.

This study and project's contribution to scholarship and academia is to incite research on policies, practices, and procedures that impact SCAs and their role in holistic student development and student success. This contribution can generate a streamlined focus on the impact of policies, practices, and procedures that could be detrimental to students, although they are in place to help. The infusion of a theory-based approach like Neumeister's (2017) model of transformational change (MTC) for moral action focused on transformational leadership could add to the understanding of the intrinsic and extrinsic factors SCAs have to navigate within a punitive monetary conduct system. The study's contribution sheds light on the internal barriers potentially hindering holistic student development and success.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

As aforementioned, outcomes of this study could bring about social change through the infusion of an intentional professional development program for SCAs focused on their role in holistic student development and success. Additionally, this study highlights high-impact practices that afford SCAs the autonomy to make decisions within the conduct process focused on theory, education, restoration, and mutual respect. SCAs require training to address student behavior in a manner consistent with integrity, care, and the law (Olafson et al., 2014).

The recommendations provided within this project have the potential to enhance the career experience of SCAs and their lens of engagement with the students they serve. Additionally, the recommendations offer a foundational pathway for ongoing development in an everchanging ecosystem. The benefits can prove significant to SCAs by providing autonomy within the conduct process, applying a focused approach to learning, removing punitive sanctions, and implementing a culture of restoration.

Future Research

Future research could include a follow-up study to determine the effectiveness of the professional development program for SCAs. The study could examine the impact of their role in holistic student development and success through ongoing professional development focused on transformational leadership, education, learning, and restoration. An additional study at the study site could be conducted to assess the impact of a theorized approach to student conduct programs or new factors that impact the role of SCAs in student development and success. A future study comparing the implementation of theory and the elements affecting holistic development and success, professional development, and a culture focused on restoration and assessment could benefit the overall conduct experience at the study site and other institutions situated in the same way.

Conclusion

In this study, the data suggested that participants perceived punitive monetary sanctions do not promote holistic student development and student success. There are many factors that contribute to a culture of student development and success. A commitment to professional development focused on transformative leadership is critical in creating a culture centered on holistic student development and success. Removing barriers that stifle education and moral growth is a vital component of a SCAs job. Each engagement should be intrinsically focused on addressing student behavior in a manner consistent with integrity and care.

Student Conduct Administrators are a part of an educational ecosystem that has a core mission of learning and interpersonal growth. In order to actualize that mission, SCAs have to be afforded opportunities throughout the conduct experience to integrate education, learning, and restoration into their student conduct programs. This infusion has the potential to benefit the students being served and expressively show the value that student conduct has on the holistic development and success of the students within the campus community.

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Appendix A: The Project Position Paper

The goal of the project study

The project study addressed the critical factors that impact student conduct administrators and their role in holistic student development and student success. Moreover, the results from the qualitative thematic analysis of the semistructured interviews revealed the first-hand perceptions of both students and student conduct administrators (SCAs) regarding the impact of punitive monetary sanctions at a mid-sized, 4-year, predominately white, public institution of higher education in a southeastern state. The position paper aims to convey the research study results and provide recommendations that could support and guide SCAs and Student Affairs Leadership at the study site in developing a formal professional development and assessment program for SCAs.

The Problem

Concerns about student misconduct have always been part of academia. Students attend colleges and universities to acquire educational credits and develop holistically (Kuh, 2018). The institution has a responsibility to invest in the development of the whole student. That includes helping them create a moral compass and understand actions and consequences. Fundamentally student conduct systems were implemented to promote growth; some systems have created barriers that can be detrimental to student conduct participants. The problem investigated by this study is that monetary fines as a punitive sanction tend to be overly represented in the student attrition group at a mid-sized, 4-year, predominately white, public institution of higher education in a southeastern state. This study addressed the gap in practice in which SCAs are mandated to administer monetary sanctions for predetermined conduct violations at the study site. At the study site, the gap in practice was identified when multiple student affairs administrators indicated concern about the number of adjudicated cases resulting in excessive monetary fines having adverse effects on student retention, persistence, and graduation (Director of Student Standards and Conduct, personal communication, March 30, 2021). The student population is 30% first-generation at the study site, with 43% being Pell Grant eligible with a mean income of $30,389.00 (Director Institutional Research, personal communication, March 30, 2021). Research indicates that students from low-income and first-generation families, who are disproportionately African American and Latino rather than White or Asian, are less likely to complete college (Fry & Lopez, 2012; Kim & Conrad, 2006; Roderick, Nagaoka, & Coca, 2009). Compounding this systematic issue with a conduct system with punitive sanctions, in the form of monetary fines ranging from $250-$950, contributes to the financial distress of recipients with intersecting identities, including first-generation, low socioeconomic status, and Pell Grant eligible students. Although students acknowledge and agree to adhere to the student code of conduct, students generally do not understand the implications and financial impact of violating the student code of conduct.

Research Questions

The research questions explored student conduct participants (students and SCAs) perceptions of the monetary sanction's purpose and possible consequences for holistic student development. Additionally, the research questions address the problem of monetary fines as a punitive sanctioning outcome and how they may hinder the role of SCAs in holistic student development at the research site. The following research questions were identified for the study.

RQ1: How do student conduct participants (students and SCAs) perceive to be the consequences of punitive monetary sanctions?

RQ2: How do student conduct participants (students and SCAs) perceive monetary sanctions as promoting holistic student development and student success?

Participants

The population for this study consisted of students and SCAs at the study site. A total of 12 participants were identified and selected for this study through purposeful sampling. Participant demographics include eight students and four SCAs who participated in some capacity in the overarching student conduct process. The students selected to participate have matriculated through the current student conduct process and received a punitive monetary sanction as an outcome. SCAs chosen to participate were presently and previously employed at the local site and provided leadership within the student conduct system. SCA participants included two administrators who facilitated the conduct process and determined sanctioning outcomes that concluded with a punitive monetary sanction and two administrators who oversaw the sanctioning appeal process.

Conceptual Framework

The Model of Transformational Change (MTC) for moral action serves as the guiding conceptual framework for this project study. MTC offers a grounded framework that collegiate disciplinarians can apply to have a more significant influence on students (Neumeister, 2017). MTC integrates moral development theory, the transtheoretical model of behavioral change, and transformational leadership. Furthermore, the Model of Transformational Change (MTC) for moral action provides conduct officials with a framework for aligning their practices with theory-driven, evidence-based methods to produce positive behavior change and moral development (Neumeister, 2017). The component of

MTC that guided this study was transformational leadership. MTC guided the research questions and analysis about perceptions and experiences, including the role of SCAs in holistic student development and student success.

Transformational leadership guidelines include looking for potential motives in decision-makers, seeking to satisfy organizational needs, and engaging the decision-maker's full potential. The result of transforming leadership is a relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation that converts decision-makers into moral agents (Andersen et al., 2018). Transformational leadership provides a more inspirational and practical set of practices to guide student conduct administration.

Traditional student conduct practices have been premised on the same underlying practices as transactional leadership (Neumeister, 2017).

Incorporating MTC offers a more holistic approach to addressing challenges SCAs face during conduct meetings and empowers SCAs to use their moment of influence to shape how a student distinguishes their behavior and its impact on their community. The research questions presented derive from the problem of monetary fines as punitive sanctioning outcomes and how they may hinder the role of SCAs in holistic student development at the research site. Prior to MTC, there was a dearth of research on the effectiveness and yields from conduct sanctions in a student's holistic development. *Figure 1* offers a detailed depiction of The Model of Transformational Change for Moral Action.

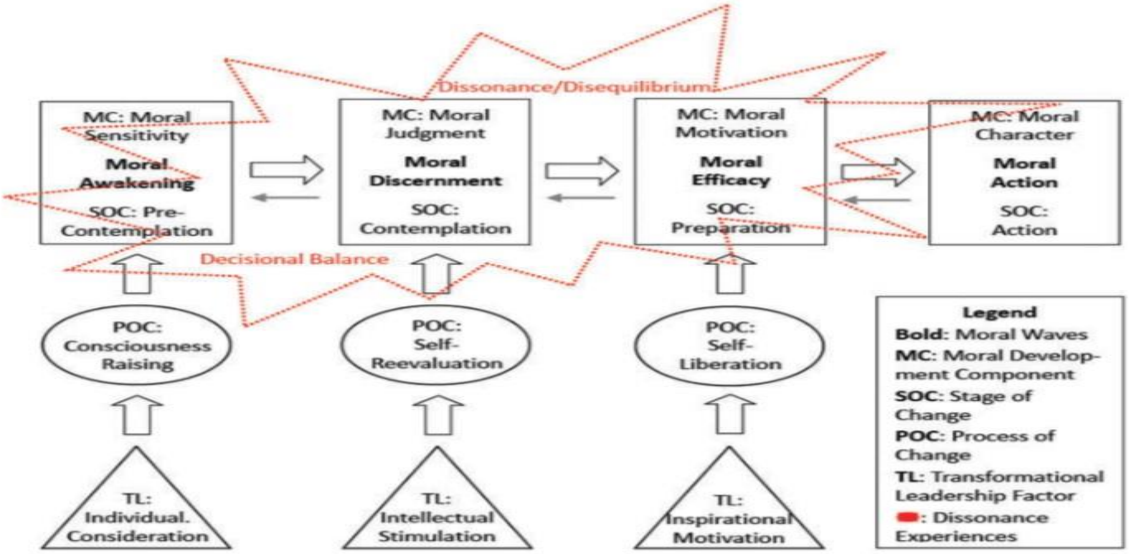
Dissonance/Disequilibrium
MC: Moral Sensitivity
Moral Awakening
SOC: Pre-Contemplation
MC: Moral Judgment
Moral Discernment
SOC: Contemplation
MC: Moral Motivation
Moral Efficacy
SOC: Preparation
MC: Moral Character
Moral Action
SOC: Action
Decisional Balance
POC: Consciousness Raising
POC: Self-Reevaluation
POC: Self-Liberation
TL: Individual. Consideration
TL: Intellectual Stimulation
TL: Inspirational Motivation
Legend
Bold: Moral Waves
MC: Moral Development Component
SOC: Stage of Change
POC: Process of Change
TL: Transformational Leadership Factor
🟥: Dissonance Experiences

Figure1: The Model of Transformational Change for Moral Action

Research Design

The research study was a basic qualitative study design, which focused on the in-depth exploration of the first-hand perceptions and experiences of students and SCAs as the key subjects of the study. A basic qualitative study design is described as a research study derived philosophically from constructionism, phenomenology, and symbolic interaction (Merriam, 2009). This study design is used by researchers interested in "how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences (Worthington, 2013; Peterson, 2019). The overall purpose is to understand how people make sense of their lives and their experiences" (Merriam, 2009, p. 23).

Ultimately, the purpose of this basic qualitative study was to improve practices within a punitive conduct system, and the basic qualitative research design created a well-suited pathway to obtain an in-depth understanding of the problem and offer insight to propose effective change. I examined this case to understand the factors that influence the impact of monetary fines due to the unknown ramifications these sanctions may have on conduct participants (students and SCAs). A basic qualitative study uncovered strategies, techniques, and practices to develop highly effective SCAs and administrators.

The qualitative data was collected by utilizing an online demographic survey and semistructured virtual interviews. I used an interview protocol as a guide to introduce the purpose and method of the study. Additionally, the interview protocol ensured all relevant information and questions were discussed with the participants. The semistructured virtual interview format allowed me to connect and engage with each participant. I was able to probe the participants as needed and provide the opportunity for the participants to voice their experiences and perceptions of the punitive sanctioning outcomes within the student conduct process.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data collection methods utilized for this qualitative study included semistructured virtual interviews, interview field notes, and an online demographic survey. Although each identified collection method provided substantial data, the semistructured interviews were the primary data collection source. Using these three methods for data collection, I will achieve triangulation. Triangulation can enrich research as it offers various datasets to explain different aspects of a phenomenon (Noble and Heale, 2019). Semistructured interviews were conducted with participants using an interview guide. The interview guide provided a pathway to engage participants systematically and comprehensively while keeping the interview focused on the desired line of action (Jamshed, 2014). Additionally, the interview guide utilized the research questions to direct the discussion through semistructured interviews. Technology was infused into the study to streamline interviews with study participants. Zoom communication technology was the platform utilized to conduct the semistructured virtual interviews. Zoom is a video conferencing platform with several unique features that enhance its appeal to qualitative researchers (Archibald et al., 2019). For this study, Zoom video conferencing allowed me to conduct virtual face-to-face interviews, gather insights in real-time, and ensure that all responses were collected accurately. This virtual platform allowed the virtual interviews to be recorded and interview transcripts to be saved for review. Ultimately, this tool increased efficiency, enhanced interpretations, and expanded the reach of scholarship (Moylan et al.,2015).

Results

Thematic analysis was employed to manage and analyze the data from the study. Thematic analysis is one of the most common forms of analysis applied to understand and examine qualitative data (Terry et al., 2017, p. 18). Thematic analysis is a qualitative research method to identify patterns or themes within a given data set (Miller, 2020). The section below contains the summarized and interpreted results from the thematic analysis of the interview transcripts, addressing the two research questions of the study. Four major themes and two minor themes emerged, aligning with the study’s research questions

Themes Addressing Study Research Questions

RQ1: Themes	Major/Minor Theme Designation	Subthemes
Punitive monetary sanctions hold no direct educational value	Major	1: Lack learning goals 2: Reactive vs. proactive
Punitive monetary sanctions do not create transformative	Major	1: Transactional engagement 2: Predetermined sanctioning outcome

relationships with the administration		
Punitive monetary sanctions do not create change in student behavior	Minor	

Note: RQ1 = How do student conduct participants (students and SCAs) perceive to be the consequences of punitive monetary sanctions?

RQ2: Themes	Major/Minor Theme Designation	Subthemes
Punitive monetary sanctions do not promote holistic development	Major	1: Emotional development 2: Moral development
Punitive monetary sanctions create barriers for holistic student development and student success	Major	1: Educational pause 2: Stress & anxiety 3: Financial strain 4: Lack of trust in the conduct system
Punitive monetary sanctions do not offer educational and developmental pathways to address student behavior	Minor	1: Lack of restorative measures 2: Establish learning goals with alternative sanctioning outcomes

Note: RQ2 = How do student conduct participants (students and SCAs) perceive monetary sanctions as promoting holistic student development and student success.

Major Themes and Subthemes of the Study

The four major themes that emerged aligned with the research questions: 1) Punitive monetary sanctions hold no direct educational value; 2) Punitive monetary sanctions do not create transformative relationships with the administration; 3) Punitive monetary sanctions do not promote holistic development; 4) Punitive monetary sanctions create barriers for holistic student development and student success.

Subthemes derived from the study's major themes identified that participants negatively perceived the student conduct process. A summary of these subthemes follows.

Lack learning goals- This subtheme identified the lack of learning goals due to the automatic administration of punitive monetary sanctions when certain conduct violations are adjudicated.

Reactive vs. Proactive. This subtheme identified that the administration of punitive monetary sanctions seems reactive vs. proactive and does not contribute to holistic student development and student success. Many participants identified that the lack of proactive education regarding the overall conduct process promoted gaps in understanding the ramifications of conduct violations.

Transactional engagement. This subtheme identified the issue that the student conduct experience seemingly felt like a transactional engagement without room to address the myriad of reasons behind poor student decision making. Student participants strongly identified that through their experiences with the current conduct system, the engagement with student conduct administrators was disingenuous and that they had no authentic voice and agency through the conduct process.

Predetermined sanctioning outcome. This subtheme identified the issue of the sanctioning outcomes for certain conduct violations being predetermined when other conduct violations did not have a set sanctioning outcome. Both student and SCA participants shared strong opinions regarding the sanctioning outcomes for drug and alcohol sanctions.

Emotional Development. This subtheme focused on the emotional development of students that receive a punitive monetary sanctioning outcome. Many conduct participants do not acquire the capacity to understand, experience, express, and manage emotions within the current parameters of the student conduct process.

Moral Development. This subtheme focused on the moral development of students who received a punitive monetary sanction. Both student and SCA participants stated that the punitive monetary sanction does not create an ethos for moral development.

Educational pause. This subtheme focused on the realization that the punitive monetary sanction created a barrier that put the student's educational experience on pause. The SCA participants offered examples from their experience adjudicating cases in which some students could not pay their monetary fine(s) and were not retained at the institution.

Stress and Anxiety. This subtheme focused on the stress and anxiety the administering of monetary fine(s) created for both students and SCAs. Participants identified the added stress the monetary sanction added due to a lack of alternative resources and pathways to address the administered fine. Both students and SCAs identified a feeling of helplessness due to the lack of alternative measures.

Financial Strain. This subtheme focused on the financial strain that punitive monetary sanctions add to students found in violation of student conduct policies. Participants identified the lengths they had to go to pay the monetary fine, many having to find additional employment or revert to illegal action to cover sanctioned fees.

Lack of trust in the conduct system. This subtheme focused on the lack of trust both student and SCA participants have in the conduct system. Participants believed that the conduct process did not consider them individually when addressing their respective conduct cases. Additionally, these participants added that the student conduct process should not be one-size-fits-all. Solidifying that there are a multitude of factors to consider when viewing the proper sanctioning outcomes.

Summary of Findings

The data analysis revealed that both student and student conduct administrators had negative perceptions of a conduct system with a strong focus on punitive monetary sanctions as conduct outcomes. Participants also indicated the need for alternative measures to be considered for authentic holistic student development and success. Overall, a shift in conduct practice and culture is critical in promoting holistic student development and student success. This insight emphasizes the philosophy that holistic student development and success are closely related to the theory, learning, and democratic outcomes (Gurin et al., 2002).

Proposed Recommendations

Based on the findings, this position paper was developed to present the findings of the study and propose recommendations on reducing and eliminating the use of punitive monetary sanctions as a sanctioning outcome at the study site affecting the student attrition group. I recommended the implementation of professional development and assessment programs for SCAs to address their role in holistic student development and student success. Implementing a professional development program for SCAs is critical to diversifying thought, practice, and outcomes. Training and education are lacking, and it is necessary for student conduct administrators to perform their job duties effectively in the best interest of the institution of higher learning and the student (All Answers Ltd., 2018).

Guskey and Yoon (2009) conducted a study on the effect of professional development, which shed new light on the complexity of professional development and skill application. The researchers uncovered relevant aspects in a professional development program: workshops, outside experts, time commitment, content, application, and follow-up. The factors affect the outcomes and sustainability of a professional development program (p. 497). The six factors may then be applied to the proposed professional development program, where participants can cultivate knowledge in a streamlined and engaging way that is continuous. Those responsible for planning and implementing professional development must learn how to critically assess and evaluate the effectiveness of what they do. This responsibility means that discussions about the specific goals of professional development, what evidence best reflects the achievement of those goals, and how that evidence can be gathered in meaningful and scientifically defensible ways must become the starting point for all planning activities (Guskey & Yoon, 2009).

It is important to note that it is critical to understand how content is delivered and identify unique barriers for high-quality professional development to prove successful. Hammer (2013) stated that high-quality professional development has the following characteristics:

- Content-focused on learning that deepens subject area knowledge and related philosophical approaches.
- Coherent instruction that provides experiences in a progression that builds upon skill over time and aligns with departmental goals.
- An active learning environment that offers participants an opportunity to plan for implementation.
- Provides opportunities for participants from the same office, department, or division to participate together.
- Completion is appropriate considering the complexity of the conveyed skills and includes follow-up coaching or instruction.

Additionally, there may be unique barriers to the planning and delivery of the program due to the institutional environment. The unique barriers for consideration were identified as (1) financial constraints, (2) time constraints, and (3) stakeholder attitudes (Kimbrel, 2018). For the professional development program to be successful, the cultivation of learning goals and the willingness of the participants to successfully complete the program is critical. This intentionality creates the opportunity for participants to generate positive change utilizing learned skills to model best practices within the student conduct system.

The proposed professional development program is a multi-day opportunity to offer structured professional learning that promotes changes in student conduct practices. The program focuses on SCA development and their role in holistic student development and student success in hopes of creating a pathway to improve the student experience.

Implementing a professional development program for SCAs is essential to promote sustainable change in practice at the study site. Change is a lengthy process and takes time and commitment. Professional development is no different, and MTC focused on transformational leadership is a pathway to infuse change within the current conduct practice.

Professional development is an ongoing process that involves intentional improvements to help SCAs reach their professional goals. The ongoing process has to evolve over time to be considered adequate. Bates and Morgan (2018) asserted that ongoing professional development involves continuously planning, implementing, reflecting, and refining content to change participant outcomes. The role of the professional development program is to promote transformational leaders by offering a grounded theory for development. Furthermore, intentionally planning, assessing, and refining the professional development program allows participants to model practice and develop educational outcomes that include a student's background, culture, and access.

The proposed professional development program is an interactive program focused on participant engagement, education, and action. The professional development program will focus on the following competency pillars: transformational leadership, practitioner education, equity and inclusion, restorative practice, and conduct system assessment. Each competency aligns with industry best practices. It is critical for participants to build their knowledge base on the competencies and infuse them into conduct practices.

Implementing an assessment program is a vital component to the success of SCAs and creates a pathway to demonstrate how they affect student learning and development. Levy et al. (2018) added that student affairs assessment has become more prevalent in today's higher education assessment climate. Institutions are seen as unique communities, and thus institutions are encouraged to develop intentional systems to deal with conduct violations that promote learning and development (Krieg, 2018). Those involved in the work of student conduct offices have the opportunity to reinforce the values of their institutions and influence college student attitudes, beliefs, and behavior. It is critical to assess internal conduct practices to ensure they are aligned with outcomes that foster learning and development. Schuh (2013) stated that assessment is an essential element of professional practice in student affairs. Infusing assessment as a sustainable practice must be established within student affairs units where administrators “recognize that they must collect evidence systematically to demonstrate accountability to their stakeholders and that they must use that evidence to improve” (p. 89).

Assessment creates an opportunity for administrators to justify and inform campus educational outreach efforts, demonstrate the impact of the conduct system experience on learning outcomes, and justify the continued development of staff (Janosik & Stimpson, 2009; Pope et al., 2019; Kinzie & Hurtado, 2017; Elkins, 2018). Biddix et al. (2020) added that assessment informs scholarship, professional development, and community of practice in student affairs. The effectiveness of institutional programs and services can be determined through sound programmatic assessment processes, which assist student affairs units in determining how well they are meeting student needs (Groover et al., 2019).

Additionally, the assessment of the efficacy of student conduct systems should include measures related to the overall climate of the campus, student satisfaction and trend data, perception data about the university, and student development (Mauk, n.d). Assessment of the conduct system creates an opportunity for SCAs to make data-informed decisions. Implementing an assessment program can assist SCAs in process improvement and sustainable practice for a more significant impact. This focus on assessment creates the opportunity to modify or abandon practices that no longer meet student or institutional goals. Moreover, Schuh (2013) stated that student affairs administrators should not proceed with new ideas or initiatives based on hunches, intuition, or trends; they should rely on assessment and be data-driven.

Significance

The project study was unique to the local study site. The study results added an original contribution due to the lack of research on how administrators and students conduct administrators (SCAs) perceive monetary sanctions and explored possible consequences for holistic student development and success. Additionally, exploring the impact of monetary fines was imperative due to the unknown ramifications these sanctions may have on conduct participants (students and SCAs). The results of this study will increase understanding of the needs of SCAs and provide a pathway for growth and development through the implementation of a professional development program.

In essence, the professional development program targets an opportunity to train and develop SCAs to infuse high-impact practices that can be immersed within their role focused on holistic student development and student success. A professional development program focused on five competencies was proposed to achieve the SCA development. The identified competencies offer a new pathway that creates measures for sustainable impact within the realm of student conduct practice. The purpose of the professional development program is to assist and accommodate the needs of SCAs. Implementing new measures that adjust their approach to conduct philosophy and practice will hopefully create a pathway for sustainable change, individual growth, and study site change.

Conclusion

The results of this study provided knowledge that could benefit SCAs, student affairs administration, and campus stakeholders. The definitive aim of this research was to culminate with a position paper with recommendations for professional development and assessment programs. The recommended programs address the needs of SCAs identified in the literature review and the themes elevated from the analysis of participant responses regarding their experiences within the conduct system. Research uncovered a need to provide administrative support, training, and developmental resources for SCAs. These measures will allow them to grow and develop in the profession. In relation to monetary fines as a punitive sanction being overly represented in the student attrition group and the participants' perceptions via research, this project was deemed vital to address the issue. The outcome led to this position paper proposing a multi-day professional development program for SCAs and student affairs leadership.

Through data analysis at the study site, themes based on first-hand experiences and perceptions of student conduct participants, SCAs must have a foundational framework that focuses on holistic student development and student success. When SCAs are assisted and appropriately developed, they are likely to create a lasting impact on the students they encounter. It was established that SCAs play a critical role in student development and student success. To maximize their ability, SCAs need to be supported in their effort by senior leadership. With genuine passion and appreciation regarding the nature of the profession, an expectation is that SCAs might be open to professional development, utilizing skills obtained to be conduits for change. The future implication of the program is that SCAs who complete the professional development program can then become coaches to new conduct administrators. This cycle would offer a pathway for ongoing professional development, which empowers SCAs and solidifies their role in holistic student development and student success.

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Appendix B: Community Research Partner Letter to Research Site

April 29, 2021

Dr. __________
Vice President of Student Affairs

Dear: _____________

As a doctoral candidate in the Richard W. Riley School of Education at Walden University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements to obtain a Doctor of Education degree. The title of my research project is *Exploring the Role of Student Conduct Administrators in Holistic Student Development and Student Success.* The purpose of this study is to investigate how students and student conduct administrators perceive monetary sanctions and explore possible consequences for holistic student development and student success.

I am writing to request your permission to conduct my research at __________ and to contact members of the student affairs division, specifically student conduct administrators and students who have matriculated through the student conduct process. I seek to invite them to participate in my research study. I would like to recruit 12 participants (eight students and four SCAs) who have received a monetary sanction or administered a monetary sanction. The participants' identity, positionality, and role at the institution will remain confidential and will not be mentioned in my doctoral study or dissemination activities.

Participants will be asked to complete a brief demographic survey, participate in a brief virtual call to ensure they understand participation benefits and risks, and schedule a semistructured virtual interview of approximately one hour. Participants will be presented with an electronic informed consent form and information about the research study's purpose. Taking part in this study is entirely voluntary and participants are welcome to discontinue participation at any time.

Thank you for considering my request. If you choose to grant permission, please provide a signed statement on official letterhead indicating your approval to lashan.lovelace@waldenu.edu.

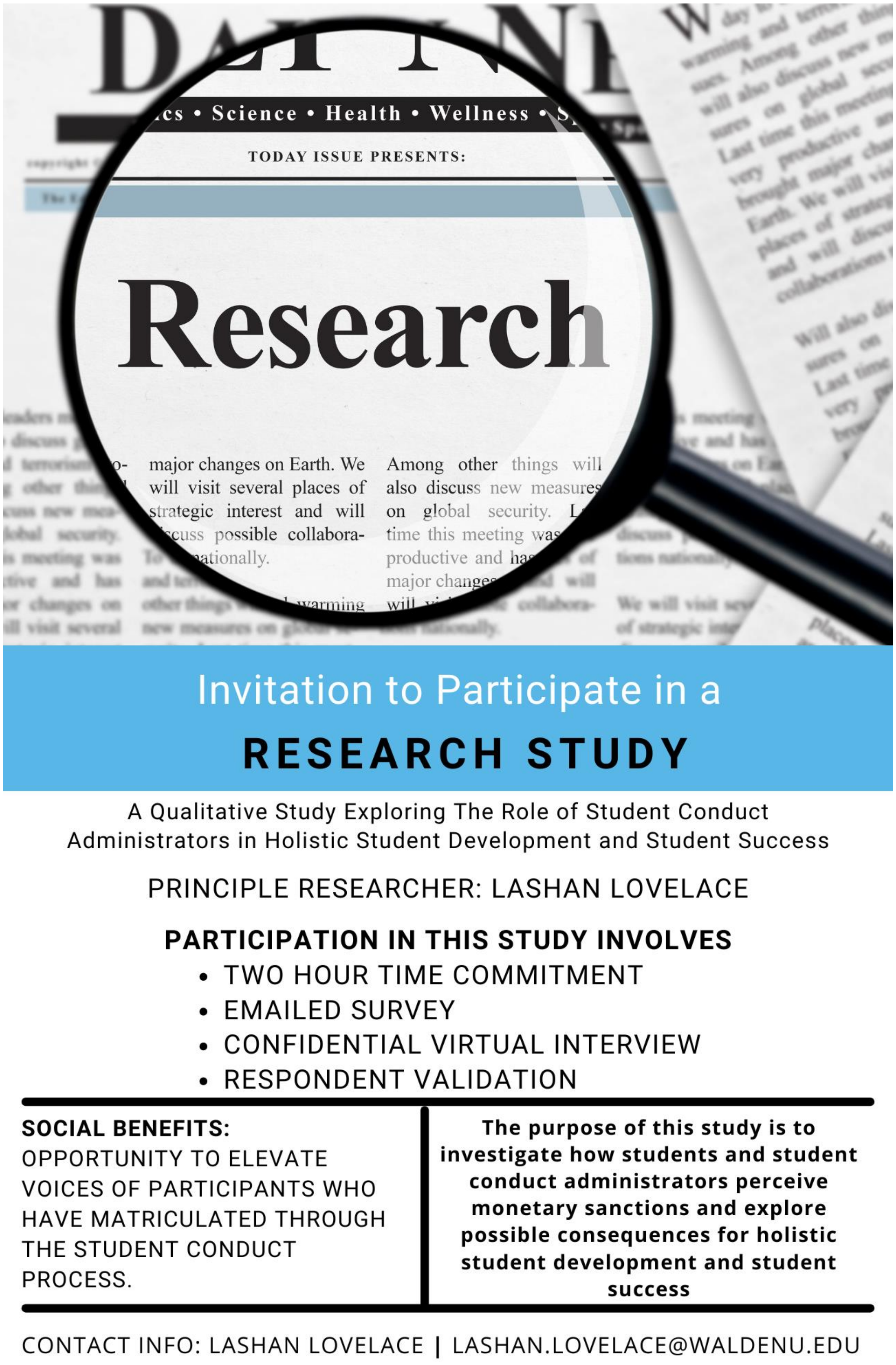
Sincerely,

LaShan Lovelace (lashan.lovelace@waldenu.edu)
Candidate for the Doctor of Education Degree (Ed.D),
Richard W, Riley College of Education
Walden University

Appendix C: Letter of Cooperation

Confirmed and IRB Approved

Appendix D: Participant Recruitment Flyer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TODAY ISSUE PRESENTS:
Research

Invitation to Participate in a

RESEARCH STUDY

A Qualitative Study Exploring The Role of Student Conduct Administrators in Holistic Student Development and Student Success

PRINCIPLE RESEARCHER: LASHAN LOVELACE

PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY INVOLVES

- TWO HOUR TIME COMMITMENT
- EMAILED SURVEY
- CONFIDENTIAL VIRTUAL INTERVIEW
- RESPONDENT VALIDATION

SOCIAL BENEFITS:
OPPORTUNITY TO ELEVATE VOICES OF PARTICIPANTS WHO HAVE MATRICULATED THROUGH THE STUDENT CONDUCT PROCESS.

The purpose of this study is to investigate how students and student conduct administrators perceive monetary sanctions and explore possible consequences for holistic student development and student success

CONTACT INFO: LASHAN LOVELACE | LASHAN.LOVELACE@WALDENU.EDU

Appendix E: Initial Email Letter to Potential Participant
Invitation to Participate in a Research Study

Greetings,

I am a doctoral candidate at Walden University, conducting a research study. The title of my study is *Exploring the Role of Student Conduct Administrators in Holistic Student Development and Student Success*. The purpose of this study was to investigate how students and student conduct administrators (SCAs) at the study site perceive monetary sanctions and explore possible consequences of monetary sanctions on holistic student development and student success at the study site.

I am requesting your participation to learn more about your experience and perceptions of student conduct outcomes that result in a punitive monetary fine. In addition to this brief demographic survey, we will speak virtually to get to know each other and schedule a one-hour virtual interview that will be audio-recorded. You will have the opportunity to review the interview and have a final virtual call to ensure I have recorded responses accurately. Your name, identity, email address, college, and location will remain private; your name will not be recorded or written on notes, and responses will be kept confidential.

I am seeking 12 participants who meet the following criteria:

Student Participants selected have matriculated through the current student conduct process and received a punitive monetary sanction as an outcome.

Student Conduct Administrators chosen to participate are employed at the local site and provide leadership within the current conduct system. SCA participants will include four administrators who facilitate the conduct process and determine sanctioning outcomes that conclude with a punitive monetary sanction and four administrators who oversee the sanctioning appeal process.

If you meet the above criteria and are interested in participating in this study, please reply to this email, and I will provide the consent form.

I have included a copy of the site approval research document signed by the Vice President of Student Affairs, which permits me to conduct this study. The study site has granted approval to conduct the study but are not involved in any way. This study is being conducted as a part of my Walden doctoral study. If you have additional questions about this research's purpose or scope, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
LaShan Lovelace (lashan.lovelace@waldenu.edu)
Candidate for the Doctor of Education Degree (Ed.D),
Richard W. Riley College of Education
Walden Universit

Appendix F: Online Demographic Survey

Exploring the Role of Student Conduct Administrators in Holistic Student Development and Student Success

Thank you for agreeing to share your time and experience by choosing to participate in this study. Your feedback on the survey is an integral part of my research and will help me complete my doctoral study. Please provide answers to the following questions.

1. How long have you been a part of the campus community?
    - Classification/Years of study (students)
    - Timeline of employment (staff)
2. Gender: How do you identify?
    - Male
    - Female
    - Trans-gender
    - Non-binary
    - I prefer not to answer
    - Self-describe __________
3. Please specify your ethnicity; what is your ethnicity?
    - Caucasian
    - African American
    - African
    - Latino or Hispanic
    - Asian/Asian Pacific Islander
    - Two or more ethnicities
    - Unknown
    - I prefer not to answer
    - Self-describe_______________
4. What is your discipline/area of study or department?
    - ___________________________________
5. Do you identify as?
    - First-generation
    - Low socioeconomic
    - Pell Grant eligible
    - Other/Multiple__________
    - Not Applicable

The voices, experiences, and perceptions of participants are critical in broadening the understanding of the role of SCAs in holistic student development and student success. The information you provide may contribute to the scholarship of high-impact student conduct practices. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions about the purpose or scope of this research or the upcoming interview. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
LaShan Lovelace (lashan.lovelace@waldenu.edu)
Candidate for the Doctor of Education Degree (Ed.D),
Richard W. Riley College of Education
Walden University

Appendix G: Consent Form

Exploring the Role of Student Conduct Administrators in Holistic Student Development and Student Success

You are invited to take part in a research study *Exploring the Role of Student Conduct Administrators in Holistic Student Development and Student Success.* The researcher is inviting SCAs who administer the conduct process and students who have received a punitive monetary sanction as a sanctioning outcome to participate in this study. This form is a part of a process called "informed consent" to allow you to understand this study before deciding where to take part.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named LaShan Lovelace, who is a doctoral student at Walden University. You might already know the researcher from previous roles at the site, but this study is separate from previous roles.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to investigate how students and student conduct administrators (SCAs) perceive monetary sanctions and explore possible consequences for holistic student development and student success.

Procedures:

This study involves the following steps:

- Demographic survey-10 minutes.
- Semistructured individual virtual audio recorded interview-60 mins
- Review virtual interview transcript to make corrections (email option available)-30 minutes.
- Speak with the researcher one more time after the interview to hear the researcher's interpretations and share your feedback (this is called member checking) with a virtual/email option available-20 minutes.

Here are some sample questions:

- How do you understand the current student conduct practices and sanctioning outcomes?
- Was the punitive monetary sanction educational or developmental?
- Did the punitive monetary sanction impact your educational experience?
    - If yes, how did the monetary sanction impact your educational experience?
- What type of student conduct violations does your student conduct program adjudicate?
- What type of student conduct violations have monetary fines as a sanction?
- Is there an educational value in a monetary fine?
    - If yes, what educational value do monetary fines support?

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Research should only be done with those who freely volunteer. So, everyone involved will respect your decision to join or not. You will be treated the same at Walden University whether you join the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time. The researcher seeks 12 volunteers for this study. The researcher will follow up with all volunteers to let them know whether they were selected for the study.

Risk and Benefits of Being in the Study:

Being in this study could involve some risk of the minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life, such as emotional distress, discomfort, or revealing things that are personal. With protections in place, the study will pose minimal risk to your wellbeing.

The benefits to participants in this process include the opportunity to elevate participant voices who have matriculated through the student conduct process by sharing their experiences for research purposes. Participants will contribute to the overall research, gain insight, and promote awareness regarding the impact of monetary sanctions, and potentially assist in shifting current conduct practices at the study site and beyond.

Payment:

Participation in this study is voluntary. No financial benefits, gifts, or financial compensation will be provided.

Privacy:

The researcher is required to protect your privacy. Your identity will be kept confidential within the limits of the law. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purpose outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. Participants shall be identified by a number and code in all transcriptions and analysis to remove identifiable information and further ensure confidentiality. If the researcher were to share this dataset with another researcher in the future, the researcher is required to remove all names and identifying details before sharing; this would not involve another round of obtaining informed consent. Data will be kept secure by password protected database only accessible to the researcher. Data will be kept for a period of at least five years, as required by the university.

Contacts and Questions:

You can ask questions of the researcher by emailing lashan.lovelace@waldenu.edu. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant or any negative parts of the study, you can call Walden University's Research Participant Advocate at 612-312-1210. Walden University's approval number for this study is **07-23-21-0569740,** and it expires on **July, 22, 2022.**

You might wish to retain this consent form for your records. You may ask the researcher or Walden University for a copy at any time using the contact info above.

Obtaining Your Consent

If you feel you understand the study and wish to volunteer, please indicate your consent by replying to this email with the words, “I consent.”

Thank you for your consideration

Appendix H: Interview Protocol

Exploring the Role of Student Conduct Administrators in Holistic Student Development and Student Success

Date:

Time:

Researcher: *LaShan M. Lovelace*_

Participant: ___________________

Introduction:

Thank you for making time to speak with me today and answering my questions. Please let me know if you have any questions before we begin or at any time during our interview.

- Remind participants about the purpose of the research project.
- Verify assigned consent form is on file.
- Reiterate to the participant that the interview will be recorded.
- Remind participants about the confidentiality of the interview.
- Discuss the agenda for the interview.

Appendix I: Interview Questions

Problem Statement

The problem to be investigated by this study is that monetary fines as a punitive sanction tend to be overly represented in the student attrition group at a mid-sized, 4-year, predominately white, public institution of higher education in a southeastern state.

Research Questions

RQ1: How do student conduct participants (students and SCAs) perceive to be the consequences of punitive monetary sanctions?

RQ2: How do student conduct participants (students and SCAs) perceive monetary sanctions as promoting holistic student development and student success?

Introduction and Interview Questions

Students

- Tell me about yourself/classification/major/campus involvement.
- Tell me about the path/decision to pursue a degree at the study site.
- Tell me about your experience going through the conduct process.
- Do monetary fines support educational value?
  - If yes, what educational value do monetary fines support?
- How do you understand the current student conduct practices and sanctioning outcomes?
- Was the punitive monetary sanction educational or developmental?
- Did the punitive monetary sanction impact your educational experience?
  - If yes, how did the monetary sanction impact your educational experience?
- Do you feel that punitive monetary fines as a sanctioning outcome positively impacted your student experience?
  - If yes, please explain
- Do you feel that punitive monetary fines as a sanctioning outcome negatively impacted your student experience?
  - If not, please explain
- Do you feel that punitive monetary fines as a sanctioning outcome promote holistic student development?
- What type of sanctioning outcomes promote change in student behavior?

Student Conduct Administrator(s)

- Tell me about yourself
- What is your role within the student conduct program at the study site?
- What motivates you to work as a student conduct administrator?
- What type of student conduct violations does your student conduct program adjudicate?
- What type of student conduct violations have monetary fines as a sanction?
- Is there an educational value in a monetary fine?
    - If yes, what educational value do monetary fines support?
- How do student conduct administrators describe evaluating and supporting student development?
- Are there learning outcomes for a student when punitive monetary fines are assigned as a sanctioning outcome?
    - If yes, what are the learning outcomes?
- Do you feel that punitive monetary fines as a sanctioning outcome positively impact the student experience?
    - If yes, please explain
- Do you feel that punitive monetary fines as a sanctioning outcome negatively impact the student experience?
    - If not, please explain
- Do you feel that punitive monetary fines as a sanctioning outcome promote holistic student development?
- Are there sanctioning outcomes that promote change in student behavior?
    - If yes, what type of sanctioning outcomes?

Conclusion and Follow-up

1. Do you have lingering thoughts since participating in this study?
2. What is the most important idea you have absorbed from this study?
3. Do you see yourself and your work/student experience differently based on your participation in this study?

    - If yes, how?

4. What suggestions do you have for further research in this area?
5. What more should I know that I have not asked?

Appendix J: Respondent Validation Checklist

Exploring the Role of Student Conduct Administrators in Holistic Student Development and Student Success

Date

Dear (participant name):

Thank you for taking the time to review the transcript of our interview. Your review for accuracy helps ensure the reliability and authenticity of the data for this research project. Please review the transcript and answer the questions below to ensure I have accurately captured the information you shared with me.

1. Does the transcript match your experience and perspective(s)?
2. Do you want to change anything stated herein?
3. Do you want to add anything that was not captured?

If I do not hear from you by (insert date), I will assume that you believe the transcript is an accurate depiction of our conversation.

As mentioned in a previous communication, once the study is complete, I will forward you a summary of the findings.

Again, thank you for your participation and your generosity with your time.

Regards,

LaShan Lovelace (lashan.lovelace@waldenu.edu)
Candidate for the Doctor of Education Degree (Ed.D),
Richard W. Riley College of Education
Walden University