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School Counselors' Lived Experiences Working With Northeastern Urban Minority High School Students

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This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

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Abstract

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MA, Long Island University, 2006

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

Professional school counselors employed in low-income education communities have a large, diverse student population to service. Researchers have indicated that urban minority youth present more challenges in school than affluent students due to economic constraints and other related factors. School counseling members apply different skills or techniques mastered from their graduate and professional training regardless of existing inequalities. School counselors are ethically obligated to help minors attain academic success, social-emotional development, and postsecondary goals. The dearth of literature warrants more qualitative research studies to explore further the phenomenon of school counselors working in underprivileged neighborhoods. Husserl's transcendental phenomenological framework provided a foundation to understand the lived experiences from the high school counselors' perspectives to bridge the gap in research. A purposeful sample with experience in Northeastern public schools participated in the interview. The data collected from the eight participants reached saturation based on emergent themes and some subthemes. Upon data analysis, the key themes indicated (a) rewarding experiences with urban minority students, (b) feeling overwhelmed, (c) reactions about received training/master's program, (d) need for additional training/educational changes, and (e) limited resources/supports. These results confirm the need to raise awareness for professionals in the school counseling field, organizations, and universities. Ultimately, this qualitative research study may contribute to social change for marginalized minors in all districts by effectively preparing and supporting school counselors in modern society.

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Dedication

This dissertation study is dedicated to my caring family and close friends. A big thank you to my mother, father, sister, niece, and nephew for their immeasurable love, support, and encouragement throughout this PhD program. Each day you inspire me to keep going and finish what I set out to accomplish in life.

To my friends, your sense of humor and words of wisdom have helped me not give up on my goal of completing this dissertation. Thank you for listening to my ups and downs in writing this research study.

Finally, to my grandmother, Adela Ramos Medina, I dedicated this monumental project to you. Thank you for your unconditional love and inspiration to achieve the highest academic success. Although you are no longer here, I know you were with me every step of this journey. Love you always.

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With prayers and persistence, all dreams are possible. My motto has always been to *Dream Big*. A hard work ethic has allowed me to finish what I start with the support of others. It is fundamental to acknowledge specific faculty members at Walden University who helped me reach this milestone and finish this dissertation.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Professional school counselors employ practices to help students achieve academic goals, college admissions, and career trajectories (Goodman-Scott, 2015). According to the 2017 American School Counselor Association (ASCA) ethical standards, school counselors are responsible for the following domains: student advocacy, collecting data, and minimizing gaps to foster student achievement in goal planning. The counselors are accountable for providing accurate information and developing intervention plans according to what they learned from the comprehensive school counseling master's degree program to work in different socioeconomic educational communities effectively. For example, school counseling master's programs are designed to train graduate students to deliver strength-based content in preparation for servicing all youth populations (Gysbers, 2013). Elementary, middle, and high school counselors must continue to enhance their skills by attending workshops and state conferences or taking extra courses to continue their professional development progress (ASCA, 2018a; Epstein & Van Voorhis, 2010). Young and Kaffenberger (2016) found professional development opportunities available to 512 school counselors with additional knowledge, resources, and tools to maximize their efforts with the student population. Influential factors within the outcomes of the research, such as the academic success of adolescents with economic hardships, depend on the school counselors' shared knowledge and competency skills (White & Kelly, 2010). Professional school counselors who can communicate social-emotional information and display student counseling

abilities are ready to work in school districts with socioeconomic confines and other related factors (Tina et al., 2012).

Chapter 1 presents the topic of the research study, which is the role and experience of school counselors working with urban high school learners in Northeastern regions of the United States. The remaining sections in Chapter 1 cover the synopsis of the background of the study according to the literature review. A discussion of the problem statement, purpose of the study, and research question highlights the phenomenon within the research based on professional school counselors' lived experiences. Justification for the conceptual framework and nature of the study comes from using a transcendental phenomenon with Husserl's philosophical method to collect data and guide the qualitative research study. In addition to providing research information, Chapter 1 includes key terms with definitions for the frequent words used throughout the dissertation. Next, assumptions, scope, delimitations, and limitations related to the school counselors in urban education appear for the readers to interpret. Finally, I will describe the significance of the study and conclude with a summary of this transcendental qualitative research project.

Background of the Study

The background for this study is a review of the literature on professional school counselors' roles with urban minority youth. A discussion of current and past research findings from the perspective of school counselors working in urban school districts will highlight the gap for this qualitative study. In a phenomenological research study, Savitz-

Romer (2012) emphasized the importance of focusing on the school counselor's role with culturally diverse students. The viewpoint of high school counselors is essential to the feedback interview process to collect valid data for this transcendental qualitative study. Cole and Grothaus (2014) found limited research on professional school counselors' self-told stories working around adolescents' financial limitations in low-income high school districts. Savitz-Romer identified the following themes collected from the research questions: (a) "complex college readiness counseling," (b) "interpretation of the role," and (c) "unpreparedness" (pp. 103-107). The results from the data showed that school counselors felt dissatisfied with the lack of training on how to assist urban minority teenagers with college and career readiness. Based on the results, the authors recommended that school counselors attend workshops or training to create postsecondary programs, as well as utilize the data on socioeconomically disadvantaged students to promote district-wide changes to eliminate inequalities. The scope of this topic relates to the proposed qualitative research study by focusing on professional school counselors' views and experiences with minority high school students in urban districts.

In a similar research study, Goodman-Scott (2015) utilized the School Counselor Activity Rating Scale (SCARS), finding that high school counselors felt unprepared for the realities of job activities due to insufficient training in the counseling programs. The conclusion from SCARS showed the influence school counselors possess in helping all students achieve success based on the delivery of previous training experiences. The outcome raises awareness for graduate-level programs to provide practical training for

potential counselors and inform employed counselors in less-privileged school districts to understand the need for high school counselors' preparedness in today's society. The results relate to the current study as a qualitative transcendental research design to explore the lived experiences of professional school counselors and their role in working with urban minority youth to achieve high school expectations despite known confines. Milsom and McCormick (2016) recommended that school counselors become more accountable in the field by examining research findings to enhance their counseling curriculum and advocate for the struggling student population.

Gaps are present in past and current research regarding school counselors' training and their experiences in the field. Colbert (2013) addressed the school counselors' role when working with youth and delivering effective dropout prevention programs in low-income and overpopulated education communities. In addition to exploring the role of school counselors based on the gap in literature, it is necessary to acknowledge the problems impacting urban minority youth. Thus, with this transcendental qualitative research study, I also addressed economic factors that influence graduation rates for high school learners in urban districts.

According to White and Kelly (2010), minority teenagers from low-income families were more likely to drop out of school than high-income students. In further exploring the perspectives of school counselors, this research may facilitate the creation of a comprehensive program to address economic hardships and develop dropout prevention plans. The transcendental qualitative research project served as an

investigation of the perception of school counselors to explore and gain an understanding of their lived experiences working with the urban minority population. The results from this study may help school counselors improve student success rates and establish social change for urban minority high school members. Therefore, the objective of pursuing this transcendental qualitative study aims to raise awareness for future experts to advocate for social justice, improve student performance, and reevaluate school counseling programs.

Problem Statement

The training provided to school counselors determines how they approach challenges in the education field. Boes et al. (2006) conducted a survey that raised the concern of counseling programs needing additional courses to help potential school counselors respond to future ethical dilemmas. For instance, school counselors who work with urban minority youth encounter socioeconomic and other related adversities. Inequality exists for the students based on the family's low economic status, which impacts employment opportunities, education, health insurance, and resources (Conrad et al., 2009; Hutchison, 2011).

Professional school counselors' involvement critically influences the high school graduation rates. A significant drop below 60% of yearly graduation rates exists among minority students in urban high school communities (Morgan et al., 2015). Colbert (2013) identified a decrease in graduating seniors in low-income districts despite prevention efforts made by school counselors. Based on these intervention attempts from professional school counselors, future researchers can highlight the importance of

educating and training school counselors to successfully assist underachieving high school learners with economic difficulties impacting their progress in school.

According to Savitz-Romer (2012), urban minority students attending schools in poverty-stricken locations tend to be less successful in postsecondary degree attainment than students in suburban or rural districts. In connection with this correlation, Colbert (2013) noticed a decline in high school graduation rates due to the socioeconomic status (SES) of parents or guardians, which resulted in student emotional distress and little motivation to succeed academically. Research studies about urban minority high school populations revealed restricted access to resources, low aspirations, barriers to postsecondary attainment, lack of knowledge, and financial constraints in attaining educational goals (Aladag, 2013; Colbert, 2013; Hutchison, 2011; Savitz-Romer, 2012; White & Kelly, 2010; Young & Kaffenberger, 2011).

Underachieving high school learners with a low SES encounter more struggles in school (Hutchison, 2011). Due to financial barriers, limited resources, and lack of knowledge on how to achieve their goals, students with economic hardships rely heavily on the expertise of urban school counselors (Savitz-Romer, 2012). Limited qualitative research exists addressing high school counselors' lived experiences working with urban minority youth in urban education settings (Lapan et al., 2014). Because of ongoing economic-related obstacles for students in urban minority high school districts to attain academic success, additional research is needed on school counselors' self-reported encounters working with the youth population (Anctil et al., 2012). Currently, school

counselors do not have adequate training opportunities, such as additional courses to foster improvements in preparation for working in urban school settings (Owens et al., 2009). In conducting this study, I explored the lived experiences of high school counselors from their perspective to raise awareness, improve academic success, and increase graduation rates despite urban minority teenage students' economic barriers.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to explore school counselors' lived experiences working with urban minority high school students' financial hardships and other associated factors. Given family-related restrictions for adolescents, professional school counselors are responsible for developing dropout prevention plans to support and promote student success (Owens et al., 2009). I used a transcendental phenomenological approach to explore the counselors' lived experiences. As the facilitator for this research, I coded data to reveal emerging themes and subthemes related to the setbacks school counselors encounter in seeking to assist the urban minority population (Parikh, 2013). The identifying themes and subthemes came from the school counselors' lived experiences based on their master's-level training in promoting urban minority students' achievement in the domains of academic, personal-social development, and postsecondary planning (ASCA National Standards for Students, 2016). The findings from the study may help raise awareness about the challenges faced by school counselors who work with urban minority students. Professional counselors, trainees, counselor educators, and master's-level program leaders may be inspired to

modify or adopt training practices for counselors who work in schools that urban

minority learners attend.

Research Question

The central research question for this qualitative research study is as follows:

RQ: What are school counselors' lived experiences working with urban minority

high school students in Northeastern U.S. urban areas?

Conceptual Framework

Based on the problem statement, the conceptual framework of transcendental

phenomenology helped me to understand the experiences of school counselors who

support economically disadvantaged high school students. Antonenko (2015) referred to

the conceptual framework as a necessary research tool that helps organize and break

down in-depth data about the described phenomenon. Edmund Husserl created the

transcendental phenomenological approach; he was a dedicated philosopher who

explored the lived experiences of humans (Taipale, 2015). Husserl's inspiration came

from his mentor, who motivated him to investigate the human consciousness rather than

making inferences about the phenomenon to gain its true meaning. Although he was not a

researcher, Husserl maintained a philosophical belief leading to the idea of subjective

reflection, which encouraged individuals to share their lived experiences to gain a deeper

understanding of a problem (Chernavin, 2016).

According to early writings by Husserl, the phenomenon development evolved

into a transcendental philosophy to assist in exploring the conscious mind from the first-

person perspective, ultimately capturing the true meaning of the phenomenon (Husserl, 1960). In particular, the progression from a Husserlian lens is a technique that utilizes epoché (also known as bracketing) to gather detailed accounts from participants to prevent suppositions on the topic (Beyer, 2018; William, 1984). As part of Husserl's belief system, epoché is a proactive approach used to separate one's own influences or ideas from interfering with the shared knowledge provided by the participant (Hamill & Sinclair, 2010). After this core phase in transcendental phenomenology, inquirers can raise their conscious thoughts to suspend any biases or assumptions and focus on the lived events of participants (Heinamaa, 2017).

The step-by-step phenomenological procedure from this conceptual framework allows the researcher to use open-ended questions to engage the individual further, sharing a meaningful dialogue about their encounters with the topic under consideration. Transcendental phenomenology was an appropriate framework for this study to prevent imposing any biases or thoughts onto the participant's responses and influencing the outcome of the data. The pure conscious evidence presented from a transcendental phenomenology stance receives further discussion in Chapter 2.

Data collected using a transcendental phenomenological approach provide detailed feedback from school counselors employed in urban high school settings. The findings from the qualitative research project may enable school counselors to approach underachieving urban minority students, as well as influence changes to school

counseling master's degree programs. The shared encounters from the professional school counselors' points of view may provide detailed results from this research study.

Goodman-Scott (2015) recommended additional qualitative research to center on school counselors' self-reported experiences assisting urban high school students in identifying common patterns. Based on the recommended transcendental phenomenology process, I applied Husserl's epoché and phenomenon reduction to best explore the human consciousness based on the interviewees' responses (Hamill & Sinclair, 2010). Epoché enabled me to collect unbiased information highlighting the school counselors' experiences working with urban minority youth.

Following epoché was the phenomenological reduction, another Husserlian philosophical belief used to suspend judgment to understand the true nature of the human problem (Heinonen, 2015). To apply this core idea, a phenomenological reduction is essential to trigger the consciousness and allow participants to relive their everyday experiences in urban school districts (Heinonen, 2015). Hence, the notion of phenomenological reduction is appropriate to help delay any assumptions, center only on the human experience, and identify patterns.

In conjunction with transcendental phenomenology, a Husserlian philosophical lens maintained the focus on the school counselors' priorities, skills, and actions in working with urban minority adolescents. Through this conceptual framework, the data gathered facilitated better processing of the experiences of professional school counselors in urban school districts. Hannon (2016) called for additional qualitative studies that

support school counselors working with marginalized students struggling with personal restrictions to achieve success.

Nature of the Study

The purpose of the qualitative transcendental phenomenological project is to explore and describe the school counselors' professional experiences working with urban adolescent students with socioeconomic difficulties. Diem (2015) suggested research on school counselors in urban settings could provide findings that would impact how they plan and approach challenges faced by urban minority high school learners. More research is needed to raise awareness of the importance of professional school counselors' roles as adolescent advocates in influencing urban high school student achievement (Hutchison, 2011).

Using epoché and phenomenological reduction, I asked participants open-ended questions about their lived experiences and invited their conscious thoughts to gain feedback (Skea, 2016; Yıldız Karagöz, 2015). This transcendental qualitative study comprised school counselors employed in urban U.S. Northeastern city school districts who answered one-on-one interview questions to address the identified gap in research. The intent of this individualized approach was to allow participants to share their past experiences free from restrictions and to minimize possible influences from other school counselors in the same type of school community. Interviews were facilitated over a video conference call with Adobe Connect, depending on the available off-campus hours of the school counselors.

As Benoot et al. (2016) recommended, a purposeful sample allowed me to collect a detailed description from a small sample of participants with similar demographic variables for optimum results. As part of the data analysis process, I used NVivo 12 by QSR, an online qualitative computer software program, to gather, organize, and store information. With the results of the data analysis, I aimed to minimize the gap and foster social change, which can raise awareness to address the realistic challenges school counselors encounter working in urban New York City high school locations.

Definitions

The key terms used throughout the dissertation are as follows:

American Counseling Association Code of Ethics: The *ACA Code of Ethics* is a list of ethical standards and principles for professional school counselors, counselor educators, supervisors, and trainees to uphold when working with the public in various settings to ensure ethical and legal rights (ACA, 2014).

American School Counseling Association: The ASCA is a worldwide professional organization for school counselors that provides support in professional development, research, publications, and other resources to advocate for student success (ASCA, 2018f).

American School Counselor Association National Model: The ASCA developed the National Model for school counselors to integrate into their school counseling programs as a supportive, data-based curriculum for students (ASCA, 2018a).

Comprehensive school counseling program: School counselors designed the CSCP as a preventative plan to encourage student development in the areas of academic, social-emotional, and postsecondary planning (ASCA, 2018d).

Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs: CACREP is meant for adults in higher education programs so colleges and universities can adopt it and become accredited master's and doctoral degree programs in the counseling field (CACREP, 2016).

School counselors: School counselors are part of the education team who work together with staff, parents, and outside agencies to meet students' needs in the areas of academic goals, social-personal development, and career planning (ASCA, 2018c).

Urban school communities: Commonly based in the city, urban school communities have an overly crowded, diverse student population who qualify for free or reduced-price lunches (Evans et al., 2017).

Urban minority youth: Urban minority youth are young learners with culturally diverse backgrounds who reside in low-income neighborhoods (Gamble & Lambros, 2014; O'Donnell & Kirkner, 2016).

Assumptions

For this qualitative transcendental research study, a few assumptions were necessary. One assumption is that professional school counselor participants will answer the interview questions truthfully according to their lived experiences (Martin, 2017). Similarly, the open-ended interview questions presented to participants should be

sufficient to gather valid data for the study. The next assumption is that the professional

school counselors have comparable training experience in an accredited CACREP

master's degree program, as opposed to nonaccredited counseling programs (Hughey,

2011). These assumptions were necessary to conduct this transcendental qualitative

research study. For example, there is no guarantee the feedback reported by the

professional school counselors will be entirely honest and reliable. It is also difficult to

predict whether the sample group will have a similar training experience from a

CACREP accredited program or nonaccredited school counseling program. These

assumptions were necessary to address any possible implications or rationale for the

outcome of this study.

Scope and Delimitations

Specific delimitations required consideration to explore the human experience of

professional school counselors working with urban minority youth. The selection of

transcendental phenomenology was to encourage the school counselors to share their

lived experiences working with urban minority youth, free from any expectations. Thus, a

specific focus on transcendental phenomenological research should ensure the suspension

of biases during the data collection process.

Unlike the transcendental method, hermeneutic phenomenology is a description of

understanding the interpretation, something otherwise omitted because individuals cannot

separate themselves from the world with bracketing (postponing all postulations, ideas, or

preconceptions; Seymour, 2006). Thus, hermeneutic phenomenology consists of the

individual self-reflecting on the rationale for the actions taken during their lived experiences. Due to the existing gap in research, a transcendental qualitative method was appropriate to explore further the lived experiences of professional school counselors serving urban minority students.

Few current qualitative researchers have focused on school counselors' perceptions and work experiences with the urban student population (Friesenhahn-Soliz et al., 2015). Participants selected for the study worked for the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) in urban public high schools. School counselors employed by private and charter urban high schools were ineligible to participate. The professional school counselors selected had a New York State license with at least 3 years of experience in the field. To narrow the prospective tenured group, delimitations were school counselors who have experience working in urban public high school districts. Male and female school counselors over the age of 18-year merited selection using a criterion sampling method, with assistance from a generalized list provided by the Licensed Counselors Organization (LCO) website (NYSSCA, 2018).

Data may be transferable based on the descriptive, open-ended interview question responses gathered from professional school counselors. The detailed background experiences of counselors working with urban high school students allowed me to elaborate and transfer the sample group members' shared accounts. Thus, I used the interview questions and responses from the school counselors to check, organize, and provide credible, transferable results. Based on the multiple perspectives from the same

professional members, I anticipated similar answers to the open-ended questions, as the focus is on the school counselors' lived experiences working with urban youth. Overall, the data results, Husserl's philosophy of inquiry, and literature review each contributed to equitable results and delimitations for the transcendental qualitative research project.

Limitations

As part of any research study, outside factors can enable limitations to appear during the data process. For instance, video conference calls via Adobe Connect may contain some background noise (depending on the interviewee's location) or other unforeseen interruptions that can confuse the participant when answering the interview questions. Based on the potential for disruption in school, it was imperative to conduct the interviews in a private location away from the educational setting. Another possible weakness is that some participants may not be technologically savvy enough to operate Adobe Connect on the Internet. To address this potential issue, I provided the interviewees with written instructions, verbal explanations, 10 extra minutes to help them use the technology, and sent a video link explaining the programs.

In addition, it is possible for professional school counselors to experience burnout during the school year, which can sway their interview responses. According to Mullen and Gutierrez (2016), school counselors serving a large and demanding student population experience stress and burnout. For that reason, I conducted the interviews at a time convenient for the participants that were not associated with stressful events during the school year (e.g., state testing, first or last day). Similarly, giving feedback requires

the school counselors to self-reflect first to share personal experiences working with urban minority youth.

Even the use of Husserl's philosophical technique cannot ensure the legitimacy of the study, which depends on the accuracy of shared responses (Chernavin, 2016). Although the stories told by the interviewees may not be entirely accurate due to burnout or differences in experiences, it was essential to prompt the school counselors to expand on their thoughts and provide evidence in a relaxed environment.

To ensure accurate transcription of interview feedback, I utilized member checking to eliminate any misinterpretations as a technique. Member checking is a credible data confirmation method in research that helps develop trustworthiness with the participants, allowing them to look over the transcribed accuracy of their shared lived experiences (Harvey, 2015).

Another likely limitation in utilizing Husserl's research design may entail the effectiveness of epoché. For example, there is no guarantee bracketing helped set aside all opinions or assumptions during the investigation phase. To ensure subjectivity, I interpreted the school counselors' shared experiences based on written notes and recordings to analyze and organize the qualitative data. Similarly, as a professional school counselor with experience in only the urban elementary and middle school levels, I remained cognizant of my own biases through journaling to keep them from interfering with the outcome of the study. Therefore, I randomly selected a sample of high school

counselors I did not know, excluding counseling professionals who worked in urban elementary and middle schools.

Another setback is gaining willing recruits for the study; to address this, I used snowball sampling and resent invitations to obtain enough school counselors in urban high schools to increase the likelihood of saturation. Furthermore, I chose Husserl's transcendental phenomenological method to help keep any of my preconceptions or personal experiences from interfering with the voluntary participants' feedback. I rejected Heidegger's research approach because it does not allow for suspending the researcher's ideas or assumptions. To address all potential limitations, I took steps to help address and eliminate any potential setbacks while focusing on the high school counselors in Northeastern urban settings.

Significance of the Study

In studying professional school counselors' responsibility to promote students' academic success, social-emotional growth, and college or career fulfillment (ASCA, 2018c), I explored high school counselors' self-reported experiences working with urban minority high school students (DeKruyf et al., 2013). According to the ACA Code of Ethics (2014) and the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2018a), school counseling professionals must assist all students equally, despite the individuals' background or other challenges. Although school counselors seek to meet the needs of each student, an adolescent's family financial constraints associated with other interpersonal factors can make it challenging for professional counselors to succeed in this mission. Lapan et al.

(2014) acknowledged the need for school counselors working in low-income communities to implement intervention plans to tackle adverse factors and improve graduation rates. Thus, the results from this research study had some social change implications in Chapter 5 regarding improving the school counseling services provided to the urban minority youth.

In addition, the research findings discussed may encourage graduate school counseling programs to advance their practice and align policies with CACREP standards to keep up with changes in education. Merlin et al. (2017) found a limited amount of current research regarding the implications of positive changes with CACREP requirements for school counselors. As social change advocates, all professional school counselors may benefit from the information and findings shared to raise awareness and advance in the field. The significance of this qualitative research study is that it will give meaning and an overview of their lived experiences in hopes of making improvements for professional school counselors' services to urban minority school communities.

Summary

Professional school counselors play a fundamental role in helping and guiding students throughout their academic careers. As part of the advocacy role, school counselors implement the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2018a) in the domains of academic, personal-social development, and postsecondary planning in the context of CSCPs. Professional school counselors and trainees in master's-level programs need to be aware of socioeconomic differences and receive training in current multicultural

competency concerns impacting urban minority youth to facilitate a successful CSCP in low-income school districts. I used a qualitative transcendental phenomenological method to explore school counselors' perspectives and lived experiences working with urban minority high school students. In Chapter 2, the identified themes and subthemes on the urban minority adolescent population, roles, and challenges of professional school counselors, education, and training for school counselors, as well as the conceptual framework used for this study, did appear.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

School counselors serve an important role in helping minors overcome personal or economic confines to become successful. According to the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2018a), professional school counselors in the education system are accountable for each student's academic, social, and emotional development. In line with Cigrand et al. (2015), school counselors can create support plans and use their expertise to address the key points in the ASCA National Model.

Professional counselors must consider other factors impacting the urban minority youth population (Lee, 2005). Urban minority adolescents residing in poverty-stricken communities may find it challenging to meet graduation requirements due to economic barriers and other related factors. Most underachieving students living in urban areas with a low-income SES are Latino or African American (Plata et al., 2017). Jia et al. (2016) found a connection between SES and the high school dropout rates for the disadvantaged Latino and African American student population. The U.S. education census report recognized a 10.6% and 7.4% increase in high school dropout rates for Latino and African American student populations, respectively (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016b). In addition, 55% of high school graduates were White compared to 12% Hispanic (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016a).

Based on limited literature, further exploration was necessary to minimize the knowledge gap regarding professional school counselors' experiences working with urban minority students (Colbert, 2013; Goodman-Scott, 2015; Militello & Janson, 2014;

Savitz-Romer, 2012; Vega et al., 2015). To address this gap, I conducted a transcendental phenomenological qualitative study to investigate the lived experiences of school counselors working with urban minority high school students from low SES families.

This chapter provides an overview of the extant literature regarding the phenomenon examined in this study, which is the experiences of public school counselors working within urban school districts. I have organized the literature review around the themes of school counselors' work environment, existing hardships for urban students, school counselor roles, challenges faced in low-income high school communities, and education and training programs provided for school counselors. I also use this chapter to present the conceptual framework on transcendental phenomenology and conclude with an overall summary.

Literature Search Strategy

I used various resources to gather detailed information related to professional school counselors' experiences in urban high school settings. Exploring the gap addressed by this qualitative study entailed searching on Google Scholar and Walden University's library website. The search engines I used most often were PsycINFO, ERIC, PsycARTICLES, ProQuest Central, and SAGE Journals. Additionally, the Thoreau Multi-Database search was a reliable tool to search multiple keywords and narrow down themes noted in the scholarly articles. The specific words input into the search engines and databases were *professional school counselors, urban schools, high school students, urban minority students, graduation rate, dropouts, guidance*

counselors, low-income students, and counseling graduate programs. I reviewed the references from limited old and somewhat current peer-reviewed articles to research more about school counselors working with urban minority minors. Furthermore, I delved into the gaps in the literature by applying specific terms in the Thoreau search engine, such as *school counselors*, *urban school communities*, and *urban minority youth*. The intent with this search was to understand and gather enough scholarly information to identify and support the identified gap.

Conceptual Framework

I used a transcendental framework in this qualitative study to examine the research problem of not knowing school counselors' lived experiences working with urban minority youth. Researchers adopting a transcendental phenomenological approach focus on exploring the person's everyday interactions with others to gain a deeper understanding of the identified phenomenon (Sheehan, 2014). Therefore, the objective was to seek detailed information from school counselors to help unveil their thoughts, recognize actions taken to support urban minority adolescents, and organize collected data. Specifically, transcendental phenomenological researchers use the concept of *intentionality* in asking participants questions to understand the problem through personal details. Wesołowska (2014) acknowledged that transcendental researchers purposefully encourage interviewees to reveal their lived experiences as available only from the selected group.

Philosopher Edmund Husserl developed the transcendental approach around the 20th century to fully understand a problem using phenomenological reduction through hands-on investigation procedures (Taipale, 2015). Before becoming the founder of phenomenology, Husserl was inspired by his mentor and teacher, Franz Brentno, who focused on the characteristics of consciousness (Dowling & Cooney, 2012). Early uses of Husserl's transcendental philosophy were to evoke people's thoughts of their lived experiences for the investigator to narrow down the shared information. As a philosopher, Husserl felt compelled to inform others about the importance of focusing on participants' human experiences to obtain valid research (Chernavin, 2016). Husserl believed it was essential to investigate the nature of things based on the actual lived events themselves (Klauser, 2017), thereby preventing any preconceptions from interfering with the interpretation of information. Husserl's phenomenological belief allows the investigator to look at the existing human conscious based on respondents' experiences. I explored the conscious mind through this pure phenomenological method and listened to the participants' everyday experiences to gain understanding.

Husserl used a specific model to help adopt a natural attitude and obtain details about the phenomenon (Yudin, 2016). In his early philosophical writings, Husserl described the development of transcendental phenomenology as a scientific approach that looks deeper into the human mind based on life experiences (Husserl, 1970). With his unique beliefs and way of thinking, Husserl influenced and transformed how the European people viewed the systemic method without the traditional use of mathematics,

science, or theories (Husserl, 1960). Thus, Husserl's transcendental phenomenology revolutionized the way people approach a phenomenon by focusing on the human conscious and descriptive life experiences.

Fischer (2010) acknowledged the philosophical Husserlian technique to be relevant for centering on the reported human experience instead of making inferences about the topic. Husserl created the technique of epoché, or bracketing, to focus on individuals' shared accounts, gather meaningful information, and establish clarity (Beyer et al., 2016; William, 1984). Husserl proposed bracketing in research to inquire into the first-person description of the individual's experience to eliminate assumptions (Hamill & Sinclair, 2010). Hence, Husserl's objective in implementing epoché was to intentionally gain meaningful details of the individual's experience with a phenomenon. As the researcher, I narrowed the shared events by the professional school counselors and organized them to identify similar patterns by utilizing epoché from a transcendental lens.

Husserl's other core concept, phenomenological reduction, intentionally brings about consciousness by returning to the interviewees' everyday life experiences (Heinonen, 2015). In this action phase, phenomenological reduction allows researchers to postpone any generalizations while focusing on and exploring the human experience. Husserl's perspective on phenomenological reduction centered on the individual's experiences by setting aside any biases to avoid undue influences. Thus, this philosophical idea prevents the interviewer from making hypothetical speculations to center only on the interviewee's shared experience.

An alternative to Husserl's transcendental methodology, Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology did not merit consideration for this research study because the theorist reflected only on what influenced participants' decisions about their experiences (Crowther et al., 2017). Based on the intent of focusing only on the lived experiences of school counselors as opposed to their influential life factors, using Husserl's philosophy allowed me to break down the data to gain a clearer understanding of the knowledge gap.

Consequently, I invited school counselors to reflect and share their experiences working with urban minority youth. Assessing respondents' feedback sheds light on their lived experiences and identifies common patterns associated with urban minority youth challenges. Applying Husserl's transcendental phenomenology helped me explore the human experience further.

The human relationships and the school counselors' interactions with others can also undergo analysis to gain a deeper understanding of the lived experiences (Epp, 1998). In working with adolescent learners in urban communities, professional school counselors must consider how financial barriers manifest in the way students approach and overcome obstacles in their education. As Cole and Grothaus (2014) demonstrated, students from families with a low SES tend to have more difficulties achieving academic expectations. Based on these adversities, looking at other researchers who addressed professional school counselors' lived experiences was essential. Tucker et al. (2010) discussed Husserl's transcendental philosophy in exploring successful urban African American male students and the impact of interpersonal mattering despite possible

influencing responses given to please the female interviewers. The results from subjective statements revealed how the African American students' felt a cultural disconnect in their school climate when not supported by school counselors (Tucker et al., 2010). The researchers provided evidence on the impact professional school counselors' have in urban education settings.

Parikh (2013) investigated 10 urban minority high school students and their experiences in the GEAR UP program, which recommended including multiple schools with the same program, and exploring school counselors' field training experience working with diverse adolescents. From the data analysis, the investigators were able to categorize five major themes, which were to navigate the college system and expand career options, counseling relationships, personal insight, and future orientation (Parikh, 2013). From this transcendental study, Parikh identified the benefit of students' participation in the GEAR UP program and the importance of building a trusting relationship with school counselors to attain future aspirations.

Among the small number of journal articles available, some investigators have included Husserl's transcendental philosophy in their suggestions for future research. For instance, researchers recommended additional studies to explore and minimize the phenomenon related to professional school counselors working with the urban minority youth population (Cole & Grothaus, 2014; Goodman-Scott, 2015; Holcomb-McCoy & Mitchell, 2005; Savitz-Romer, 2012). Husserl's philosophy helped remove biases by

collecting enough detailed information based only the school counselors' interpretation of their experiences with urban minority youth.

According to Miron (2016), the Husserlian philosophy allows an investigator to understand the meaning behind school counselors' lived experiences by identifying themes based on the individuals' shared perspectives to gain clarity on the problem. Furthermore, transcendental phenomenology enables the exploration of participants' points of view based on lived experiences in their everyday environment (Giorgi, 2007). Therefore, the commonality in the transcendental approach permitted school counselors and the investigator to engage in exploring the human experience instead of making inferences about the gap in the research study.

Based on the personal adversities impacting minority high school students in urban locations, I focused on the professional school counselors who work and interact with this population daily. Parikh (2013) emphasized the importance for professional school counselors to use multicultural skills when building supportive and trusting relationships to approach the concerns of the urban minority students properly. Therefore, the urban minority adolescents' unique needs require school counselors to recognize particular factors that may influence students' academic or future vocational outcomes.

According to Hannon (2016), further research is equally warranted to address the influential factors impacting students' academic achievement. To address the urban minority student challenges, Hannon proposed future qualitative researchers focus on developing open-ended questions to help identify urban school counselors' professional

growth insufficiencies and successful techniques. Findings from this transcendental qualitative research study supported this exploration of the lived experiences of school counselors in urban communities.

Husserl's phenomenology approach served as the blueprint to center on the phenomenon to gain insight from the school counselors' perspectives. Despite Holcomb-McCoy and Mitchell's (2005) assertion, no current researcher has addressed the school counselor's perspective about servicing urban minority youth in low-income districts. In pursuit of closing the gap within the literature, I anticipated the findings from this study may spur current professional school counselors to self-reflect and share their everyday experiences working in education communities with economic deficiencies and other similar factors.

The transcendental phenomenon identified can facilitate further exploration of the professional school counselors' perspectives with the support of implementing a conceptual framework. The selected conceptual framework, transcendental philosophy, assisted in the research process through a focus on professional school counselors' lived experiences working with urban minority high school students. Thus, Husserl's transcendental method should lead to increased insight and understanding of the human experience from the individual's perspective (Correia, 2017).

The human experience is a vital part of the transcendental method (Carlson, 2003), something for school counselors to remember when approaching the challenges of urban minority learners. Husserl's phenomenological approach also contributed to the

study by eliminating any judgments based on the analysis of the school counselors' lived experiences with urban minority teenagers. Based on the epoché and reduction techniques, data interpretation and organization into narrowed themes helped close the knowledge gap (Henriques, 2014). Overall, the rationale for addressing this transcendental phenomenon was to raise awareness for professional school counselors by reassessing their practices to bridge achievement gaps in urban school districts, and provide school counseling master's programs with current data to promote social change.

Literature Review Related to Key Variables and/or Concepts in

School Counselors' Work Environment

In the education field, professional school counselors strive to assist all youth in overcoming personal, social, or academic matters to manifest future aspirations (Shaterloo & Mohammadyari, 2011). The impact of supportive efforts by school counselors is evident in the literature (Mau et al., 2016; Nichols et al., 2017). According to Williams and Bryan (2013), urban minority students who come from low-income families struggle more with obtaining financial stability, employment, housing, food, medical insurance, and resources. Due to circumstances faced by the urban minority youth population, school counselors may encounter more stress in the work environment when trying to help students meet academic requirements, personal growth, or future aspirations.

Researchers have indicated a higher burnout rate among professional school counselors in urban districts due to increased demands from overpopulated youth (Butler

& Constantine, 2005). Professional counselors in urban schools are also less likely to report high job satisfaction compared to those in rural areas because of financial disadvantages, larger student populations, and unrelated duties from administrators (Camadan & Kahveci, 2013). Thus, the work environment of school counselors can present strain and frustration when providing services to urban minority youth. Therefore, as the researcher for this transcendental qualitative research study, I planned to explore only the high school counselors' lived experiences working in marginalized communities. For example, the literature review encompasses urban minority students, school counselor roles, CSCPs, and current challenges in urban high schools. Furthermore, I discuss CACREP, CACREP standards and preparation in school counseling programs, and the application of CACREP standards in urban education communities.

Urban Minority Youth from Urban Areas

School counselors in urban communities tend to serve a large, underachieving population of culturally diverse students who come from families with low SES (West-Olatunji et al., 2011). Mahatmya et al. (2016) attested that the most evident school districts with notable challenges are commonly in low-income communities with students from culturally diverse families. Similarly, Dretzke and Rickers (2016) indicated an overlapping higher occurrence exists for the enrolled low-income students, who are likely from ethnic minority groups in urban education communities. In accordance with the prediction from Hussar and Bailey (2011), an increase in student enrollment has occurred for the African American and Latino populations currently attending public schools in the

United States. McWilliams (2016) documented a growing trend in class size and students attending public schools in Philadelphia's low-income districts and other states.

Overcrowded schools, for example, commonly compromise the learner's academic performance, impact negative behaviors, and restrict access to school resources (Sheets, 2011). The challenges inherent in overpopulated urban schools raise concerns for school counselors to help urban minority students meet academic expectations. The highlighted barriers in urban school districts present a need to investigate how school counselors are currently working with the growing urban minority youth's adversities. Urban adolescents are in a critical phase in their educational career, which requires consistent guidance and support from their school counselors. Barrett et al. (2011) believed high school counselors play a unique advocacy role in responding to social justice by encouraging students to complete graduation requirements despite any systemic barriers. Based on the issues and the projected influx of minority students attending urban schools, I explored the school counselors and their lived experiences working with the large urban minority high school population.

Family financial status and other factors directly influence a student's economic status in society. Low-income students enrolled in the U.S. public school system are eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunches (Howard & Prakash, 2012). The majority of identified marginalized students receiving free meals were of ethnic minority status and came from low-income families below the 130% economic standing (National School Lunch Program, 2017). Based on the identified urban minority youth participating

in the lunch program, it is apparent that many minors are enrolled in urban education neighborhoods. In urban districts, most schools are overcrowded with minimal funding to support staff and students (Cox & Benson, 2017). Lee (2005) shared how high school students attending urban education settings were less likely to attain academic success, meet attendance expectations, graduate high school, receive medical care, come from two-parent households, and have access to resources or technology. Similarly, Nasir et al. (2011) revealed urban schools have a higher enrollment rate of low-income minority students coping with academic or other common barriers who also felt disconnected in their learning environment and unmotivated to graduate. These examples highlight the hardships of urban minority teenagers and the compromised learning environment in high-poverty schools.

The pressing financial factors related to marginalized urban minors require attention and support to promote student achievement in impoverished high schools. Compared to the suburban adolescent population, urban high school students face more economic-related hurdles while trying to fulfill academic requirements. According to Wax (2017), minority urban learners have a myriad of obstacles, such as financial barriers, limited resources, lack of knowledge, and social stigmas. Economic disadvantages and other related factors can place a significant amount of stress on high school students attempting to meet academic requirements, plan for postsecondary degrees, and obtain jobs after graduation. Molina et al. (2016) acknowledged that

students living in low-income households tend to have inadequate educational resources, low expectations to achieve goals, poor academic performance, and high dropout rates.

Based on socioeconomic restrictions, urban minority youth require extra support from professional school counselors to advocate and develop academic or mental health plans, as needed. According to the three domains of the ASCA National Model, school counselors are mandated to tend to the youth's academic needs, personal-social development, and postsecondary aspirations (ASCA National Standards for Students, 2016). The young urban learner's outcome is not only a reflection of the teachers but the efforts made by the school counselor. Gamble and Lambros (2014) stressed that culturally diverse student populations in economically disadvantaged communities have a higher need for counseling providers who offer extra services to improve students' social-emotional development and teach life skills to attain academic achievement. Based on the research recommendation, there is a need in urban districts for professional school counselors to provide ethnically diverse students with more services, along with mental health support, to meet their academic challenges. The ACA Code of Ethics urges counselors to maintain social justice by understanding their clients' cultural backgrounds and seeking resources as needed to promote growth (ACA, 2014). Recognizing the needs of young learners, professional school counselors should create an individualized student plan and a counseling curriculum while satisfying their roles in the education field.

School Counseling Roles

The high demand for urban minority youth services (Goodman-Scott, 2015) led to changes in holding school counselors accountable for developing a core curriculum to meet young learners' social, emotional, and academic needs while juggling other work-related responsibilities (ASCA, 2019a). Recently, researchers have centered their attention on the school counselors' different roles in education settings to minimize limitations in focusing solely on the youth. Astramovich et al. (2013), for example, disclosed how professional school counselors have multiple unique roles and obligations to fulfill in different school communities regardless of the population's economic status. For example, school counselors collaborate with administrators, teachers, and parents to address the student's individualized issues with supportive solutions.

According to Bickmore and Curry (2013), administrators may assign school counselors with various duties. For example, their responsibilities can entail providing classroom guidance presentations, individual or group counseling, academic advising, faculty or parent workshops, college applications, and career planning. The identified role and function of professional school counselors are helpful. However, their obligations can vary according to the school's location, student demographics, and administrator decisions (Grimes et al., 2017).

School counselors' roles are dependent on their supervisors' direction and vision. The administrator's directives may restrict school counselors' ability to plan for themselves and integrate intervention plans. Edwards (2007) acknowledged

administrators are leaders who make determinations in delegating duties based on the young population's needs and goals for the school year. In urban education districts, for instance, the issue of focus for school counselors' centers on urban minors who come from low-income families and face other concurrent factors. Professional school counselors address the urban population's circumstances by advocating and seeking partnerships with organizations to bring in extra student support (Crawford & Valle, 2016). To help urban minority learners deal with life circumstances, school counselors build trusting relationships and develop long-term plans to meet their students' individualized needs. In addition to addressing the urban population's socioeconomic concerns, school counselors must pay attention to the students' needs while adhering to administrators' instructions.

Economic adversities for the youth commonly impact their behaviors, emotional well-being, graduation requirements, and future vocational aspirations (Cole & Grothaus, 2014). The urban minority youth's challenges require professional school counselors to be realistic and trained in their role to help the marginalized population succeed in modern society. The ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2018a) identified school counselors as pivotal facilitators in collaborating in the school community and utilizing data to improve student outcomes despite their economic status, gender, race, and other demographic factors.

Although professional school counselors are accountable for supporting and actively participating in their role, the success of the learner's outcome also depends on

the direction counselors receive from the administrator and the comprehensive training experience they received in the master's program. According to Konstam et al. (2015), school counselors who undergo rigorous training are more confident in addressing and tackling challenging situations related to urban minority youth in schools. This finding attests to the importance of providing up-to-date training in the school counseling field to educate and develop intervention plans. Therefore, school counselor readiness and awareness are advantageous for meeting the concerns impacting the low-income urban minority population.

Although the professional school counselor's performance consists of helping students with various interventions, administrators' directives may sometimes go against the ASCA National Model and ACA Code of Ethics. For example, administrators may ask school counselors to perform teaching duties, such as overseeing students at lunch, proctoring examinations, monitoring hallways, or facilitating school discipline, all of which are outside of their role, according to the ASCA Ethical Standards (ASCA, 2018b). Karatas and Kaya (2015) identified principals and assistant principals as not being cognizant of or disregarding the duties they assign to school counselors that go against ethical guidelines.

This literature raises questions about how school counselors can be competent in their role despite requests to take on the responsibilities of a teacher, dean, lunch aid, or secretary in the school setting. According to Section C of the ACA Code of Ethics, counselors have a professional obligation to adhere to and practice within the standards

(ACA, 2014). Although it does not specify responsibilities, the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2018a) for school counselors suggests they should spend 80% of their time servicing the student population. To address this problem, school counselors require additional support from administrative leaders to devote more time to youth.

This phenomenon is also evident in older literature, with past scholars suggesting future researchers focus on the missing collaborative efforts between administration and counselors based on the National Model Themes of leadership, advocacy, and systemic change (Wilkerson, 2010). Wilkerson et al. (2013) also noted the need for data from comprehensive school counseling programs in middle and secondary schools regarding school counselor and leadership improvements based on student achievement results from the elementary level. Principals and assistant principals are crucial in providing professional school counselors opportunities to work with them and others to help students excel. As a result, it is important to recognize the impact of the administration's decisions and the productivity of professional school counselors serving the student population effectively. To address this controversy, exploring the school counselors' lived experiences may productively enhance counseling and guidance activities as directed by the administration.

Comprehensive School Counseling Programs

In educational communities, school counselors develop CSCPs by mapping out and documenting students' academic, social, emotional, and postsecondary goals for the year. Professional school counselors must ensure these developmental domains are part

of the CSCP to promote growth and provide student support (American Counseling Association, 2014). A review of CSCPs will shed light on the school counselors' responsibilities and methods to provide supportive services to all youth.

The ASCA (2019d) created CSCPs for school counselors to integrate into students' curriculum to collect data and make necessary improvements to attain school goals. For example, school counselors can utilize student data from CSCPs to monitor their progress or adjust in serving urban minority youth. Researchers have indicated a successful CSCP entails a smaller student-to-professional school counselor ratio to be more effective in contributing to student achievement in low-income communities, as well as the use of advocacy efforts as a preventative method (Goodman-Scott et al., 2016; Lapan et al., 2012). Despite the barriers in disadvantaged educational districts, the opportunities presented by the CSCP may help school counselors create a curriculum with intervention plans based on the youth's needs. Thus, the purpose of applying CSCP is to allow students an opportunity to learn and grow throughout the education journey.

CSCP is also advantageous for professional school counselors in setting a unified role, encouraging collaborative efforts with other educators, and establishing a systemic change (Ziomek-Daigle et al., 2016). Professional school counselors also utilize CSCPs by setting standards and collecting student data aligned with the curriculum. According to Goodman-Scott et al. (2016), CSCP implementation in public school communities across the United States is an attempt to maximize school counselors' efforts in raising student achievement.

Although CSCP developed in the late 1960s, it has evolved to meet the changes and challenges in today's society (Ziomek-Daigle et al., 2016). For instance, CSCP can serve to inform, support, and advocate for struggling urban minors in low-income school districts. Besides adopting CSCP into the guidance curriculum, professional counselors may also want to develop individualized student plans and provide support services for the youth (Gysbers, 2013).

Based on research studies (Alger & Luke, 2015; Ziomek-Daigle et al., 2016), professional school counselors depend on CSCPs to contribute to the success of students' primary domains in academic, social/emotional, and vocation expansion. For example, school counselors in urban communities have the challenging task of developing intervention plans and increasing achievement results for a large, diverse student population seeking positive results from the implemented CSCP. According to Mason (2016), urban minority students in low-income school districts require extra assistance from school counselors by employing the CSCP due to home and community factors contributing to the academic achievement gap. Researchers have suggested CSCP improvements will help challenge and train future school counselors to increase student success rates despite different hardships (Goodman-Scott et al., 2016; Mason, 2016).

Dahir et al. (2009) found the problem in delivering a successful CSCP to the student population existed because professional school counselors struggle due to their inconsistent participation in self-assessment to make improvements and execute the components from the ACA National Model. The result from the school counselors' self-

assessment is a potential step forward to improve student success and highlight areas needing improvement with the ACA model. The research findings contribute to the knowledge in exploring the lived experiences of public-school counselors to see if they are guided by the ASCA, ACA Code of Ethics, administration, CSCP, procedures, and policies in urban communities.

Challenges for School Counselors in Urban High Schools

Neighborhoods in poverty-stricken locations house a growing number of urban minority youth attending public schools (Garbacz et al., 2017). Thus, in urban school districts, educators, support staff, and professional school counselors are more likely to serve the young urban minority population. Most students who come from low-income families in urban education settings eligible for free lunch are minorities (Renth et al., 2015). Furthermore, these impoverished educational districts present unique and demanding challenges for professional school counselors. For instance, the abundance of urban minors enrolled in low-income schools creates an overcrowded environment, which requires more than one school counselor to balance the student ratio. Holcomb-McCoy and Mitchell (2005) found urban school districts to have the most constant challenges compared to affluent schools. This older research is critical to highlight in the literature review compared to more recent findings.

For example, Lapan et al. (2014) noted how data gathered from impoverished schools with urban minority student challenges could assist future school counselors in building more relevant, comprehensive school counseling programs. Yih-Jiun (2017) also

recognized that school counselors have the demanding task of applying multiculturalism to a large, diverse student population, where professionals need exposure to culturally diverse groups to bring about competency improvements. As a result, professional school counselors encounter an abundance of adversities based on the existing financial limitations and other struggles in urban communities. Therefore, it is advantageous to address some of the present obstacles specifically for the role of urban high school counselors, despite minimal findings in research.

In urban high school districts, school counselors play a vital function in guiding and helping urban minority adolescents meet academic requirements. According to Alavi et al. (2012), professional school counselors specifically assist high school students in overcoming difficulties in school and life. The complexity of working in high schools consists of dealing with learners' and families' concerns while juggling other obligations. For example, professional school counselors in urban settings may find it challenging to get more families involved to support their son or daughter because of their employment hours, cultural differences, limited education, or family obligations (Ludden, 2011). Lack of parental involvement often leads to behavior problems, poor grades, self-esteem issues, and high school dropouts (Majumder, 2016). As facilitators in bridging community efforts, professional school counselors may not always be successful in getting involvement from family members.

Along with failed participation from parents or guardians, school counselors in urban public settings tend not to have ample resources due to limited money from the

education system. Anderson (2016) addressed the conflict between high expectations from the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) across the United States and insufficient money in the budget to help urban minority students succeed. The establishment of the CCSS in the public school system was to help educators adhere to creating academic goals, building skills, and providing knowledge in all core subject areas (CCCS Initiative, 2017). For school counselors to support the CCSS for the urban minority population, a significant increase in funding for low-income districts can assist with the present concerns of learning disabilities, health complications, behavior problems, and mental health issues (Hodges et al., 2017). The extra financial resources can also provide professional school counselors with additional training opportunities and introduce external programs into disadvantaged education communities to address matters in urban districts.

In 2013, President Barack Obama implemented the $150 million initiative for economically disadvantaged schools across the United States in need of developing safer climates and integrating school-based mental health services with resource officers (Thompson & Alvarez, 2013). This federally funded proposal should foster collaborations between urban schools and local community organizations to establish nurturing learning environments and decrease youth violence. To date, there is no indication that this initiative terminated due to changes in the presidency. Despite this current preventative initiative, the outcome of the school counselor's role in tackling gaps

in urban education districts still depends upon the decision and direction provided by the administration.

Based on the initiative, the existing economic challenges and present outcomes surrounding the urban minority high school students continue to raise concern for professional school counselors, society, and researchers. Cole et al. (2015) recognized the challenges school counselors face in trying to get more involved parents to participate in low-income communities. Bryan and Henry (2008) found successful collaborative efforts made by professional school counselors in urban settings tended to encourage urban minority youth, despite personal constraints and inadequate education funding. The impact of economic factors on the success of the urban minority population merits the exploration of the lived experiences of professional school counselors to understand their work in urban districts. The shared lived experiences from the school counselors can help identify additional barriers or gaps in urban school districts. Findings from this qualitative research study may contribute to expanding the literature, training potential counselors, enhancing the skills of professional counselors, as well as updating the multicultural courses in the master's programs. Furthermore, additional research on the lived experiences of school counselors serving urban minority students is necessary to address the low achievement gap, and existing inequalities as an update to the previous literature presented (Cooper & Liou, 2007; Goodman-Scott, 2015; Savitz-Romer, 2012).

Based on the importance of the school counselor's role in working with the urban minority population and outdated research articles, it was necessary to explore their lived

experiences working with high school students to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon. The shared accounts from the advocating counselors' perspectives touched on their roles in raising awareness, improving student achievement, and promoting social change for urban minority students (Mitcham et al., 2009). Furthermore, the gathered data may serve as an additional resource to support counselors in the education field and make necessary changes to improve the CACREP for accredited master's curriculum to minimize the gap.

Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs for School Counseling

The Association for Counselor Education and Supervision created CACREP in 1981 (CACREP, 2016). The developing organization successfully advocated for CACREP to foster continuing education, enhance training experiences, and create a common practice serving the diverse student population (CACREP, 2016). The 2016 CACREP documented standards begin with an introduction, which then narrows to explain in detail the learning institution, counselor's identity, professional practice, evaluation procedures, different specialty areas, doctoral standards, and glossary for the reader (CACREP, 2016).

The learning environment for Section 1 of the CACREP standards includes the institution's learning structure, academic curriculum, and faculty in undergraduate and graduate programs (CACREP, 2016). Section 2, focused on professional counseling identity, provides a foundation for a counseling curriculum to master techniques for

ethical practice while working with clients. Section 3, professional practice, focuses on the counseling skills and experiences under supervision while participating in practicum or internship courses. Following the professional practice standard, Section 4 centers on evaluating the program and assessing the progress of the CACREP-accredited institution based on data from adult learners' performance and faculty members' evaluation. Section 5 outlines entry-level specialty areas with a discussion of specific counseling professions in the areas of addiction, career, clinical mental health, clinical rehabilitation, college and student affairs, marriage, couple, family, school, and rehabilitation. Following the professional counseling specialty areas, Section 6 highlights the importance of doctoral standards for the learning environment, professional identity, practicum, and internship requirements. Last is a glossary and explanation of terms for rehabilitation counseling. As an overview, the purpose of the documented CACREP standards is to highlight the expectations for institutions, educators, supervisors, and trainees in the counseling field.

CACREP's (2016) adoption into adult education programs, such as school counseling, to teach advanced skills was a means to ensure consistency in practice, protect clients' rights, and maintain standards to meet changes in society. According to CACREP standards, more counseling institutions have requested to establish an accredited adult learning program to warrant a school of excellence for master's students and faculty members over the years. The evaluation process for accredited higher education programs entails a thorough review conducted by experts to determine the quality delivered to the adult learners. For instance, accredited CACREP school

counseling programs should prepare and provide adequate training experiences to deal with unpredictable societal changes (Bobby, 2013).

Although the intent of adopting an accredited CACREP design for adult institutions has its benefits, school counseling interns and professionals can still encounter challenges while working with urban minority youth. Branthoover et al. (2010), however, found CACREP methods to help professional school counselors organize their counseling program to address the needs of urban minors in low-income education communities. In a recent pilot study, Merlin et al. (2017) found positive results with the CACREP requirements increasing the master's school counseling program from 48 credit hours to 60 in 2020 to provide more training opportunities by counselor educators to support the youth in K-12 schools better.

In applying the new CACREP 60-hour credits for school counseling programs, counselor educators can provide additional courses and different training experiences. The advanced courses may help inform trainees about the contemporary issues affecting the urban minority student population in low-income school districts. An accredited school counseling program currently ensures educational institutions meet higher academic standards, partake in yearly evaluations, require graduate prerequisites, and maintain 48 or more credits for a valid PK–12 certificate (ASCA, 2018e; CACREP, 2016).

The common associated socioeconomic barriers in urban schools require school counselors to apply their training experiences and master skills to help urban minority

students succeed, regardless of their finical constraints. Intertwining an enhanced CACREP for school counseling programs sets a foundation for helping professionals create and navigate the CSCP for all school districts, despite differences in student needs. McWilliams (2016) identified the urban minority student population as having more long-term academic and vocational adversities. Therefore, completing a proactive multicultural course under the new CACREP standards may prepare trained school counselors to address current urban dilemmas, seek social justice, and help more academically resilient urban minority youth succeed. From the distinct purpose of integrating CACREP into school counseling, trained professionals can approach matters efficiently to bridge the gap in school communities with economic adversities.

CACREP Standards and Preparation for School Counseling Concentration

The school counseling programs hold professionals in the field accountable in their practice with guidance from the established CACREP standards (CACREP, 2016). The established CACREP standards mandate rules for all counseling professionals to maintain an ethical practice while servicing the public. In the CACREP Standard G (School Counseling), for example, school counselors in P–12th-grade education settings must become system change agents by accessing student data, collaborating with other professionals, developing comprehensive school counseling models, as well as implementing strategies to promote graduation (CACREP, 2016). According to the standards, demonstrating these professional obligations are leadership qualities of a successful school counselor.

Although CACREP standards underwent an update in 2016, researchers have questioned the competency of new graduate school counselors from accredited higher learning programs due to accredited-program graduates having fewer ethical infractions compared to nonaccredited graduates (Even & Robinson, 2013). Based on the highlighted concern, it is important to assess the specific standards currently practiced and enforced by CACREP. For instance, the accredited requirements from the School Counseling Standards under the Counseling Curriculum (Professional Counseling Orientation and Ethical Practice) expect school counselors to demonstrate the knowledge and skill in developing a comprehensive model and advocate for social barriers while maintaining multiple roles or functions (CACREP, 2016). Interestingly, the older 2009 CACREP standards for Professional Orientation and Ethical Practice required professional school counselors to understand their different roles and collaborate with other providers to employ appropriate strategies on current human issues (CACREP, 2009).

To ensure CACREP competency in the field of counseling, Sink (2016) proposed an extension of the curriculum to train school counselors using a multitiered system of supports (MTSS). The intervention model is a proactive method to help school counselors collaborate with staff to improve students' behavior and academic performance. The idea of presenting a CACREP extension to the school counseling program also allows for more training experience to tackle future challenges in school settings. Although this extension can potentially enhance school counseling programs, CACREP-accredited master's programs currently have multicultural counseling courses

to teach information about culturally diverse learners in middle- or low-class school communities.

Mayorga et al. (2013) acknowledged that professional school counselors are bound to work in diverse school settings but may not necessarily be fully prepared for the concerns of the large urban minority population due to multicultural beliefs, values, cultural identities, family dynamics, and ethnic and racial issues. Instructors of the multicultural course for school counselors share basic knowledge and skills; however, course completion does not guarantee multicultural competency growth throughout the counselor's career. After administering a self-rated survey to elementary school counselors, Holcomb-McCoy (2001) found participants felt less multiculturally competent in knowledge and racial identity development. Counselor educators who teach multicultural counseling courses use real-life scenarios to inform and prepare adult students about present race-related issues in the school system due to notable competency development concerns (Willow, 2010).

On another note, White participants in Baker and Moore's (2015) study recommended data from counseling education programs can gather minority college students to participate in self-awareness activities to feel confidently equipped to tackle diverse adversities in school. Despite the multicultural techniques utilized to train future school counselors, raising awareness and encouraging changes in the potential 2024 CACREP program is imperative. A reevaluation of the CACREP standards and educational programs for school counselors is warranted to create and integrate a

multicultural CSCP for diverse schools to tackle concerns in economically disadvantaged minority education communities.

Application of CACREP Standards in Urban School Settings

To comprehend the high school counselors' experiences, I investigated and discussed their efforts in working with urban minority students in low-income districts by applying what they have learned from their accredited CACREP master's program. Dolph (2017) reported that urban schools across the United States face multiple challenges in improving and increasing students' academic performance. The most common difficulties presented by urban minority youth are inconsistent attendance, classroom overcrowding, higher trauma rates, scarce resources, mental health issues, inadequate health care, behavior problems, academic disabilities, higher dropouts, financial restrictions, and single-parent support (Mosley, 2009). These prevailing trends in urban education settings are considerations high school counselors must be prepared to face while working with the urban minority adolescent population. Perusse et al. (2015) stated that school counselor trainees from accredited colleges or universities undergo extensive internships and practicums to gain hands-on experience in active urban school settings. The training experiences from a potential updated CACREP accredited program can help address such concerns affecting high school learners from low-income districts.

Along with the benefits of having on-site experience from the accredited CACREP programs, professional school counselors can also apply various learned techniques and skills to meet students' needs. For instance, professional school

counselors employed in urban communities tend to have a higher number of enrolled urban minority students with various limitations, which requires more individualized time and planning as part of the counseling curriculum (Kozlowski, 2013). Holcomb-McCoy and Johnston (2008) found placing novice counselors in unfamiliar rural or suburban educational settings can pose a challenging concern when trying to work in unfamiliar territory. Also, in 2008, Holcomb-McCoy, Harris, Hines, and Johnston revealed school counselors with higher multicultural self-efficacy beliefs are more confident in tackling challenges related to cultural diversity by applying learned skills and supportive resources. To establish student equality and professional competency, master's degree programs and counselor educators can provide additional multicultural courses to train future school counselors thoroughly (Dodson, 2013).

When entering the field of school counseling, newly hired professionals can approach some of the challenges in low-income schools by adapting to the culture of the building, as well as finding what works best to promote academic success in lower-class districts. Upon researching school counselors' application of CACREP standards in urban schools, Holcomb-McCoy (1998) acknowledged a concern for school counselors being prepared to work efficiently with the urban minority student population by having counseling educators address realistic urban training using CACREP standards. Such preparation is still an important research topic in education, which calls for counseling educators and CACREP institutions to restructure the program to focus on the unique demands of the urban population specifically. The purpose of addressing this concern is

to foster practical courses related to the hardships impacting the urban minority youth in urban school communities to help school counselors advocate and develop preventative models. Thus, the findings from this qualitative study can help bring about some changes to the CACREP standards, which will allow professional school counselors to apply the urban standards mastered from accredited programs as opposed to just traditional environments for the urban minority youth.

Summary and Conclusions

In pursuit of understanding school counselors employed in urban school settings, I also explored the urban minority adolescent population to gain clarity on the phenomenon. Based on the information in the literature, it is advantageous to raise awareness about professional school counselors' experiences working with the urban minority high school students' existing challenges. Thus, the shared accounts provided by school counselors regarding training experiences with the adolescent's socioeconomic disparities are critical to bridging the gap to help minors meet graduation requirements and vocational aspirations. According to Dariotis et al. (2016), students who exhibit socioeconomic hardships early in life are more susceptible to having difficulties overcoming stressful situations and attaining goals. Whether socioeconomic and similar factors influence the urban minority youth's outcome, it is necessary to investigate the professional school counselors' training in master's programs and professional experiences in urban education settings to explore their ability to understand these hardships and to promote positive outcomes for this population. Conducting current

research from a transcendental qualitative approach can minimize the gap in research by focusing on the school counselors' encounters with urban minority adolescents through detailed testimonies. The intent with the gathered data is to inform school counselors, counselor educators, and trainees in master's degree programs to efficiently advocate and service the urban minority student population despite its adversities. Previous inquirers have voiced the need for additional research to advance understanding of this phenomenon through empirical data collection.

Chapter 2 included a review of the literature relevant to high school counselors working with the urban minority youth population, with a demonstrated gap where these themes intersect. Also, there appears to be a limited amount of up-to-date research to address school counselors' lived experiences working with urban minority high school students in low SES communities. To fully understand the gap addressed by this qualitative study, the literature review included some important central themes related to school counselors. The school counselor's role and challenges while working with urban minority students in urban educational settings were discussed in extensive detail. In addition, there was a focus on school counselors' training experiences in CACREP-accredited master's degree programs and how they applied such training in comprehensive school counseling programs. The feedback provided by the school counseling participants will also contribute more information on the related themes mentioned in the literature review. Along with the details from the literature review,

Chapter 3 includes a discussion of the research design and methodology to explore the

phenomenon, as this topic is scarce in qualitative studies.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this qualitative transcendental phenomenological study was to explore and understand the school counselors' experiences in urban minority educational settings. According to the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2018a), professional school counselors are pivotal in leading and assisting today's student population during their educational journey, despite various challenges. I selected Husserl's philosophical method for this research study to comprehend how school counselors work professionally with adolescent youth who present existing adversities in low-income communities (Wesołowska, 2014). Husserl's (1960) transcendental philosophy is useful in research to explore and capture the true meaning of the human experience from their perspective. The main goal of using Husserl's transcendental phenomenological approach was to investigate the current group's predicament through shared accounts of their everyday environment, with research performed in such a way as to remove any biases (Buser et al., 2016).

Open-ended interview questions were the means used to gain rich information about professional school counselors. Similar themes or patterns emerged from the data provided by participants. The results from this study have the potential to raise awareness for school counselors, influence positive changes in master's-level programs, and establish social justice for urban minority students. Overall, the objective of using transcendental phenomenology for this qualitative study was to address the existing problem, as evidenced by the gap in research.

Chapter 3 contains sections to delve further into the qualitative research design and the overall research topic of school counselors' lived experiences working with minority high school students in urban areas. I also explained my role as the researcher to align with the research design. Finally, the methodology section will serve to elaborate on the central research processes, specifically highlighting the research design and rationale, participants, instrumentation, research question, data collection, data analysis plan, transcendental data analysis procedures, trustworthiness, ethical procedures, and summary.

Research Design and Rationale

As a guide for this qualitative research study, I created the following research question: What are school counselors' lived experiences working with urban minority high school students in Northeastern U.S. urban areas? Based on the focus of human experiences, the rationale for selecting a qualitative research method was to further explore the phenomenon by interviewing school counselors who work in urban high schools. A qualitative research design allows the researcher to understand the problem more deeply by investigating participants' perceptions and interpreting them through reported stories (Vass et al., 2017). A transcendental phenomenological approach was appropriate to capture the socioeconomic problems school counselors face when working with urban minority high school students. According to Henriques (2014), Husserl established the transcendental philosophical method to pursue a clearer understanding of the phenomenon in research based on the first-person perspective. Hence, transcendental

phenomenology was an appropriate design for high school counselors to share their lived experiences of servicing urban minority adolescents. Following Husserl's phenomenology tradition, the school counselors provided a conscious report about the world around them as they had experienced it. As a result, I found Husserl's method suitable for further exploring the school counselors gap identified in the research.

Transcendental phenomenology is appropriate over other phenomenological traditions because it provides a description of the individuals' lived experiences. Furthermore, once transcribed, the participant reviews the detailed responses to check for accuracy and allows interviewees to participate in member checking by reviewing transcribed summaries of their answers and providing additional information after the interviews. As proposed by Dabić and Stojanov (2014), interviewees' self-description of their lived experiences should undergo review for accuracy and edits to ensure a clear understanding of the phenomenon. Along with assistance from participants, I identified patterns from the rich details provided while following a transcendental phenomenological design. Overall, I found transcendental phenomenology the most appropriate choice to obtain the most accurate interview information from the high school counselors and shed light on the gap within the literature.

Role of the Researcher

As a middle school counselor working in an urban school district, I was intrigued to explore the lived experiences of high school counselors servicing the urban minority adolescent population. Based on the literature review and knowledge from my position,

the unique needs of the urban minority youth are high due to economic factors and other related adversities. Hannon (2016) documented that high school counselors in urban locations have a larger population of students, which requires a greater need to help students meet academic success and grade promotion due to low SES or family problems. Given the challenges school counselors encounter in urban education communities, I focused on the school counselors who are working or have worked in urban high schools. Since I have no relatable experience servicing the urban high school population, I was intrigued to investigate if similarities exist at all urban education levels.

From my review of the literature, I found a problem also exists in research regarding school counselors working with urban minority high school students (Cole & Grothaus, 2014; Savitz-Romer, 2012). In carrying out my role as a researcher and observer, I remained mindful of possible assumptions or opinions from my professional role interfering with this study's results. As a precaution, I incorporated epoché in the data collection phase to help suspend any outside influences from impacting the collection of participants' identified themes (Hamill & Sinclair, 2010). Beyer (2018) referred to epoché as a technique applied in research to set aside speculations in making conclusions about the phenomenon.

Epoché enabled me to focus only on the high school counselors' past experiences working with the urban student population and avoid making any inferences. Also, I relied on epoché to help organize the results and identify patterns from the interview process. It was also important to be mindful of potential confusion or power struggles as

the facilitator collecting answers to the interview questions. The respondents in this study received written and verbal instructions at the start of the interview as a preventative measure. In the researcher's role, I find early planning is beneficial to developing trust, understanding, and organization with the school counseling group members. According to Guillemin et al. (2018), building a trusting relationship between researcher and participant is vital to promoting free will and receiving honest feedback. The importance of trustworthiness in research will receive further explanation in the methodology section of this chapter.

Along with the listed obligations in facilitating qualitative research, reviewing some relevant ethical issues in my research role was necessary. As noted by Lee (2018), investigators should first consider any ethical concerns to uphold moral obligations in working with human participants. For this transcendental qualitative research study, I focused only on professional school counselors who work or previously worked with urban high school minority students in Northeastern cities. As a school counselor in the same field, I considered conducting the video conference interview at my work site via Adobe Connect. However, due to the many interruptions at the office (e.g., office phone ringing; school bell; student, teacher, or parent interruption), it was best to hold the video conference call away from my work site. Given the interviewees are in the same line of work, it would make sense for them to converse in a less hectic and quiet location (e.g., home or library conference room). I also did not want to unintentionally influence any high school counselors with anything visual or audio from my work environment. The

conflict of interest I have as a middle school counselor in the same field was also a consideration.

As a justification to avoid the dual role exchange as a middle school counselor, only professional school counselors who have worked in urban high schools received invitations to participate. Hay-Smith et al. (2016) posited that researchers with parallel backgrounds could end up in dual role relationships, which can have ethical and methodological consequences for the data and human group members. To avoid crossing boundaries or disclosing confidential information, informed consent was a means to explain the interviewees' and researchers' roles, the problem, purpose, and intent of the qualitative study. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Walden University granted approval (#11-25-19-0326642) before I presented the informed consent to the randomly selected sample. Each volunteer reviewed the consent form to learn about this qualitative study, criteria, interview questions, possible benefits, potential risks, confidentiality, voluntary participation, withdrawal rights, no compensation, researcher, and IRB contact information. The school counselors' identities (i.e., FP1, MP4) and organization affiliation (i.e., LCO) did not appear to ensure confidentiality throughout the study. The virtual interviews were via Adobe Connect in a private location for each respondent. The collected data underwent upload and organization in the online software NVivo 12. The stored data, notes, audio, and transcripts were on a password-protected laptop and locked in a safe. Based on the listed ethical considerations for the research project, I purposely

implemented a plan to help prevent issues and generate optimum results considering the 2011 National Institute of Health human rights.

Methodology

Participants

As of 2021, the NYCDOE had identified more than 2,902 school counselors employed across 400 high schools (Chapman, 2017; NYCDOE, 2018). Based on the total number of professional school counselors in the New York City public school system, I first sent a formal request to the LCO website after approval from Walden University IRB. The LCO supports researchers in the school counseling field by forwarding their invitations to participate in a study (NYSSCA, 2018). As an LCO member, I reached out to the site to generate a list of licensed professional high school counselors employed in NYCDOE, which then emailed them an invitation letter on my behalf. The LCO site helps dissertation candidates by sending out a research invitation letter and reminders via email for school counselors to participate in the research study voluntarily. Although I obtained enough participants from the LCO, I had planned to network with the American Counseling Association of New York (ACA of New York; 2018) site to generate an email list and contact more high school counselors working in urban education districts. Additionally, I used snowball sampling to ask participants to recommend other members they felt would be appropriate for the study. Despite the growing number of employed school counselors in modern society, it was necessary as the inquirer to develop additional options to gather enough participants.

According to Chapman (2017), the NYCDOE now employs an additional 134 professional school counselors working across the different public-school districts. The invitation emails went to all high school counselors to gain the best number of participants for the study. To gather the appropriate sample group for the interview, I asked the high school counselors to confirm if they are working or have worked in an urban education community. I also looked at the map in the high school directory to double-check the vicinity of the school is in the Northeastern city. The NYCDOE (2018) updates the high school directory every school year with detailed information for the public to view.

After they answered the demographic questionnaire and met the criteria of having licensed and tenured professional school counselors from urban districts in the geographical area, potential participants received an email from me to schedule the video conference call interview and discuss the informed consent. Eight school counseling members in urban high schools took part in open-ended interviews, which depended on reaching saturation and redundancy of themes. To ensure saturation, I continued recruiting school counselors in two recruitment rounds to obtain sufficient details about members of this population's lived experiences.

According to Blackwood et al. (2015), IRB approval is imperative for both parties involved (e.g., researcher and participants), as the IRB helps review the study and ensure the ethical rights of the human sample group. In addition, I addressed the benefits and potential risks to the professional high school counselors in the informed consent. I also

shared how Walden University has an IRB in place to help protect the volunteers' human rights throughout the study. The IRB's email address was available in the consent form for all school counselors to use as needed. The respondents participated in the virtual interviews outside of work hours and off-site from the high school location. As the sample group consisted of high school counselors, I was vigilant in selecting a specific group with an urban school community background. To accurately collect data from the best-suited group for the qualitative study, it was logical to use purposeful sampling. In qualitative research, purposeful sampling helps inquirers explore and gather specific information from a group of participants (Suri, 2011). In this case, purposeful sampling allowed me to invite tenured school counselors with a specific background working in urban high schools.

I used inclusion criteria to screen candidates. Initial screening occurred with eligible individuals who responded to the invitation letter (see Appendix A). The individuals first confirmed their status as licensed school counselors with at least 3 years of experience working with teenagers in urban high school districts in the NYCDOE system by answering the demographic questionnaire (see Appendix B). Upon determining eligibility, I used purposeful sampling to procure the study's most appropriate professional school counselors. Palinkas et al. (2015) identified purposeful sampling as an appropriate technique commonly used by qualitative researchers expecting to show limited findings in providing more detail related to the phenomenon.

Criterion sampling allows the investigator to seek out information purposefully from a small group of individuals with similar experiences as the identified phenomenon. According to Palinkas et al. (2015), criterion sampling is a purposeful type of sampling commonly used for qualitative research with limited findings to help researchers pursue new, detailed information as part of the data. Eight high school counselors voluntarily participated in interviews. To ensure saturation, I also employed snowball sampling to gain the most detailed results for this qualitative study. As noted by Suri (2011), the number of participants can depend on the use of snowball sampling for participants to invite additional members in the same field. The professional school counselors took part in individual interviews for more privacy and as a precaution against influencing one another.

Instrumentation

For this qualitative transcendental study, I used the four phases of the interview protocol refinement (IPR; Castillo-Montoya, 2016) to conduct thorough interviews with the high school counselors. The inquirer uses the first part in IPR to ensure the interview questions align with the topic of the research question (Yeong et al., 2018). I created in-depth interview questions to target the phenomenon associated with the high school counselors' lived experiences working with urban minority students. The objective was to help interviewees unravel their thoughts to understand their experiences from their points of view. Castillo-Montoya (2016) described the second IPR phase as the process in which the researcher seeks to facilitate inquiry-based conversations with the participants. Hence,

I developed open-ended interview questions to easily encourage individuals to share their experiences and participate in continuous dialogue to answer the questions adequately. The next IPR step targets the sample's feedback about interview protocols (Yeong et al., 2018). This interview technique was appropriate to obtain detailed responses, confirm understanding of the questions, and establish trustworthiness and reliability. The final IPR step permits the researcher to pilot the interview questions and make any changes necessary to improve (Chenail, 2011). Before conducting the video conference, I invited four participants with similar backgrounds to rehearse using the open-ended interview questions and make adjustments as needed. Overall, the objective of adopting the IPR framework was to develop a protocol connecting the research topic to the interview questions, with ongoing review and revision to collect rich data.

I conducted a video conference off-campus as part of the data collection process. Semistructured interviews consisted of five open-ended questions focused on the lived experiences of professional school counselors working in urban high schools. A video conference call was preferable to a face-to-face interview because of the distance between the participants and me. The intent was to provide flexibility and convenience to operate around their work and personal schedules, free from interruptions or delays. According to McCarthy (2016), the investigator must select a proper location before the start of the interview to establish a quiet, private, and comfortable environment for participants. I encouraged participants to choose a calm location for our video conference call. Participants could use Adobe Connect or their phones, desktop computers, or laptops

in a quiet area (e.g., library conference room or home office) to prevent interference in the data collection phase.

During this phase, I used data triangulation, taking written notes for each answered question and audio-recording the participants' responses. Using data triangulation was a means to understand the phenomenon in research. I also asked an external auditor, a Ph.D. professional, to review the literature and interviewees' answers after signing my confidentiality agreement. The semistructured interview would last about 30 to 60 minutes, which I explained verbally and in writing in the consent form. I informed participants they could ask questions, take a break, or choose not to continue at any time during the interview. At the end of the interview, I alerted participants that they would be receiving a follow-up email to review and verify the transcripts. As for my part in the interview process, I uploaded all responses into NVivo 12 to transcribe, code, and organize collected data. I am familiar and comfortable with this software, which I utilized in my time at Walden University. No technical problems arose with NVivo 12; therefore, I did not need to upload the data to the HyperRESEARCH qualitative software as an alternative.

List of Interview Questions

1. Tell me about your experiences as a professional school counselor in the urban high school community. (You mentioned working at the XXY high school; can you elaborate more about it?)

2. What was it like working individually with the urban adolescent population? (What more can you tell me about that experience?)

3. Please share your experiences supporting urban high school students. (Can you share some student challenges and achievements you encountered?) (I am interested to know more about what you meant when you said XYZ.)

4. Describe your experiences with professional training and school counseling education in preparation for working with urban high school students. (How did you find these preparations and learning experiences beneficial to work with the urban adolescent population?) (You said Y, but other folks have said Z; what are your thoughts on that?)

5. What are your experiences with the resources and supports at the urban high school? (Thank you for the feedback. What do you and other high school counselors currently implement as resources and other supports at the urban site, if any?)

Data Collection

As part of the data collection, I utilized an audio recorder and handwritten notes as a backup to ensure the capture of all details. I also compared my written notes to participants' data loaded into NVivo 12 software. Interviewees received verbal instructions at the beginning and end of the interview. To ensure the accuracy of the school counselors' subjective answers, I relied on member checking, allowing participants to confirm my interpretations of their responses, further increasing the

study's credibility. Varpio et al. (2017) emphasized the importance of member checking in qualitative research to help inquirers interpret data and clarify meanings by having participants validate the transcripts multiple times. Thus, as part of member checking, I verbally informed participants they would receive an email to double-check the transcripts and answer questions after the interview to maximize the results. I also submitted the qualitative research findings to each of the high school counselors in an email. The goal was to keep the participants involved before and after the one-on-one interview. I aimed to explore, discover, and present detailed information about the lived experiences of high school counselors working with the urban adolescent population with a data analysis plan.

Data Analysis Plan

In connection with the data analysis plan, utilizing a transcendental reduction method with other multiple sources was a necessary technique for me to answer the research question, ensure validity, and raise awareness to minimize the gap in research. From a transcendental lens, I asked each participating high school counselor five main open-ended questions, with a few follow-up questions, as appropriate. Some follow-up examples include "You mentioned working at X high school; can you elaborate more about it?"; "What more can you tell me about that experience?"; and "You said Y, but other folks have said Z; what are your thoughts on that?" The interview questions helped me explore the experiences of professional school counselors who have worked with the

urban high school population. I audio-recorded the video conference interview and took notes as a backup to collect detailed data.

Once I uploaded all materials to NVivo 12, I analyzed and coded the data by using epoché to code the main details gathered from the interviews with the high school counselors (Beyer, 2018). Based on this data analysis plan, I first examined the results collected from the open-ended interview questions to highlight any emerging themes. Epoché helped me establish a clearer understanding of the participants' experiences in this transcendental qualitative project.

To further understand the human experience of the participants with a transcendental method, I also used Moustakas' original (1994) coding procedure to categorize similar patterns discovered in the transcribed interview responses. Husserl referred to the data analysis process as noema, noesis, and noetic-noematic (Sheehan, 2014). Although noema and noesis work together, they have different purposes for comprehending the detailed data objectively. A researcher applies noema to focus on what individuals think about, whereas noesis evokes thinking about or interpreting the findings (Sheehan, 2014). Sousa (2014) explained *noetic-noematic* as discovering the meaning behind the main phenomenon concerning the person and the world around them. This step-by-step process helped me collect, analyze, and code themes to raise awareness based on the school counselors' lived experiences in urban high school settings.

As part of the data analysis plan, I also saved, organized, and revisited the qualitative data in NVivo 12. This qualitative software program served as a tool for me to

place keywords together into a color-coded table. The table helped me illuminate and establish a deeper meaning behind the professional school counselors' lived experiences working with urban teenagers in public schools.

Transcendental Data Analysis Procedures

The collected data from the purposeful sample group underwent thorough dissemination following Husserl's transcendental steps. Husserl's stance helped interpret the school counselors' conscious experiences as lived. Upon analyzing the rich data, I identified, condensed, and categorized the themes and subthemes. I omitted any unnecessary words, such as "like," "let me see," and "um." According to my notes, FP5 had so much to share that she ended up repeating certain words. For instance, FP5 stated, "Um, like, there is so so many things going on, but let me see what else I can think of." I reread each transcript, crossing out any repeated phrases that did not contribute to their lived experiences. After replaying the audio and rereading the transcripts, I highlighted respondents' common concepts in yellow as the central theme. Next, I categorized and organized similar themes and subthemes in the NVivo 12 software program.

Each volunteer shared similar answers regarding Theme 1, rewarding experiences with urban minority students. In Theme 1, for instance, FP1 stated, "I am able to relate culturally a little bit more especially if I did go to New York City public schools." FP2 noted, "I went in thinking, that I would be able to relate to the urban minority students." FP3 stated, "I work well with all my urban students." MP4 reported, "When working with urban minority students individually, I am able to be more honest, and they can be

themselves." FP5 articulated, "I connect, learn about them, and their story." FP6 communicated, "I love it, honestly. I will tell the urban students that I wasn't aware of that in your culture." FP7 expressed, "I need to make a point to do more research about the different cultures." Next, FP8 stated, "I found myself learning about the different cultures in the public school." The purposeful sample presented similar outcomes when working with urban minority high school learners. I used the same search method to piece together other parallel themes and subthemes.

The high school counselors' identities also remained anonymous, with alphanumeric identifiers assigned in the order they appeared in the text. For instance, the first female participant received the label Female Participant 1 (FP1); the only male participant was MP4. Pseudonyms ensured the protection of participants' human rights and safety as mandated by Walden University's IRB. The invitation letter and informed consent also indicated the lack of identifying information used throughout the research process (see Appendices A and B). This policy put the interviewees at ease in divulging their most authentic experiences at the urban high school.

The participants' shared stories revealed common themes and subthemes based on the open-ended questions. The raw data underwent multiple checks, followed by synthesis and organization to derive the final common themes. The five main themes that emerged were (a) rewarding experiences with urban minority students, (b) feeling overwhelmed, (c) reactions about received training/master's program, (d) need for additional training/educational changes, and (e) limited resources/supports. Amid the

main themes, some subthemes emerged from the follow-up questions in the interview. The themes and subthemes helped address and minimize the literature gap for this transcendental qualitative research study.

As part of the transcendental phenomenological analysis process, I used a Husserlian approach to capture the professional school counselors' true essence about their lived experiences in the Northeastern districts. As a researcher reviewing the findings from a transcendental lens for the first time, I employed Husserl's intentionality to focus only on the shared narratives from the school counselors' perspectives. Husserl found that intentionality was the best way to connect and look purely at the target phenomenon's essence from a first-person perspective (Belousov, 2016; Husserl, 1960). Thus, I was aware of the importance of carefully approaching and thinking about the rich data in this step. For example, I intentionally slowed down in the data analysis phase to dwell on and understand the meaning behind the participants' lived experience statements. I would review each question first and then reread the participants' answers to ensure nothing was missed or misinterpreted. I understood what the school counselors had verbalized about their experiences because I took my time or asked the respondent for clarification after the interview. The flexibility of Husserl's data analysis approach ensured the correct conveyance of the pure data.

In the second data analysis phase, I employed Husserl's phenomenological reduction to temporarily set aside and monitor my preconceived knowledge about current high school counselors working with urban minority students. In the reduction process,

epoché allowed me to suspend judgment while learning about the professional school counseling members' phenomenon. Husserl emphasized the need to set aside hypothetical speculations while analyzing the human experience to avoid making inferences regarding the phenomenon (Beyer, 2018). I relied on documenting my thoughts and biases by journaling to know what to set aside during the research. For example, I wrote in my journal that veteran high school counselors would have more common experiences than those with less time in the education system. This note-taking exercise allowed me to objectively think about that assumption to see the school counselors' phenomena. Therefore, I set aside and monitored my predictions to keep them from interfering with the analysis of the volunteers' self-told stories. Epoché ensured centering on the interviewees' authentic experiences while bracketing my personal beliefs and refraining from making inferences.

Next, I executed the Husserlian analysis procedures of noesis and noema jointly to think about and fully understand the pure phenomenon in the qualitative study. This provided a clear understanding of the statements collected from the sample. Beyer (2018) referred to noesis as the stage where the inquirer contemplates the discovered data, and noema helps narrow in on those thoughts. In performing the noesis and noema exercise, I thought about all the high school counselors' narratives in the transcripts and reflected on my interpretation of the findings. I also wrote in my journal about the respondents' passion while describing their frustrating and successful experiences at urban high schools. For example, I documented how their facial expressions and voices changed as

they described feeling frustrated or triumphant in their role. This immersive task allowed me to gain insight and grasp the true meaning behind their everyday encounters in urban educational settings. Sousa (2014) referred to this insightful observation as noetic-noematic, expanding upon what the sample presented.

The final step in transcendental data analysis entailed acknowledging my present experience with the explained research results while excluding epoché. According to Belousov (2016), an individual cannot be in the moment of the experience while actively bracketing. Therefore, Husserl's horizon was appropriate for full immersion in the present moment while analyzing the school counselors' real-life circumstances with the phenomenon.

The respondents projected different horizons while active in the school counseling field. Some were passionately vocal about hiring more minority school counselors. In my research journal, I noted that FP2 and FP5 specifically spoke the most about wanting more African American school counselors employed at their high school to connect with the urban student population. However, there is no guarantee that everything shared about the professional school counselor's phenomenon emerged in the horizon phase. As a result, implications regarding the horizon in the data analysis process receive further discussion in Chapter 5.

Issues of Trustworthiness

As the inquirer for this qualitative transcendental study, it was necessary for me to carefully collect and decode the school counselors' personal experiences working with

urban youth. Participants needed to feel safe to build trust and disclose accurate details to gather rich information from the sample group. One means of building trust was to have participants review their transcripts and identify anything missing or needing changes by member checking. The strategy of member checking can help ensure the data are credible and unbiased. According to Naidu and Prose (2018), researchers who practice member checking can decrease potential issues with trust, disclosure, or participation. Gaining trustworthiness for qualitative research assists in obtaining quality answers to the open-ended interview questions and uncovering emerging themes (Sekhon et al., 2014). I analyzed the evidence from the recordings to understand the lived experiences of high school counselors in urban education communities in consideration of minimal findings from the literature review. Along with member checking, I found it important to implement other strategies to increase the outcome with trustworthiness and detailed data.

The key to presenting plausible data is eliminating possible assumptions or biases from interfering with the results. To accomplish this, I used reflexivity as a strategy (i.e., researcher journal writing) to explore and share any concerns with my dissertation committee members to monitor potential issues with trustworthiness. As recognized by Berger (2015), qualitative researchers frequently use reflexive journal writing as a tool to self-reflect on their own biases, assumptions, or thoughts before hearing the participants' perspectives. As a novice investigator, I journaled throughout data collection to document processes, establish transparency, understand the open-ended interview, and clearly understand the high school counselors' lived experiences. As a middle school counselor, I

know the importance of having an open mind when asking interview questions to prevent undue influences from jeopardizing the high school counselors' narratives about working with urban minority teenagers. In line with the process of facilitating a productive interview, I considered other criteria as needed to ensure the data collected are credible, transferable, dependable, and confirmable.

Credibility

The credibility of the transcendental qualitative research results is imperative to raising awareness and closing the gap in literature regarding professional school counselors' experiences working with urban minority high school students. Therefore, my role in collecting, analyzing, and interpreting the responses from the purposeful sample group of high school counselors was valuable to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon. According to Cox and Benson (2017), credibility in qualitative research depends on how reliable and precise the inquirer is at interpreting the detailed information from the participant's perspective. For qualitative research, specific procedures and tools can illuminate the meaning behind human experiences without compromising the data.

Some may question the methods used in qualitative research due to potential concerns with inferences or lack of transparency (Davidson et al., 2017). I used triangulation, member checking, saturation, and reflexivity as appropriate techniques to improve credibility. Two triangulation methods allowed me to check collected data for consistency and establish credibility by using multiple sources (Johnson et al., 2017). For

instance, I used data source triangulation to take notes in the researcher's journal and audio record the interviews to ensure accurate transcription of rich details. Data source triangulation was an alternative method to review the qualitative study for credibility and transferability and gain more rich details from all school counselors to understand the phenomenon. According to Varpio et al. (2017), triangulation is a strategy researchers use to obtain optimum results using various methods, theories, data types, and outlooks. Data source triangulation allowed me to collect information from respondents to gain insight into their perspectives about the phenomenon (Carter et al., 2014). For example, the in-depth interview questions and journal notes taken during interviews with high school counselors from urban communities were forms of data source triangulation.

As another strategy, I utilized investigator triangulation to conduct an external audit, which allows a fellow professional to double-check the literature and interview responses from participants (Appelbaum et al., 2018). According to Archibald (2013), investigator triangulation is a collaborative approach in which another skilled researcher inspects and compares literature in a study's findings. Overall, triangulation supports the exploration and understanding of professional school counselors working with urban minority high school students. Varpio et al. (2017) acknowledged triangulation as a strategy researchers use to obtain optimum results using various methods, theories, data types, and outlooks.

To maintain credibility, I also used member checking, reflexivity, and saturation. Member checking was a means to confirm the findings for this research study by

allowing respondents to review and edit their transcripts and answer follow-up questions after the interview for precise interpretations, as necessary (Naidu & Prose, 2018). I believe this shared strategy was a necessary follow-up to the one-on-one interview to establish clarity about the phenomenon. Similar to member checking, I maintained a researcher journal as a method of reflexivity to attain trustworthiness with participants, actively participate in the research, and increase my self-awareness in the role of a researcher. According to Rettke et al. (2018), reflexivity requires the investigator to partake in facilitating interviews and building the qualitative research design through a researcher's journal. The goal of including reflexivity was to obtain trustworthy and consistent data based on participants' accounts. Hence, both interviewee and interviewer contribute to a clear understanding of the detailed description surrounding the phenomenon under study.

Transferability

In line with the mentioned research strategies, I focused only on professional high school counselors who work or worked with urban minority students to establish transferability for the findings. Burchett et al. (2013) explained the importance of first seeking interviewees' perspectives to compare the results from other populations and check for transferability. Thus, the findings from this transcendental qualitative study may be transferable to other school counseling professionals who have worked in elementary, secondary, and high school urban districts. Alternately, the collected data

may not be transferable to some professional school counselors or other educational staff
not employed in urban education communities.

The population of interest is NYCDOE school counselors who have worked in
urban public high schools. A purposeful sample supported my efforts to gather rich
information about human experiences based on the small group's similar demographic
background (Benoot et al., 2016). If I had not achieved saturation with the original
sample, I would have also reached out to a second professional organization or applied
snowball sampling to reach more high school counselors from urban education districts.
Snowball sampling allows a researcher to obtain more participants by asking current
participants to recommend others associated with the phenomenon (Griffith et al., 2016).
I anticipated the subjective results from the interviews would have some similarities, as
the purposeful sample has worked with urban minority high school adolescents in the
NYCDOE public school setting. The success of the open-ended interview responses
depended on the variation of selected participants and how thick the narrative was to help
identify some credible emerging themes for this transcendental qualitative research
project.

Dependability

Along with transferability, it is also essential to discuss dependability. To
establish relatable and consistent research findings, I had an external auditor look
carefully over the contextual data's accuracy and overall dissertation. The external audit
entailed having another researcher double-check the literature and interpret the evidence

to confirm the conclusions and gap in the research study (Appelbaum et al., 2018). The external auditor's qualifications consisted of being familiar with qualitative research to accurately identify potential literature or data debates that could challenge the dissertation. Morse (2015) recommended applying different triangulation strategies, such as an external audit to examine the presented research material to achieve trustworthiness.

For this research study, dependability consisted of the procedures conducted to attain rich data from participating high school counselors and the literature review findings. According to Ivanova-Gongne et al. (2018), qualitative investigators apply multiple methods to optimize the chances of gathering detailed results to understand the subjective responses from the sample group. I used an audit trail to keep biases and preconceptions from interfering with the step-by-step procedures to monitor qualitative data analysis. For instance, I used raw data as part of the audit trail strategy, taking notes during the interview to later help interpret and transcribe participants' answers (LaBanca, 2011).

In addition to the audit trail techniques, I integrated member checking and interview follow-up questions to gain more information about the school counselors' lived experiences. Data reduction and analysis allowed me to identify key terms and themes and then code the collected data (Clarke et al., 2018). I recorded, saved, organized, and coded all data using NVivo 12. I also used the audit trail to guide readers in clearly understanding the procedures and rationale behind attaining detailed evidence

about human experiences (Newman et al., 2013). Documenting the audit trail helped build trustworthiness with participants, maintain consistency, disseminate the data for transparency, and establish the credibility of results.

Confirmability

In qualitative research, confirmability is critical to determine if the data collection and interpretation accurately represent the group of participants and the phenomenon of the study (Korstjens, & Moser, 2018). Hagood and Skinner (2015) referred to confirmability as a way respondents contribute to and help shape the results with their perspective. Thus, the subjective testimonies from the open-ended interview questions were the focus instead of the investigator's beliefs or speculations.

I used reflexivity as a strategy to ensure confirmability from the reported findings for this transcendental qualitative study. Reflexivity is a researcher journal used by the inquirer to take notes, keep as a data source, monitor the relationship with the interviewees, and evaluate personal preconceptions before interpreting the data (Berger, 2015; Karagiozis, 2018). As the facilitator in this research, my goal was to use reflexive journaling to write down my thoughts, concerns, participant feedback, or noted observations from the interviews. This simple method allowed me to review my notes and permit the participants to edit their transcribed responses. Reflexivity is an essential researcher journal strategy used to achieve confirmability before and after the data collection phase. Utilizing a self-reflecting technique supports making better decisions that impact the professional school counselors and the outcome of the transcendental

qualitative research study, which can help guide other investigators in future research projects.

Ethical Procedures

I requested proposal approval from the IRB at Walden University before inviting and interviewing the high school counselors for this qualitative research study. The objective of the IRB is to determine if the investigator's research procedures are ethical and ensure the safety of human participants (Nichols, 2016). Lynch (2018), states that the IRB can approve or reject a research study. They aim to protect the human population's rights, ensure an appropriate sample size with signed informed consent forms, make suggestions for modifications, and oversee policies at the educational institution. The qualitative transcendental research study followed all guidelines necessary to gain IRB approval.

I also consulted with my committee chairperson and methodologist to ensure a sound and properly conducted study. For example, I discussed the recruitment phase of the project with the committee members and presented multiple documents, as shown in the Appendices. The forms for this research study consist of the participant invitation letter, demographic questionnaire, informed consent, and a list of interview questions (see Appendices A–C). As part of the ethical procedures, it was necessary to present documentation for the sample group, the dissertation committee team, and IRB members to outline the qualitative research plan.

Once granted access to work with the human subjects, I sought only tenured

NYCDOE school counselors who have worked in public urban high school districts.

These criteria helped narrow the professional school counselors' eligibility so I could

focus on the phenomenon of serving urban minority high school youth. Lee (2018)

emphasized how it is the mandated responsibility of the researcher to obtain informed

consent when working with human subjects, disclosing information for the individual to

understand the purpose of the study. Participants also had the option to withdraw from

the research study at any point without penalty. If for some reason, the interviewee could

not continue with the interview, the individual could email or call to opt-out of the study.

They could then choose if they would like me to destroy any information shared thus far.

I maintained confidentiality and kept the transcripts in a password-protected qualitative

software program (i.e., NVivo 12) on my personal computer. Access to the collected and

stored data was only available to me to ensure privacy. I also assigned the participants

pseudonyms by identifying them as numbers (e.g., FP1) instead of their names to ensure

confidentiality. I recorded the interviews during the video conference calls using Adobe

Connect's audio-recording option. I will maintain all audio recordings and digital files for

5 years per Walden University requirements. After that time, I will permanently delete

the transcripts and shred any notes or other materials. The data collected underwent

transcription and backup in the NVivo 12 qualitative software program.

Summary

I selected the transcendental phenomenological approach for this research project to map out the procedures for the audience and participants to understand the purpose of the exploration given the ethical considerations. A group of eight professional school counselors participated to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon regarding their lived experiences working with urban minority youth in Northeastern areas. The open-ended interviews conducted through Adobe Connect and written notes assisted in gathering detailed information for the research study. After the completion of each interview, I transcribed recordings, coded data, and stored information in NVivo 12. As a form of member checking, I followed up with participants after the interview for them to review the transcripts, make edits, and answer additional questions as necessary. My goal in this study was to close the research gap regarding high school counselors working with urban students. Existing studies were beyond 5 years old, thus warranting additional and newer research about the phenomenon of high school counselors working with urban minority student populations. Hence, I used this transcendental qualitative research study to explore and gain information from the human subjects' lived experiences, as explained in the procedures from Chapter 3. In Chapter 4, I discuss the results obtained from the data collection process and report the data analysis.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The Walden University IRB provided approval to proceed with this study (#11-25-19-0326642). Chapter 4 focuses on the findings of the targeted sample in this qualitative transcendental phenomenological research. The findings describe high school counselors' lived experiences of servicing the urban minority adolescent population. Husserl's transcendental phenomenological approach was the means used in the interview process to understand the true essence of the phenomenon. The participants answered open-ended interview questions about their everyday encounters working in urban high school settings. Gaining professional school counselors' perspectives was essential to understanding the challenges of working with culturally diverse minors in low-SES areas. Past researchers have noted this phenomenon among school counselors in urban education communities (Colbert, 2013; Cole & Grothaus, 2014; Savitz-Romer, 2012). Therefore, it was necessary to investigate and address school counselors' concerns in less-privileged public school districts.

According to Colbert (2013), urban high school teenagers face more disparities and challenges than their peers in more affluent schools. In addition, urban minority learners often struggle to meet graduation requirements due to low economic status, overpopulated schools, inconsistent parental involvement, and other related factors (White & Kelly, 2010). Therefore, this study filled the gap in the literature and as a means of bringing about social change for today's youth and enhancing the school

counseling field. The study's main research question was, What are school counselors'

lived experiences working with urban minority high school students in Northeastern U.S.

urban areas? Chapter 4 presents the study's findings, setting, participant demographics,

data collection, data analysis, trustworthiness, results, general narrative, general

summary, and a conclusion.

Setting

The one-on-one interviews occurred over the internet via video conference calls. I

scheduled individual virtual live meetings with the New York high school counselors to

ensure discretion. The participants avoided possible disruptions by engaging in the

interviews in quiet locations away from their worksites, at their homes or public libraries.

I used my home office to communicate virtually with the interviewees for privacy. The

sample group members completed and returned their demographic questionnaire via

email before participating in the virtual interview.

The online interviews asked the individuals five semistructured questions and a

few subquestions. I posted the five main interview questions in the Adobe Connect

meeting room so the participants could see and follow along during their video

conference calls. Although I did not collect the data face-to-face, I gained in-depth details

from the respondents' statements via video conferencing.

The participants engaged in 30- to 60-minute open-ended interviews. Although I

initially anticipated 15 to 20 minutes per interview, the school counselors answered the

questions in-depth, resulting in transcripts that contained lengthy dialogue with rich data.

None of the eight recipients requested breaks or refused to answer any of the interview questions.

I explained the interview procedures via Adobe Connect to help the school counselors feel comfortable enough to answer the questions thoroughly. Each participant answered five semistructured questions and a few follow-up questions. The respondents willingly shared detailed stories about their lived experiences working with minority high school students in urban districts. For example, FP1 expressed that her rationale for volunteering in the study was the lack of research on urban minority youth issues. During data collection, each participant interacted with me via email, text, and video conference call.

It took approximately 8 months to recruit enough volunteers for the research study. The live interviews took 1 day for each professional school counselor to complete. I transcribed and emailed the transcripts to the participants to review that week for necessary edits or questions. I organized, analyzed, and saved the gathered data with NVivo 12 by QSR the following week. Because the transcripts mainly contained accurate information, only a few respondents made edits. However, I did ask further questions to clarify or gain additional information about school counselors' lived experiences in modern society. No participants responded under influence or received compensation for participation.

Demographics

The study sample consisted of professional school counselors who worked in an urban high school setting as part of the NYCDOE. I sent the invitation letter via email to 2,710 professional school counselors in New York listed on the LCO. I received 13 responses from *individuals* interested in participating in the qualitative study*; h*owever, only nine met *participation* criteria based on the demographic questionnaire. The requirements were to have a school counselor license, 3 or more years of experience in the field, and experience working for the NYCDOE in an urban Northeastern high school region.

Although nine male and female volunteers responded to the invitation and met the criteria, some did not proceed with the virtual interview for various reasons. Therefore, I sent another round of invitation letters via the LCO to recruit more professional high school counselors employed in Northeastern urban areas. The second round of recruitment resulted in additional volunteers, four women.

I masked all eight school counselors' identities by labeling them as Female Participant 1 (FP1), Female Participant 2 (FP2), Female Participant 3 (FP3), Male Participant 4 (MP4), Female Participant 5 (FP5), Female Participant 6 (FP6), Female Participant 7 (FP7), and Female Participant 8 (FP8). The names of the urban high schools affiliated with the participants remained anonymous. The study included only the boroughs (i.e., Queens, Brooklyn, or the Bronx) of the New York City locations. See Table 1 for each respondent's demographic information.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Participant	Gender	Years of experience	School site level	State
P1	Female	11	High school	New York
P2	Female	3	High school	New York
P3	Female	18	High school	New York
P4	Male	20	High school	New York
P5	Female	4	High school	New York
P6	Female	11	High school	New York
P7	Female	7	High school	New York
P8	Female	10	High school	New York

Background of Participants

The participants provided some necessary information at the beginning of the interview process. The recruitment procedure included a random selection of all genders, with a final sample of seven female participants and one male. The eight participants completed the demographic questionnaire to share their information and confirm they met the parameters for this research project. Thus, the participants answered the demographic questionnaire and open-ended interview questions to provide detailed, subjective answers about their professional experiences. Following is a brief description of each school counselor. The identities and names of the participants and their schools remained private.

Female Participant 1

FP1 was a female school counselor who worked in the Northeastern public school district. She had 11 years of experience in the NYCDOE system and worked at a high school in the borough of Queens. FP1 was a founding school counseling member at

another school before transitioning to her current urban high school. The participant disclosed that she worked mainly with international adolescents recently arriving in the country. This respondent strove to give back to her community as a former urban minority learner of the public school system. As a result of her experiences, she chose to work in an urban education setting with teenagers as a professional school counselor.

Female Participant 2

FP2 was a female counselor with 3 years of experience in a Brooklyn transfer school. However, she started her career as the dean of a Northeastern high school for 7 years. Before becoming an NYCDOE employee after a fellow employee retired, she had firsthand experience as an intern in the same underprivileged high school setting. In addition to her field experience as a grad student, the respondent found the city program extremely helpful for learning to advocate and prepare as a new school counselor. The paid program was an initiative in selected districts to raise graduation rates for high school learners via the deployment of additional school counselors. As an urban minority alumnus from a public school, FP2 found it necessary to work with a relatable population to succeed during and after high school.

Female Participant 3

FP3 was a female school counselor with 18 years of service in the NYCDOE system. She described working as a teacher while a graduate student in a school counseling program. Therefore, this participant had gained experience supporting and guiding students from culturally diverse populations. At the time of the study, FP3 was a

high school counselor who worked with urban minority high school students in Brooklyn. She had worked at the same high school since its opening in 2007. FP3 primarily counseled and helped the 11th- and 12th-graders with college admissions. As a professional in the school counseling field, she found it beneficial to create a caring environment for all students to feel comfortable receiving assistance.

Male Participant 4

MP4 was a seasoned school counselor of the NYCDOE with 20 years of experience at the high school level. The respondent worked in the borough of Queens with urban minority teenagers. MP4 began his career in the urban high school setting as an intern. As an intern, he learned how to work with a diverse and large student population. After graduating from the master's program, this participant worked with ninth- and 10th-graders. However, at the time of the study, he worked with 10th- and 11th-graders at the public school. His mentors inspired him to help those in the education field dealing with multiple adversities.

Female Participant 5

FP5 was a female school counselor with 4 years of experience working with urban adolescents in the NYCDOE. Additionally, she served as a career and youth advisor in other educational institutions. FP5 worked at a Queens public school in the Northeastern district. She felt it was a privilege to work with disadvantaged high school students and had an interest in school counseling. While in her internship and practicum courses, she had to complete her required hours with an ethnically diverse population. As

a public school alumnus, FP5's goal was to work with young learners of color to expand their opportunities despite adversities.

Female Participant 6

FP6 was a female counselor who worked in the NYCDOE for 11 years in different urban education communities. She had served in a school for under-credited students and traditional schools throughout New York. FP6's ninth-grade high school counselor inspired her to become a school counselor. FP6 aspired to help students like her assigned high school counselor had helped her. As a high school counselor at the Queens public school, FP6 was driven to assist urban minority students and their families. Over the years, this participant noticed inequality differences among urban school districts.

Female Participant 7

FP7 was a school counselor who had worked at the NYCDOE for 7 years and had a background in school counseling at the elementary and high school levels. Before entering the education field, FP7 had worked at a mental health clinic and preventative service agency for several years. The participant felt the clinic and agency experiences provided preparation for working with urban minority adolescents in Queens. The respondent decided at a young age to be an educator and eventually became a bilingual school counselor. FP7 enjoyed working with large, diverse populations from low-income families.

Female Participant 8

FP8, a female school counselor, had decided to work in the education field because of her former high school counselor, whom she described as an engaging professional who communicated well with his students. FP8 described these characteristics as efficient for working with teenage students, so they reach their full potential. Thus, the interviewee referred to her former high school counselor as a college professor. She sought to follow in his footsteps, and at the time of the study, had 10 years of experience in the NYCDOE system. As a professional school counselor, FP8 had also worked in other states with immigrant and military students. At the time of the study, the participant had served 4 years at an urban high school in the Bronx. FP8 enjoyed working with minority adolescents and admired their fearless approach to different things in life.

Data Collection

Walden University approved the data collection of this transcendental qualitative research project before the participant interviews commenced. This study adhered to the recruitment procedures, as indicated in Chapter 3. LCO professionals received an invitation to the study to email their listed members on my behalf. The LCO professionals sent the email invitation to over 2,000 school counseling members in New York City within two rounds. At the time of the study, the NYCDOE had 2,902 employed school counselors working across 400 school districts (NYCDOE, 2018).

Thirteen school counselors indicated their interest in the study via email and text message with assistance from the LCO. However, only nine met the research criteria

based on the demographic questionnaire. Therefore, those who did not meet the criteria could not participate in the study. Snowball sampling also commenced to increase the chances of achieving data saturation for this study. Many qualitative investigators rely on snowball sampling to save time, asking the purposefully sampled group to suggest similar subjects to gain sufficient information (Balikçi & Tofur, 2019; Hennink et al., 2019). Snowball sampling resulted in enough participants and answers from the open-ended interview questions for the data to saturate.

Although nine professional school counselors met the research criteria, one individual could not commit to the interview due to a busy schedule. As a result, there were eight online interviews conducted with professional school counseling members. The eight participants worked in different Northeastern urban school districts in the United States, including public high schools in Queens or Brooklyn in New York City. The pure data gathered from the small group of volunteers provided in-depth details for saturation. Saturation occurs when an inquirer has exhausted exploration and gained enough information from the human subjects (Hennink et al., 2019).

Before scheduling the virtual meetings, the participants filled out the demographic questionnaire and returned it via email. The participants reviewed the consent form and agreed to the online interview by replying "I consent" via email. According to Baker and Chartier (2018), obtaining informed consent is essential to the research process to protect human subjects' rights. In addition, a researcher must explain the study and document each individual's agreement. In this study, the consent form indicated that the study's

objective was to explore the phenomenon of high school counselors' lived experiences of servicing the urban minority adolescent population in Northeastern U.S. public schools. The informative patterns and results gathered from the one-on-one video conference interviews showed that participants understood the research questions.

The virtual recruitment occurred over 8 months due to the school counselors' hectic schedules, withdrawal from interview dates, late volunteers for the study, and the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 was an unexpected and unusual worldwide health circumstance that some participants understandably prioritized over their interviews. The participants who agreed to interviews received email reminders to schedule individual virtual meetings. Each participant interview lasted approximately 30 to 60 minutes due to the detailed explanations of work experiences at the urban high school. The private video conference occurred online at the participants' homes or other quiet locations. The interviews were conducted from my home office to avoid interruptions and ensure confidentiality.

Adobe Connect, written notes, epoché, and reflexive journaling were the means used to document the data with much accuracy as possible for each interview transcript. Weinbaum and Onwuegbuzie (2016) suggested that researchers use various data collection techniques to report more profound findings to fill the qualitative research gap. Therefore, in this study, Husserl's epoché process commenced before the meetings to bracket out all preconceived concepts and analyze the participants' experiences. At the same time, reflexive journaling provided the opportunity to reflect on personal thoughts

and think about the phenomenon objectively. The proactive exercise of reflective journaling consisted of writing down personal thoughts, thinking about how I think, and reviewing the notes to capture the phenomenon's pure essence. Thus, I reframed my subjective opinions about high school counselors. For instance, I noted, "Professional school counselors with only 3 years in the field may have difficulty sharing enough details." However, the participants' informative responses indicated that this was not the case for school counselors with up to 3 years of experience. I knew which biases to suspend before the one-on-one interviews by acknowledging my judgments. I set aside any postulations and monitored my thoughts to truly see the interviewees' everyday worlds from their points of view.

After the interviews, I reviewed my written notes and listened to the interview recordings multiple times to accurately transcribe the participants' statements. In addition, the school counselors received their transcripts to check for accuracy and clarification in the same week as their one-on-one interviews. Member checking commenced so the respondents could correct any inaccuracies and ensure the credibility of the data (Varpio et al., 2017). The participants responded to the follow-up questions via telephone or email to expand upon their interview answers. The participants also offered additional information after the virtual interviews in the member checking process. Member checking occurred in the same week as the interviews so the participants could have their responses fresh in their minds.

The extensive testimonies and lack of requested breaks during the interviews showed how comfortable the participants felt during their interviews. None of the participants expressed discomfort or personal conflict during and after the interviews. Providing verbal and written information about myself and the research procedures might have made the participants feel comfortable disclosing their lived experiences. I planned ahead by using reflexive journaling from the participants' perspectives to map out how to conduct the virtual interviews efficiently.

I transcribed each interview recording accurately by replaying the audio recordings, rereading the interview notes, and reviewing my comments in the reflexive journal. Weinbaum and Onwuegbuzie (2016) encouraged qualitative inquirers to exhaust every data collection technique to reach optimum findings. Furthermore, in this study, I deidentified the participants' names and exact locations in the transcripts to protect their anonymity. Next, the NVivo 12 software was a program used to import and code the data from the transcripts for emergent themes. After finding the reoccurring patterns in NVivo 12, I organized and sorted the themes from each participant (see Table 2). Table 2 is a simplified and condensed list of the emergent themes for each participant.

The findings of this study showed commonalities in the participants' accounts of the barriers and successes of working in urban public schools. Researchers have indicated that school communities in low-SES areas tend to present the most hardships for various reasons (Mahatmya et al., 2016). Hence, the enriching data collected from the participants

in this study addressed the main research question and showed evidence of the phenomenon that exists in research.

Table 2

Listed Themes

Emergent themes	Participants
Rewarding experiences with urban minority students	FP1, FP2, FP3, MP4, FP5, FP6, FP7, FP8
Feeling overwhelmed	FP1, FP2, FP3, MP4, FP5, FP6, FP7, FP8
Reactions about received training/ master's program	FP1, FP2, FP3, MP4, FP5, FP6, FP7, FP8
Need for additional training/educational changes	FP1, FP2, FP3, MP4, FP5, FP6, FP7, FP8
Limited resources/supports	FP1, FP2, FP3, MP4, FP5, FP6, FP7, FP8

Data Analysis

Before data analysis, several procedures commenced to obtain the optimal findings in this qualitative transcendental research study. I recorded, saved, transcribed, reviewed, coded, and categorized the data to conduct an in-depth analysis of the participants' perspectives. I exported the audio recording of each interview in Adobe Connect to NVivo12 to generate the transcripts word for word. Next, the qualitative data analysis commenced by creating key terms, also known as nodes or preliminary meaning units, based on the five main interview questions and subquestions. After creating the nodes and submersion into each report occurred multiple times to highlight significant themes in sentences, words, or numbers. I also printed the transcripts separately to review the participants' responses line-by-line and develop an outline, keeping the printed documents and laptop computer in a safe at my home when not in use. A file on a

password-protected laptop and the NVivo 12 online software were the sites used to store the data.

I paired the five main emergent themes with the nodes to condense and organize the data in the phenomenological analysis process. The process occurred by remaining cognizant of capturing the participants' shared interpretations about the phenomenon to analyze the findings truthfully with Husserl's (1960) philosophical approach. As a qualitative researcher, I applied Husserl's fundamental premise of intentionality to evoke awareness of the human subjects' descriptive events (Belousov, 2016). Thus, I consciously focused on how I looked at and thought about the research gap to minimize subjective thoughts. Applying intentionality with Husserl's phenomenological reduction was a way to set aside personal judgments. According to Beyer (2018), bracketing or epoché is a way to avoid conclusions about a topic and closely analyze the participants' lived experiences. Therefore, epoché was the strategy used in this study to set aside my conscious ideas and get to the pure essence of the problem through the first-person perspectives of the participants.

Next, Husserl's noema, noesis, and noetic-noematic techniques occurred to think about and understand the interviewees' lived experiences (Beyer, 2018). Noema was the technique used to ponder the uncovered data, and noesis occurred to think about the interpretations of the final empirical results. Similarly, noetic-noematic provided a more in-depth understanding of the meaning depicted by the participants in the purposeful

sample (Sousa, 2014). This immersive activity aimed to get a clearer picture of the outcome of the school counselors' worlds in an urban public school setting.

Lastly, Husserl's horizon was another strategy included in my experience of analyzing the volunteers' real-life encounters in their professional roles (Belousov, 2016). I could not bracket the horizon; therefore, I noticed the participants' different horizons from their everyday environments. Understanding these horizons allowed me to remain in the present moment, slow down, and listen entirely to the participants' explanations. I obtained multiple examples of the lived experiences from the participants' perspectives. Intentionality is the respondents' way of providing personal examples based on their conscious thoughts about past encounters (Belousov, 2016). Capturing the interviewees' descriptions from the time of the lived event was essential in interpreting, categorizing, and summarizing the data as a phenomenological inquirer.

Each step in the data analysis of this qualitative transcendental study served as a guide for reviewing each detailed narrative, as researchers using the Husserlian philosophical lens take nothing for granted (Husserl, 1960). The data from virtual interviews resulted in five themes that emerged from the participants' statements, with subthemes emerging from responses to the follow-up questions. Thus, I documented the series of patterns that appeared the most frequently as central themes in NVivo 12.

Next, I reread the respondents' transcripts and removed unnecessary language in the themes. After clean-up of the collected data, the preliminary meaning units were generated to condense the participants' answers into shorter dialogues. From there, a

synthesis of the final meaning units occurred to represent the themes and subthemes. Next, I condensed the detailed testimonies into general narratives, producing short descriptions of the participants' lived experiences as professional school counselors servicing underprivileged adolescents in Northeastern high schools. I grouped and labeled the data to enable readers to understand the main themes easily. After coding data, I created a table to categorize the identified themes with the meaning units and organize the dialogue from the in-depth interview responses (see Appendix D). According to Zoellner et al. (2012), a qualitative researcher uses a meaning unit to identify a sequence of words or sentences about the sample group's phenomenon. Thus, organizing the data provided a concise understanding of the findings in the data analysis.

Continuing the data analysis phase, horizontalization occurred to carefully comb the rich data from the sample group (Moustakas, 1994). Horizontalization was a means to thoroughly review the data for overlapping remarks, ensure their legitimacy, and remove repetitive dialogue and nonrelated answers. I also wrote side notes on the printed transcripts to highlight any deep meanings. Hence, this phase focused on the structural elements and entailed combining the clusters of statements from the human subjects. The subjective feedback occurred based on the open-ended and follow-up questions posed to the participants. Appendix D shows that the school counselors provided meaningful interpretations of their lived experiences working with urban minority high school learners. Rereading the transcripts and replaying the audio recordings commenced to avoid overlooking details and identify the emergent patterns from the rich data.

Husserl's Transcendental Approach

Husserl's philosophical framework was part of the data analysis process to explore the phenomenon thoroughly through the participants' first-person perspectives. Husserl encouraged investigators to interact with human subjects to gain a deeper understanding of the problem without inference (Chernavin, 2016). Hence, the Husserlian approach was appropriate to guide, investigate, and address the phenomenon of NYCDOE professional school counselors working in urban high school districts. Data analysis occurred with several proactive Husserlian steps.

In the principal theme within the philosophy, Husserl's intentionality consists of looking at something for what it is to connect with the human experience (Belousov, 2016). I brought my conscious awareness of the phenomenon to the forefront to focus on the participants' lived events in urban districts. I took the time to slow down with intentionality and dwelt on each participant's narrative. In addition, I dedicated more time to rereading and thinking profoundly about the data to position myself to look at things from the perspectives of high school counselors in impoverished communities. Hence, I deliberately made sure not to overlook any information in each narrative.

Along with intentionality, Husserl's phenomenological reduction was a means to clarify and set aside preconceived knowledge about the interviewees' lived experiences (Heinonen, 2015). The reduction concept allowed me to participate fully in the intentional consciousness with epoché. Epoché allowed identifying common patterns from the results and minimizing personal thoughts or biases about the participants. For

example, writing down preconceived ideas about the participants allowed me to heighten my awareness, self-reflect, and truthfully analyze the empirical data throughout the project. Journaling of personal thoughts and presumptions occurred to discern what to suspend before conducting the interviews.

Transcendental research requires the inquirer to withhold any personal beliefs with Husserl's epoché temporarily. I focused on the New York school counselors working with urban minority high school students to create open-ended interview questions and elicit their thoughts. This reduction also allowed me to break down the gathered data into themes and postpone speculations to understand the research gap. Husserl's epoché from a hermeneutic lens effectively captured in-depth details about the participants' daily interactions instead of the influences behind their experiences. Overall, epoché was a successful strategy for setting aside my ideas to understand the interviewees' shared illustrations of their self-told stories.

The other technique performed were noema, noesis, and noetic-noematic from Husserl's (1960) conceptual framework. Implementing this philosophical method consisted of grouping and coding the data for emergent themes without discrimination while interpreting and thinking about the discoveries. Specifically, noema entailed centering on the participants' past experiences. Noesis was the strategy used to capture the interpretation of the phenomenon surrounding the participants (Sheehan, 2014). That outlook allowed me to format the data into general categories to minimize ambiguity in the research. By synthesizing the in-depth details, I eventually understood the pure

essence behind high school counselors' experiences through noesis and noema. Noema and noesis together enabled me to establish clarity, while the noetic-noematic technique allowed me to clarify the meaning of the participants' descriptions of their everyday environments (Sousa, 2014). The volunteers' subjective rich text contributed to the validity of the study.

Husserl's horizon was another strategy used to stay in the here and now and listen to each individual's unique responses to the open-ended questions (Belousov, 2016). The horizon is the experience encountered in the present moment (Belousov, 2016; Husserl, 1960). The goal of the horizon phase is to see things differently in the natural world to comprehend the outcomes described by participants. I did not fully bracket anything in the horizon phase; however, I engaged deeply in the experience by taking notes and listening carefully to the participants' narratives. I reached the horizon when I gathered enough testimonies to understand the obtained data.

The horizon process enabled me to explain different and similar horizons based on the participants' current situations in the field. After comparing the findings, I also realized the participants had different educational and training experiences. However, due to epoché, there was no guarantee of realizing everything at that moment of the interviews. Thus, there was a possibility that the participants did not recognize everything about their lived experiences during their self-told stories, which could have presented a discrepancy. Chapter 5 presents the implications of adhering to the horizon process.

I carefully listened, thought about, analyzed, narrowed down, and coded the rich data in the summary of Husserl's transcendental steps. The goal of this proactive method was to learn and think about what the participants' perspectives showed, free from biases. The process allowed the themes to naturally emerge as the participants lived them, with coherent explanations of meanings for the audience. Overall, Husserl's philosophical method enabled me to comprehend each participant's shared, lived events in the urban education setting from a first-person perspective, answer the main research question, and ensure the validity of the qualitative study.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

Establishing the trustworthiness of the data analysis consisted of protecting the credibility of the data via the following actions. Qualitative researchers use multiple triangulation methods to thoroughly review the participant-provided evidence and obtain reliable outcomes (Johnson et al., 2017). In this study, two triangulation techniques were means to double-check the findings for consistency: data source triangulation and an external audit.

Data source triangulation occurred by taking notes during the interviews and replaying the audio recordings for accuracy. The open-ended questions and documented notes contributed to obtaining detailed information from the participants. The other triangulation strategy used was an external audit of the literature and pure data. A research expert collaborated with, examined, and compared the anonymous transcripts

(Archibald, 2013). In this study, the skilled researcher supported and confirmed the participants' details about working in urban minority high schools.

Additional means of ensuring credibility included member checking, reflexivity, and data saturation. Member checking commenced by following up with each respondent after the interview to build trust, clarify inaccuracies, and expand on the transcript's interpreted answers. The goal of member checking was to prevent issues with the disclosed information presented in the findings (Naidu & Prose, 2018). In this study, the participants did not find it necessary to change and email back their transcripts. However, they offered assistance and provided additional information in the interview follow-up questions. The added information enabled me to draw precise conclusions about the phenomenon without preconceptions. In this instance, different data analysis techniques helped confirm the participants' details about working in urban minority high schools.

Member checking, reflexivity, and saturation were the means used to ensure the credibility of the data analysis of this qualitative study. Kalman (2019) indicated that qualitative inquirers must maintain transparency throughout data analysis to prepare and overcome possible challenges with the research. Therefore, in this study, reflexivity occurred to carefully map out the project, increase self-awareness, and invite active participation.

A reflexive journal was the tool used to plan the research, document the rigor of my role, and actively follow up with participants after their interviews. As the facilitator, journaling was a means to guide my role while working with the interviewees to maintain

consistency, clarity, and reliable data. In addition, the participants' detailed accounts resulted in data saturation, which occurred after obtaining enough information from the participants to address the research gap.

Some original school counselors who consented to participate could not proceed with their interviews. Therefore, I sent potential participants a second recruitment letter via email. Snowball sampling also commenced by asking the participants to recommend other high school counselors from Northeastern districts for the study. Snowball sampling and the process of seeking more participants occurred to ensure saturation and obtain rich data for this study.

Transferability

Different strategies helped to ensure the transferability of the study. I sought out professional school counselors with experience with urban minority high school students to ensure the transferability of the study. The idea was to gather information from experts with similar backgrounds in high schools with socioeconomic challenges to compare the findings and check for transferability. According to Varpio et al. (2017), research should commence by searching for participants with the same demographics to identify similarities or differences in the findings.

Therefore, criterion sampling was the approach used to focus on a small group of individuals to obtain their perspectives of their everyday experiences in urban schools in Northeastern areas. Purposeful sampling commenced to gather rich data from the NYCDOE high school counselors who had worked in urban education settings.

Furthermore, snowball sampling allowed me to recruit additional school counselors with similar backgrounds via the participants' recommendations (Suri, 2011).

A comparison of the respondents' transcripts showed that the study had findings transferable to professional school counselors at the elementary and secondary levels and the high school level in impoverished areas. In addition, other researchers could also compare the findings to school counselors working with urban minority students in other states. The goal of this study was to raise awareness and support professional school counselors either preparing to work in urban schools or currently servicing urban minority youth. Thus, the rich data will allow future researchers to follow the processes and achieve transferability.

Dependability

This study also included strategies to achieve dependability in the research and data analysis process. This study included detailed descriptions of the procedures and methods implemented throughout the research so future inquirers can replicate and establish the study's dependability. Kaalen et al. (2019) emphasized the importance of studies that accurately present the research process so others can easily use the model for dependable analysis. Therefore, I used the same strategies for credibility and transferability (i.e., external audit, audit trail, and member checking) to ensure the dependability of the data.

In addition, I used Moustakas' (1994) seven-step research tasks to review the transcripts, separate the themes, and form reliable qualitative data. Moustakas referred to

this rigor as a "research-based protocol" for carefully analyzing and organizing the participants' testimonies. The following action steps occurred in this transcendental phenomenological research study:

1. Checked each answer in the transcripts to determine a clear description.

2. Utilized different techniques to record audio and written notes of the data.

3. Eliminated repetitive answers to narrow down the meaning units.

4. Categorized the collective meaning units into emergent themes.

5. Presented the evidence of specific statements with the meaning units.

6. Considered the interviewees' perspectives to seek meaningful experiences about the phenomenon.

7. Generated textural-structural descriptions of the meanings and human experiences.

Confirmability

Establishing the credibility of the findings also included confirmability activities to ensure an accurate interpretation of the data collected accurately from the participants. The rich data from participants' responses to the open-ended interview questions provided insight into the phenomenon from the school counselors' perspectives. According to Hagood and Skinner (2015), researchers must depend on respondents' subjective feedback instead of their own inferences to prevent drawing inconclusive findings that enable the gap to remain open.

I remained patient so each participant could acclimate to and take the lead in the interview. Participants rushed or pressed for time may give shorter answers or misunderstand the questions asked (Kristensen & Ravn, 2015). Therefore, during the one-on-one interviews, I listened carefully, refrained from interrupting, and responded with "What I hear you saying is…" to confirm the documented answers. Each participant took approximately 30 to 60 minutes to complete the interview, and I provided additional time for them to ask questions and provide detailed answers. I also compared the participants' transcripts to check for alarming discrepancies.

The other activities executed for confirmability were reflexive journaling, triangulation, and member checking. I wrote down any preconceptions before each interview and documented my mood during each interview for reflexivity. The participants received their transcripts for review as part of the triangulation process. The triangulation method enabled the interviewees to take the initiative in the research by reviewing and suggesting any necessary edits to their transcripts. Carter et al. (2014) indicated that triangulation is critical for attaining credibility and promoting collaboration between the inquirer and the participant.

Member checking was also a way to build trust with the participants, verify the data gathered, foster collaboration, and present the study's outcomes. Member checking enabled consistent communication between the participants and me so I could validate the research questions' results more than once. The detailed feedback from the participants contributed to the study's findings.

Results

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to explore the following research question: What are school counselors' lived experiences working with urban minority high school students in Northeastern U.S. urban areas? The purpose of this qualitative question was to guide and drive the outcomes to fill the gap within the research. The participants answered the open-ended questions in detail to deliver the meaning behind their everyday experiences in urban high schools. The five key themes that emerged from the data were (a) rewarding experiences with urban minority students, (b) feeling overwhelmed, (c) reactions about training or master's program, (d) need for additional training and educational changes, and (e) limited resources and support (see Table 2). The themes and subthemes emerged from the open-ended questions presented to the participants. The five main interview questions also included follow-up questions for increased chances of gaining detailed dialogue from their perspectives. Through their lived experiences, the eight participants showed common concerns about serving the urban minority high school population.

Description of Themes

Theme 1: Rewarding Experiences With Urban Minority Students

The first emerging theme was rewarding experiences with urban minority students. FP1, FP2, FP3, MP4, FP5, FP6, FP7, and FP8 described their experiences serving adolescents in the Northeastern United States. As current professional school counselors, the participants shared their perspectives of working with learners in urban

public high schools in the NYCDOE system. The NYCDOE has one of the largest ethnically diverse student populations in the United States (NYCDOE, 2020). Thus, a crucial need existed to interview school counseling members employed in marginalized educational communities to address the gap in the research.

Each participant described the populations they oversaw and the rewarding experiences of working in low-SES districts. The participants provided their narratives about servicing today's urban minority students.

> FP1: I am able to relate culturally a little bit more especially if I did go to New York City public schools. I think that helps a lot of the students. I'm working with mainly international students who recently arrived in the country. Sixty-five percent of the population is Latino and thirty-five percent are African American. The rest are small groups of India, Chinese, and Middle East. They're coming from countries whose native language is not English. There's about forty-five percent Asian…a growing Chinese population. The rest come from Cairo and Afghanistan. Forty percent of students are undocumented. Central American students crossing the border are being detained. A lot of them are reuniting with parents after years. It is tough coming to challenges in less fortunate communities. I've heard many stories from students…because I'm compassionate and understanding. Building connections first makes a difference.

> FP2: I was once an urban adolescent student. I went in thinking, that I would be able to relate to the urban minority students. But I was badly mistaken.

It's a new culture of being brown and lower socioeconomically. The trauma is evident…negative behaviors are more evident. I work with ninety-eight percent black, maybe 2% Hispanic students. In the past, we had international students. I work in a transfer school with students who are over-aged and under-credited. Most come in at seventeen to nineteen years old. I monitor students' transcripts and listen to their concerns to find a solution. I treat them equally and provide support. When working with this diverse group, it's not just about academics. It goes deeper than that because of the trauma. We created a safe environment where it feels like home. They never want to leave at the end of the school day.

FP3: I work well with all my urban students. I'm not sure what it is, but there seems to be students needing a lot more. I've been at this school since 2007. I'm assigned to juniors and seniors. The demographic is mostly African American and Afro-Caribbean because we're in a diverse location. We have Hispanic students, but it's less than ten percent. Some identified as Arabic, Pakistan, and Yemen. No student identifies as Caucasian. We have sixty-five percent males…thirty-three percent have IEPs…not many English language learners. All students work well with me. Many come with personal issues that show in their attendance, behaviors, and grades. Like coming from a single home or caring for ill parents. I noticed an increase of students in temporary housing. They tell me it is hard to focus on schoolwork at the shelter. This population requires…more time and listening. I work with students on other things too.

MP4: When working with urban minority students individually, I am able to be more honest, and they can be themselves. I'm upfront, so they get to know how I work as a school counselor. My honest approach helps me work together with students to get to the root of problem. Gradually they open up to me. I work with upperclassman…juniors and seniors. They are mature and focused on studies. There are two hundred and sixty Hispanic students… thirty-five percent Asians, twelve percent American, and 4% Caucasian. I like to work with different ethnic groups. My caseload is not small. A lot have difficulties at home with financial situations, parents divorced or single-parent homes. I sit and listen to their stories, good or bad. When working alone with them, they share a lot. But with friends' teenagers are not easy to approach. They eventually come…they know my office is always open.

FP5: Our students come from all different walks of life. I connect, learn about them, and their story. It's great because it's something I value. People make inferences about students' orientation or ethnicity. Until you learn who they are and where they came from you won't fully understand them. It's valuable to have conversations…support students no matter the challenges. Students at this school come from diverse communities. I have blacks and Hispanics, and Chinese enrolled at this high school. I absolutely love it…give myself back to the community. I understand what it is like to work with city students since I was a long time ago. Our students' story must be told...I carefully listen, understand, and

help them. We are in the field of assisting students in a more individualized way rather than having a blanket solution for things. I was happy to move up with the juniors this year.

FP6: I love it, honestly. I will tell the urban students that I wasn't aware of that in your culture. It's enlightening for me. It takes time to build trust with the urban population. As a school counselor, I have experience working in different schools. The East side of my students were African America or Latino…not one Caucasian student. Where I am now it's more diverse demographically. We're in a borough where most immigrant students live with their immediate families or relatives. We have a big population of Guyanese students. We have Middle East, Latino and Latina. A smaller percentage of African American and Caucasian students. It's different flavors representing New York. I oversee the 11th and 12th graders…some can be guarded. I don't expect them to trust me out of the gate, I say what's going on or how are things going? I am honest from the get-go.

FP7: Some students don't get me because of my nationality. I need to research about the different cultures. I follow up with a call for an ethnic group. Some parents call back, if not busy. Parents like when I schedule appointments later in the day. After all the calls and meetings, they thank me. With other nationalities, I send an email or call to confirm. To build trust, I must work on how I communicate…we have a large population from different countries. They all qualify for free lunch…get waivers to take the S.A.T.'s and the Excelsis

scholarship. I worked with Asian, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Myanmar, Bhutan, Philippines, Indonesia, and China. We have Korean…I get one or two from Europe. I have students from South America and Spain…White from America. The Latinos and Non-Asian is easier for me to get stressed. Makes me realize I have to understand the different cultures.

FP8: It has been a learning curve working in the urban high schools. I found myself learning about the different cultures in the public school. I felt like a minority adult…I am a Jewish woman working with a diverse population. City students have less walls up when speaking to them. I worked with all students in multiple schools…a great experience. The demographic is a mix of Black, Hispanic, Caribbean, Central American, South American, White, and Asian. I help students by listening and learning. I have a laid-back personality…I learned to listen more and be open. I practice cultural competency to interact and understand what students go through. Students have different views, beliefs, and feelings about the world. I like when they return as alumni with success stories. There are challenges…I tell my students; they can overcome anything with hard work. It's great to witness positive outcomes as their counselor.

Four subthemes emerged from the data and the subjective statements presented for the first theme. The participants' described their lived experiences with work duties, difficulties, assistance, and triumphs at their urban high schools. According to Astramovich et al. (2013), professional school counselors hold a fundamental role in

servicing students from low-SES communities. Students depend on their high school counselors' support for various reasons, as counselors have a different role than teachers. The following subthemes emerged under the umbrella of the school counselors' everyday experiences with underprivileged students in Theme 1: (a) responsibilities, (b) challenges, (c) supportive efforts, and (d) positive outcomes.

Subtheme A: Responsibilities of School Counselors

The school counselors acknowledged the obligations of working with underprivileged minors at urban high schools in Northeastern zones. According to the ACA (2019), professional school counselors perform different duties in all educational facilities. However, the school counselor's role varies depending on school leaders' ideas, funds, locations, and student populations (Grimes et al., 2017). The participants in this study related similar stories about their roles and assignments. For example, the participants frequently mentioned the term *responsibilities* in Subtheme A. Below are the participants' narratives of their daily responsibilities at their urban high schools.

> FP1: I help develop the urban students' social-emotional skills and support them with academic and career planning. My caseload is about three hundred. I counsel international students. Many are new immigrants who know little or no English. I was selected by my principal to work with this group because I speak another language. I have my bilingual extension…when I speak to them, it makes the transition less stressful. I check-in often…to go over goals, credits, scholarships, tutoring, colleges, and careers. Attend meetings with parents and other team

members. I conference with agencies…a lot of referrals because it's the biggest thing. There are guidance meetings, and we develop professional development for staff. I am responsible for paperwork, transcripts, individualized plans, applications, referrals, letters, and more. I am tasked in students' graduation requirements. Principals want to increase graduation rates every year. You can find me in the back of the office.

FP2: I focus on high school students' transcripts to meet graduation regulations. The school was my caseload of 300 students. Fifty mandates I am responsible for and the at-risk students. The high school is for students who have not completed credits. Most come 17 to 19 years old. I worked with 21-year-olds…our program works a little differently. I review each transcript to see what they need to graduate. Do teachers caseloads according to what those needs are to follow our regular trajectory. I gotta wiggle around the system to make our program work best. Delivering the college access for all program, which has me running 2 to 3 fairs. I facilitate different projects…orientation, parent workshops, vocational trips, and others approved. My priorities center around…the best social-emotional support. I give with my capabilities to make them happy. I'm not in my office answering calls, doing paperwork, and replying to emails.

FP3: I work with the 11th and 12th grade primarily and do most of the college counseling. I have 166 students on my caseload. I work well with urban high school students. I am responsible for a lot more with seniors and juniors

because of college counseling. I am obligated to the college planning and career assessments. The software program makes it easier to go over with students. I created a bereavement group because of the frequent deaths or sickness. I have students with IEPs, so I attend meetings…create goals. School counselors and social workers are making sure students are provided with supplies and clothing…we call it swag. I ensure students complete their graduation project and speech since they don't take regents exams. I participate in trips or invite guest speakers. I fill out papers, home instruction forms, financial aid or SAT applications, resume building, outside referrals, and transcript requests.

MP4: When our new principal came, he transferred me to work with 10th and 11th graders. The caseload is half the school at 300 students, almost 400. I rather work with older kids since they are mature. I am relieved the principal changed my grade level when he came on board. It makes a difference to work with students who are ready to prepare for graduation. I monitor grades, attendance, credits, postsecondary planning. I am involved in advisement, conducting assessments, financial aid, and college application deadlines…resumes, and experience the job market. My obligations demand time in facilitating workshops for parents and staff. Putting together college events that are fun…the college access for all team. The most frequent and less appealing responsibility is paperwork because of timelines and everything else

asked…meeting students is more important. They expect me to program every year…tasks are endless. That never changes in poorer schools.

FP5: This is my first year having seniors at the high school. I monitor the 12th graders' credits and develop plans with them. My caseload is mixed with 230 students…I organize my schedule around them. This allows me to review each transcript and update the principal. I conduct individual and group counseling. Those who need more, I refer them out for mental health services. I am in contact with different agencies. I don't like when attendance is getting worse…admin expressed attendance affects the entire school. I am pressured to get them transferred to another high school. They ask me to make phone calls and hold meetings. I don't do absenteeism...not in the business of getting kids out to improve the school's attendance. The other thing is the unexpected requests and paperwork. Administration asks counselors to adjust schedules, create flyers, complete special ed. documents, referrals, testing, scholarships, apprenticeships, and applications.

FP6: I'm responsible for the 11th and 12th-grade students. I have roughly 300 students on my caseload. As their school counselor, I provide college information and answer questions for juniors and seniors. I ensure urban students are socially and emotionally supported. I am responsible for meetings with teachers, parents, administrators, and agencies. People depend on counselors...I am tasked with providing educational tools for our population. My time is spent

on the college process…completing applications and visiting universities. I tell them to participate in the ASEOP program, Excelsior scholarship, or Dreamer's scholarship. I'm always researching since they aren't offered many opportunities. I contact a CUNY member, who has free resources. It's my duty to review students' grades and transcripts. If failing, I refer them for tutoring…principal wants students to graduate early. My principal asked me to be part of the graduation committee. It's work, but fun for a great occasion.

FP7: I have a bilingual license, and they wanted me to work with ENL and general ed. students. My caseload is 245 students. I have many responsibilities in addition to my caseload…after a counselor left. When people retire you get more responsibilities…AP thinks I can handle it. I get many referrals from teachers about students who need counseling for…academics, attendance, absences, or stress. I sit and talk with them…then make referrals for serious concerns. I refer them to the community-based organization (CBO) in the school or clinic. For academics, I ensure students are programmed correctly and receive tutoring. I tell students…free scholarships are available for low socio-economic standings. The AP guidance has a physical educational background and oversees our department. The APG has the work divided among the counselors…except paperwork. When teachers are having a hard time with a student, the APG recommends they see the school counselor first.

FP8: I currently work with 11th and 12th grade. My caseload is at 250 students. I do a lot for minority students since most parents are less involved at a high school level. I constantly check-in with kids. My focus is on emotional, academic, and college planning. I tend to other assignments... admins put pressure to get things done outside my role. Leaders expect me to program 12th graders, help with lunch duty, proctor exams, and dean issues. I push back…it jeopardizes the bond with students. I increase graduation rates…hold college fairs and invite speakers. To make it easier for students and their folks to attend events. I can't forget the interruptions...I stop what I am doing when it is urgent. I refer to as a first responder…follow up with students for serious mental concerns. I have a post-recovery plan with the student and conference with the parent.

In Subtheme A, the participants described their lived experiences carrying out their various responsibilities at their public schools. As noted, some of the duties assigned by the administrators fell outside the school counselor role. The respondents' answers showed the predicament of school counselors when their leaders assign additional duties related to teacher or dean roles while managing their own workloads. Bickmore and Curry (2013) acknowledged that school counselors in low-SES communities tend to have more assignments than in other environments.

The participants in this study expressed the importance of sticking to the parameters of their role to focus on urban minority students' academic, social-emotional, and postsecondary goals. Section C.2. of the ACA Code of Ethics indicates that school

counseling members must perform within their boundaries and learn from their programs to protect their diverse clientele (ACA, 2014). Thus, the professional responsibilities lie with the high school counselors who actively interact with underserved populations. The participants' responses show that school counselors often have numerous responsibilities in Northeastern schools.

Subtheme B: Challenges Experienced at Urban High Schools

In education, the expectation is for school counselors to best serve young people in different settings despite their economic status (ACA, 2014). Grimes et al. (2017) found that the school counselors' roles and responsibilities differed according to the student population and the administrators' vision. Therefore, professional school counselors must apply different methods to help students effectively. As noted in Subtheme A, school counselors in urban settings appear to face large workloads and numerous requests. Despite different responsibilities or obstacles, the participants in this study used various strategies to address the needs of each underachieving student. The participants described some of their struggles while maintaining their roles successfully.

> FP1: The biggest challenges I say are monitoring my assumptions about the urban students and community. As a school counselor, you think you know what's going on within the community. Like how parents are going to react to things. I realized that everyone's experiences are not necessarily the same. It's not good to make assumptions, and I realized that the hard way. I relate a bit more culturally if I went to public school as a kid. Many assumptions are made about students of

color…teachers made the same mistake. It is challenging to reframe from guessing what students go home too. I remind myself that today's adolescent group is different. Generation Z experiences are not the same as mine growing up. I can't come in with preconceived notions about what they can or can't do or what they possibly experienced. Now that I reflect…it is something I need to work on.

FP2: Many students do not want to see me or other counselors to deal with mental health issues. We found ourselves seeing more students presenting signs of post-traumatic stress disorder. My biggest challenge is changing the kids' mindsets about receiving mental health. Many urban students are over the concept of formal education or extra assistance. A lot of them come with a tremendous amount of trauma. However, they don't want the stigma of having to see the counselor even though they need one. It's a challenging…I try to reframe what support systems do so they do not feel singled out. I became creative and careful with my approach. I offer counseling and resources regardless of students' situation or thoughts. My effort is to make it a safe zone for students to decrease assumptions. Counselors are a separate entity in our building. It is challenging to break that pattern…change is slow.

FP3: The challenges have to do with the culture at our high school. Urban students are unmotivated and unorganized. I remind them of deadlines for assignments, projects, or what have you. Unfortunately, students wait for the last minute to get work done. Teachers brought it to my attention on countless

occasions. I speak with students in hopes of motivating them. Some either try or put it off for another day. It's frustrating when some miss the deadline…it can be prevented. I tell them the importance meeting the criteria for graduation. This is a transfer school for students who are over-aged and missing credits. The curriculum makes it easier for them, unlike at a regular high school. This population has many fathers and mothers who are seriously sick, in jail, or in temporary housing. I don't want them to give up. This is unquestionably an ongoing challenge for me.

MP4: That was challenging for me because the minority ninth graders are coming from middle to high school, and they're immature. They have to mature a little by the ninth grade. At that age, kids don't understand the importance of completing high school to graduate in time. When I worked with freshman, it was challenging to get them to take school seriously. A smooth transition from 8th to 9th grade will impact their future. Many delay the process because they don't take education seriously. Freshman make poor choices following or impressing friends. Cutting class is not going to cut it. Freshman or sophomores are not ready...their priority is to be with friends. Academically, they don't do too well. Teens get into trouble with behavioral issues and disrespectful actions. Good news is some grow up junior and senior year. They realize the mistakes and want to change.

FP5: The other challenging part was the student's issues with mental health and parents not coming to terms. I think that brings us to no progress. If parents are not on board, how can I get students what they need. I explain that therapy is the best way to improving attendance and grades. Many parents and students tell me I am not mental or crazy…I do not need it. It is a struggle because parents do not want to hear it. Other challenges are attendance every year. It is the policy in this education system. NYC students cannot fail a class because you haven't been here 20 times. As long as the work meets the criteria, you can pass. I cannot tell students that and expect them to show up every day. Minority kids are vocal, and they challenge you. As far as policy goes, that's an issue for me.

FP6: There is a lot of hoops that I and other counselors have to jump through with bureaucracy and things of that nature. I see differences in equity. There are challenges for high school counselors in low-income communities. I live in Long Island…I see differences in equity. Funding is more abundant in the middle- and upper-class neighborhoods. That makes a difference in what counselors can provide students. I found myself fighting for more…many things are unjust. I saw differences in transfer schools compared to traditional schools…resources based on zone. I know what challenges other counselors are up against. I work with a diverse population in the DOE, and the needs vary. I offer as much as possible to not feel restricted. The school is creating clubs that

relate to our student body…cultural and LGBTQ. It's long overdue…I've been vocal about it. It's a battle, but we don't give up.

FP7: The students don't always come back to me. They have more connections with teachers….it presented challenges for me. Some turn to their teacher first because they see them often. It has to do with my nationality…students don't get me. I have to learn about the cultural groups to interact. It's a challenge communicating with parents…I get stressed. I catch myself doing more for one group compared to another. Latino is a challenging since I do not speak Spanish. A solution…we have a Spanish parent coordinator…she assists me. The other challenge is my supervisor who was a physical education teacher. The APG is not familiar with the counselors' job. I get tasks meant for the dean, secretary, administrator, or attendance. Extra work takes time from deadlines and counseling students. I become uneasy and stressed, trying to do so much at once. I barely have time for breaks or lunch.

FP8: Some challenges I'm faced with is mental health issues, truancy, students in shelters, and lack of parental involvement. Students whose parents are less involved present more issues with absenteeism, behaviors, and grades. I call and email parents since many hold more than one job…it is hard to devote time to their children. Over the phone sometimes is not reciprocated. Parents think their child in high school is old enough to take on more responsibilities…that is not the case. I give my time and energy…not have parents involved. I tell them to rely on

supports in school. One other challenge is being flexible in a busy environment. I'm forced to break out of the fixed mindset when a crisis comes, or the principal wants to meet unannounced. I respond quickly, think of solutions, and switch gears. I go back to what I was doing after putting out a fire.

The participants' answers showed some of the challenges faced by high school counselors while working with urban minors, faculty members, and parents in Northeastern U.S. neighborhoods. Furthermore, the respondents candidly described their struggles as high school counselors. Diem (2015) acknowledged that professional school counselors in disadvantaged school settings experience more complications when planning and finding long-term resolutions. The participants' responses showed that high school counselors in low-SES schools have more demanding jobs because of the districts' issues.

Subtheme C: Supportive Efforts Employed for Urban Minors

Along with their challenging perspectives, the participants also gave examples of how they attempted to manage and support adolescent students from underprivileged communities. Nichols et al. (2017) referred to school counselors as influential advocates who can use promising approaches to help students succeed in the education system. The participants in this study described how they continued to persevere and encourage urban minority students to fulfill their aspirations despite the recognized difficulties. The ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2018a) aims to enable professional school counselors to assess and implement changes to the CSCP so students can achieve positive outcomes. All eight

participants in this study shared lived experiences that resulted in Subtheme C of supportive efforts.

> FP1: I encourage teachers to get to know their students with attendance issues instead of referring them to me. I invite teachers to student meetings to build trusting and supportive relationships. It makes a difference when they know the student instead of passing the concern. I ask questions…but teachers push everything to the counselors. As a teacher, you're responsible for monitoring students and reaching parents. Try that first and then we'll know if it's an emergency. I make sure urban students are supported by teachers. It shows we care…to seek possible solutions. Counselors become the space where everyone comes for help. We have a space in our office where teachers let us know which students are of concern. We think about the point person…ask if anyone can check. If the teacher feels it's beyond their control, I step in. I put students first by reevaluating how to approach different situations.

> FP2: I always try to support all the urban minority students. We get a lot of students who shut down easily. We started an initiative to feel ready for college. I and staff saw writing as something that challenges them. Myself and AP started a course on a rubric where students were understanding a one, two, three, four scale…like a chart. We are using self-reflection writing. Analyze work to build the skillset and prepare the college essay. I go over it with them during their lunch. I do classroom push-in's, weekly meeting with seniors, and college trips.

Students experienced delays due to family situations, truancy, or other reasons. Many are grieving and experiencing death in the family. I and a few staff started the lifeguard crew…six of us have twenty to thirty kids. Make them bite-size and give me a chance to breathe. I have the mandates with the other counselor.

FP3: I'm always trying to support and offer whatever services is needed. We have funding through students in temporary housing. I give those students supplies without labeling them. The social workers, school counselors, and I support students by purchasing different items. These students struggle financially to buy supplies or clothing. We purchase swag clothing…sweatshirts and stuff. They don't know why they're getting it. I don't want to reveal that issue, so others are aware of their circumstance. A young man told me about his situation. I am glad he said something…he wasn't on the list. The parents lost their job…they were staying with a relative. However, they moved again. I offered support…asking questions, metro card, and food. Last year we had a similar situation. The young man stopped coming to school, and we called mom. That was hard because we did not hear from him or the family.

MP4: They don't have much hope. I support the urban students as much as I can if I know their situation. Often, school counselors, might not be aware of the situation. I remind them that I am here for whatever is needed. I have a buddy system where peers look out for each other…they share if a friend needs my assistance. Teenagers think they can handle any issue on their own. That is not

always the case…I inform them to ask for help. Sometimes they listen, and sometimes they go on their own. I remind them…visit my office, email, or call. I support them with supplies, resources, and tutoring. Home situation may force them to care for siblings or find a part-time job. I meet with those students to talk, share ideas, and plan. It's a supportive peer group…seniors help juniors since they were part of the group last year.

FP5: We do have international students. I talk to them about experiences migrating to the states as a high school student. It's important to help international students navigate in a new school. I call parents to answer questions and provide information. I ensure students don't feel alone…if you're not born in New York, your ideal high school is different. I migrated to the states and thought I can't wait to put stuff in my locker. Nope, I had to lug around my book bag and jacket in school. I support them by sharing experiences and not just supplies. They keep coming to visit me…that's a good sign. A student thought I lived this perfect life. They say, you look like you live in a house. Students see you the way you present yourself…connecting is important. Next time they encounter something difficult, they could think of me and ask.

FP6: I am happy to be a resource for the kids. I get speakers to come in and talk with the high school students. Besides talking to me or other counselors, it helps to invite guests within the urban community. Professionals familiar with issues going on in this neighborhood. One thing I've done the past eleven

years…invite local police to speak to urban teens. Lucky, my brother is a police officer with experience. I had him come talk to the kids and say, listen; there are good cops too. He comes with a different partner, so they became familiar with who works in their community. My brother explains what you should do if something happens and provide free giveaways. My brother talks with students…if staff or I can't get them to listen for a serious problem. I use resources within the community to help students.

FP7: I believe in using my title as a resource to advocate for minority teenagers. And speak up for the students. Whenever I noticed things are not fair, I say something. One student got a 65…his classmates received a higher grade. I asked why… the teacher said, I made a mistake. Today she changed it to a 90. Faculty is under great stress with COVID-19. My title can be used to do advocating…it's my job to monitor credits and grades. I support with resources…we have a clinic operated by the department of health. Parents sign a consent for the year. I refer students, if they need therapy, intervention, money, or a physical…if students get hurt, need pills, or reproductive planning. I make sure students get educated about these options. They don't have to travel far to seek help. If students need long-term therapy, I find a facility nearby.

FP8: I try to be flexible and carefully listen to the high school students to support them. I frequently check-up on them. Some students visit me, and some are lazy. I have to be creative and find different ways to meet them in the middle.

I check on them during homeroom, lunch, or recess. I have office hours online because of the pandemic. Students and parents have my number and email. We are working remotely…I quickly developed platforms to meet with 11th and 12th graders. I hold counseling sessions…send messages…hold meetings to keep students on track. All students qualify for free breakfast and lunch. I stay prepared by asking other counselors what techniques worked. I support juniors and seniors with my time and energy. I provide counseling, workshops, assessments, and referrals. I put together trips, parent-teacher meetings, and mindfulness groups. Attending IEP meetings is another way I show support.

The participants described their lived experiences with supporting minority adolescents underachieving in school. Each participant provided examples of approaches used to adjust to the everyday demands or changes at the high school. Colbert (2013) indicated that professional school counselors have an influential role; therefore, school counselors contribute to positive changes by seeking solutions to minimize student dropouts and overcome the other adversities of low-SES districts. The participants in this study shared their approaches, creative ideas, and unique methods for meeting students' needs in marginalized high schools. The data from the follow-up questions were further opportunities to identify the interviewees' continuous efforts despite the challenges of Northeastern school districts.

Subtheme D: Positive Outcomes From School Counselors' Actions

All students, regardless of SES, should have the opportunity to attend school and receive an equitable education (West, 2016). Professional school counselors must assist and guide all secondary students throughout their educational journeys. The ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2018a) mandates that school counselors provide equitable services to help young learners achieve academic goals, grow personally and socially, and create college or career aspirations. The interviewees in this study discussed how they applied the ASCA domains to achieve positive student outcomes. For example, the respondents described how urban graduates returned to their high schools and shared their achievements due to the participants' persistent efforts. In Subtheme D, the participants also spoke about how they felt when urban minority students reached their goals.

> FP1: There was a student with special needs who came into ninth grade. Through counseling, I worked on him managing the situation and knowing how to advocate for himself. He was on the spectrum…struggled with change. He experienced classes with a small group of students. I participated in morning meetings with first-year students. Meeting as counselors…we planned activities with small groups and the whole school. Things would be triggers…he would say, "everyone shut up" and other things. I had to get him accustomed to working with fewer peers…3 students. It required patience…I worked with him, the teacher, and parent to develop life skills. He learned to use a metro card and take the train

on his own. He graduated high school. He is in a vocational training program. I was excited to see him succeed and not let his disability stop him. I think of that as one success story.

FP2: We had quite a few students graduate and then come back to become employees at the urban high school. They're everywhere in this building, which is a great way to give back. We had our first college graduate from Virginia State University. She is a motivational speaker mentoring girls. Alumni have given a couple of scholarships. Students graduate with scholarship offers…even those missing credentials. I get them to catch up through the apex program. One male took Spanish classes online in order qualify…became our first advanced Regents graduate. It is inspiring to see seniors utilize options to graduate. He attends a university out of state and majoring in Foreign Language. Some won notable contests through MCU. Staff and I helped students make a video and won a contest. The school was featured on an HBO documentary about seniors and their journeys after high school. Makes me proud of them.

FP3: Last week we had alumni day. It's always great to see and hear them talk about their achievements. Many students came back…our first graduating class. We catch up with our graduates. A few reminisced about spending time in my office to get help with their projects. This special project helped them prepare for higher education. They're seeing success in college and beyond. They write and edit their papers. Alumni recall that experience as important. A graduate

admitted that she could manage adult life. I made sure to educate all students about the real world. Like going on college trips, listening to speakers, and other events. It is good to see students…looking back and seeing it as a positive experience. A young man came in…talking about college and working for an insurance company. He said it was because I encouraged him. It's nice to know he is succeeding after everything.

MP4: I had students come back this week to visit me at the high school. It feels great to see that growth as young adults. Students worked hard to make up credits…in 4 years or a little after. Many urban students did that with help…encouraged credits from the CTE program. Alumni expressed it helped figure the best-fit job in the arts, hospitality, technology, law, and construction. A few are living on their own, going to school, and working. One alumni was pregnant senior year wasn't sure if she could graduate. I reached out to her family to build a support system. She took classes online and in-person. By adjusting her schedule, she got that diploma. I enjoy sharing those stories…students make me proud because they did not give up. That's a great feeling for them and families on graduation day. A huge accomplishment…it's something we love to see.

FP5: My former students tend to email, text, or call me. One of them went to my alma mater. I gave her my number to checked-in…she wasn't doing well academically. She completed her first year…I congratulated her. She told me thank you for believing in me. I don't know her college advisor…she came back

immediately. It was good that she wasn't afraid to ask me for help. We let our pride get ahead of us…stuck in a rut because there's nowhere to go. Proud of her for expressing that and deciding this is what I need to do. She's somebody I would bring to speak to juniors, sophomores, and seniors so they understand college is different. Knowing they allowed me to be a part of their experience is something I value. I see myself crying at graduation…going to miss my seniors terribly. They've done the work, and part of history.

FP6: They're parents now and have great jobs. It's the biggest achievement I can have as a school counselor. They're doing amazing things…chefs in restaurants, lawyers at firms, hygienist in dental offices, teachers in schools, and playing professional rugby. It's impressive to hear them talk about careers and family life. I speak with the first graduating class…even from the last school. Amazing to watch them graduate because people were saying you're not going to graduate. I work hard with families; so, I can see them walk with diplomas. I was lucky to be a part of that…they've had many rejections. My student graduated this year. He got into Kingsborough for nursing…excited for him. Another student took 5 years. He had challenges…got into fights. He finally graduated, which was emotional. I cry at every graduation. A major accomplishment for kids, families, and the school because we want them to be content.

FP7: I love to see the students graduate. And end up going to a good college that they want to go to. A student from 2 years ago went to Yale. She does call me for advice. She is a good writer and public speaker. Another student went to Carnegie Mellon University to study business with a ten-thousand-dollar scholarship. Another student from China went to Georgia Tech got a scholarship. Two students went to Cornell, and some to Lafayette. Every year they give free scholarships. One student goes to Boston University…another to Fordham University. I love to see students graduate and visit me. Students become part of history when they graduate. Our principal graduated from this same high school. My role is valuable to helping students. We want them to get an education…make their parents proud. Graduates verbalized the importance of education. Especially those new to this country.

FP8: It feels amazing to see students thrive. I am happy to share this year; we had a 95% student graduation rate. We had our first official graduate from Virginia State University…a motivational speaker mentoring young girls. One hesitated to participate in the work and earn program as a senior. After multiple meetings, she agreed to the medical program…interned and received a paycheck. She's in her last year of nursing school at SUNY Downstate. Those stories are shared with my urban students. It is great watching students reach their goals with my help. I was the oldest and my aunt helped me in high school. I give back to my students, so they can be successful. An achievement is my ability to build long-

term working relationships. Alumni express this to me, and it is heartwarming.

It's the reason why I work with students who may not have much.

The participants shared their outlooks about learners who had become successful alumni. The participants openly confirmed the challenges that underprivileged learners had to overcome and provided multiple examples. The results of Subtheme D indicate that many students from low-income backgrounds in New York grow into triumphant adults due to the support of their high school counselors. The participants smiled as they shared their former students' accomplishments because they had firsthand experience with the same financial stressors, stigmas, and family circumstances.

In addition, the participants described how some students had met the graduation requirements, participated in internships, and accepted scholarships despite the adversities of low-SES neighborhoods. Furthermore, the respondents happily verified that some alumni had enrolled in higher education, worked as professionals, or become parents. The high school counselors also described how they felt when they witnessed and learned about the alumni's positive outcomes.

Theme 2: Feeling Overwhelmed in Role

The participants also elaborated on their feelings about their role in the urban high school setting. School counseling members are primary sources for guiding and informing young learners throughout their education passage. In this study, the participants discussed their experiences with urban minors, parents, and faculty at Northeastern public schools. Professional school counselors who work in overpopulated

urban districts are more likely to feel stressed and burn out quicker due to tackling in-school adversities (Baker & Moore, 2015; Butler & Constantine, 2005). The high school principal and assistant principal tend to oversee school counselors. Thus, the eight participants in this study described how they felt when providing services to urban minority students under their schools' administrative leadership.

> FP1: I wish there was more people coming to the high school to support school counselors because I am overwhelmed right now. It gets very busy, and that's hard about being a school counselor. There's so much do it…how about the kids and mandated counseling. The principal is asking for things, and I don't want to leave students there. I'm not being treated fairly. I don't think they're being mindful of about what counselors do. A lot of times I feel there's some administrators that kind of shut the door on that a little. Saying stay in your office make sure that our graduation rate is high. Make sure that students are not dropping out and the attendance is good. I think as a parent, I wish that more principals know the value of school counselors and their school. I think that this is a hard one. Oh my god.

> FP2: I'm handling all the urban students' crisis and getting back to the paperwork later. Unfortunately, the paperwork and student trauma increase every year. I want to do everything for everyone. I don't feel effective when I am trying to get everything done at once. I plan my day, and that doesn't always happen in a school. I prioritize because I am aware of student's needs. I put students first and

focus on the paperwork after. It doesn't help that we have a growing number of students with PTSD. I focus on mental health, so students excel academically. Not many people get that and look at mental health as a stigma…like family members. May be due to religious beliefs or parents do not have time. That makes the conversation frustrating when it isn't accepted, and kids don't get what they need. It is a lot…while trying to meet deadlines.

FP3: After all these years, I don't have a handle on anything to do with mandated counseling and anything with special education. Right now, I'm dealing with all the things that students need at our school. I was not given the opportunity to focus on the special ed. population. The other school counselor is in charge of that. The division of work is not helpful in that aspect. I have many urban students with special needs too. I'm the college counselor, I take into consideration those accommodations and when we're choosing the college. I keep those needs in mind…it is so important. So, not knowing much about IEP's makes it stressful. I make sure I didn't miss anything for the transition part since it may hurt the student in the future. That's a big deal. The leaders in our build don't seem mindful of that. So, that has caused tension.

MP4: I don't have enough time to do counseling because I am busy doing a lot of paperwork and programing throughout the year. I still have crazy days… programing is a project. Many larger high schools like us are also busy. I heard there's not many school counselors in urban schools. We fall in that same

category. Administration won't support us despite the paperwork and other duties. I can't do counseling, admin requests, college preparation, and paperwork all the time. We require more counselors, social workers, time to keep up with everything. We don't have a social worker full-time at the school. The social worker comes 1 time a week and that is far from enough. The situation takes its toll…I've been at this high school for many years. I do my best in providing help, but I'm only human. It's a challenge…being drained with all the demands going on.

FP5: I get a lot of paperwork that's unnecessary at the urban high school. I feel overwhelmed, but it's never because of the students. It's because of the adults in the building. Unfortunately, the school counselor receives tasks from administration. We wear different hats, but it's a lot of things getting done until things are done at different times. In the last two weeks of school, I want smooth sailing because the last one wasn't smooth. I have seniors…I wait for word to come down from the district about graduation, requirements, and things rapidly changing. No, we're doing this, and no, we're not doing that. We gotta go back and call everybody again. It becomes overwhelming and stressful. This is usually what happens at the beginning and end of the school year…it's expected chaos. Not the fun part of the job for high school counselors.

FP6: The burnout is real because there's a lot of paperwork even though they said they would reduce it. But it's not reduced by administration. I know

urban students going through a lot need me. I'm in my 40s and I didn't have the

stressors that the kids do. I mean social media…it's true kids cannot escape

what's going on. During remote learning, tell me when I get a break because it

doesn't end. I start at seven thirty or eight in the morning. I'm going to eleven

thirty at night because kids have a question. I was responding and then...I stop at

eleven o'clock at night because it's unprofessional. I had to set boundaries, but

it's hard kids sending messages every day. I can't say, hey, I'm off the clock. If

it's during the day, I'll answer them. It's a combination of things that have me

spread thin.

FP7: I feel burned out and overwhelmed at the high school because of a

large population. I need a week to recuperate and get away from it. When there

are sever issues, they come to school counselors and dump it to us to solve. The

social workers say they need to go to the hospital… inform the parents. Do you

think the social worker informed the parents about the student emergency? No. If

we have one emergency, our entire day is gone. Due to having to talk with the

kids and inform parents that child needs to go to the hospital. Do you think the

APG will inform the parents with suicidal ideation? No, we do, and afterward, we

debrief. Parents are yelling on the phone; how can I get off from work. I calm

parents down…so much at once, and it is tiresome. I look forward to summer

break.

FP8: I feel overwhelmed and burned out because of the roles and responsibilities put on me by administration. I get pressured about graduation rates every year by the admin team. It is not because of the students…they notice it and try to protect me by staying in the office. The duties requested have nothing to do with my role as a school counselor. That takes time away from my students. God, forbid I say no, or I am busy. I feel pressured or guilt-tripped to get the request done. I am often asked to program courses for 12th grade and oversee testing. It should be administration doing that, so I can dedicate time to students. I wear many hats in the urban setting, which can be exhausting. I have so much paperwork and many interruptions, which makes it hard to meet deadlines. Who can focus…it's a pet peeve of mine.

The participants described experiencing significant stressors when trying to meet the urban students' needs while simultaneously completing paperwork and other tasks. The data provided an in-depth look at the participants' feelings about their daily lived experiences in their worksites. The participants' perspectives provided a deeper understanding of high school counselors' current circumstances when striving to help urban minority students while meeting the building administrators' expectations. Whether handling increased student enrollment, tending to everyone's needs, or having time constraints, many of the respondents faced challenges while striving to keep up with their daily demands. Eight participants' responses suggested high school counselors may feel

strained due to increasing student enrollment, mental health services, workloads, graduation pressures, and administrative requests in low-SES neighborhoods.

Subtheme A: Coping With Burnout as School Counselors

A subtheme emerged from the theme of feeling overwhelmed about dealing with pressures in the Northeastern public schools. In Subtheme A, the participants described how they coped with burnout in the high school counselor role. School counseling members employed in low-income districts with large student populations are more likely to experience fatigue and stress quicker than their counterparts in suburban schools (Mullen & Gutierrez, 2016). Burnout in school counselors often results in decreased productivity, increased frustration, and less satisfaction in the field (Butler & Constantine, 2005; Camadan & Kahveci, 2013). The extant literature and the participants' responses showed the strategies used to cope with overwork.

> FP1: I rely on the two school counselors I work with. And I network with other counselors in other urban high schools. Once a month, I come together with about fifteen counselors and social workers from different high schools, and we share best practices. What are some things that we are doing in our school? What changes have there been? How does the meeting begin? Are there any articles or recommendations that you're partnering with very highly? That's the benefit of being part of a network…the principals are on board with getting together to share idea. We offer service to the same kind of students. Let's share best practices, visit our school, feel what's going on, and bring it back to the school. It's a

support system where I express my concerns and share ideas to help our struggling students.

FP2: We finally did get a second counselor this year. It helped to balance out the work responsibilities at the transfer school. They recently started, so that's a great help. There are about 50 mandates…a big part of my responsibilities. Although we don't have a full-time social worker and psychologist, I collaborate and receive assistance when my office becomes hectic. It's nice having another counselor to vent too. I work with some colleagues to focus on students, who need a bit more support. I had to be creative to resolve areas the high school is lacking…staffing and budgets. Developing small groups with black teachers for our senior students. Students have enough distresses who should not have to wait weeks. My technique is preventing delays and increase productivity. That is how I survived working here…as a school counselor.

FP3: When I have a lot on my plate, and a number of students are in need of more help, I refer to the CBO. I rely heavily on community-based organizations…in our school to provide support or resources for students and families. Community-based organizations are usually as strong as their grants and the directors in the schools. I've been lucky the past few years to have a strong partnership to lean on. When I need additional help, I reach out to members in the CBO. They helped with many things, so I am not bombarded with work at the high school. I'm not sure how I could manage everything and the urban students'

needs. This year the students, parents, teachers, and administrators seem to request a lot more. I communicate with the CBO as my back up plan.

MP4: I tend to ask the other school counselors for assistance when I have a lot going on. I take break whenever I can. I learned to separate work from my home life. Not taking paperwork home or checking emails on days off. Earlier in my career…I was doing too much and wasn't as productive when I was working extra hours. Setting boundaries helped me take control of my time. I find those methods to be extremely helpful to maintain balance. I try to plan my week out despite handling different situations. Things are frequently changing in city schools, and plans don't always pan out. I speak with my principal or other school counselors if more help is necessary. I've been at this high school for years…developed friendships with colleagues. That makes it easier to ask for an extra hand when things become too much.

FP5: We have one school counselor that I often rely on and work collaboratively with to help me out. Having at least one reliable colleague to lean on allows me to vent and come up with solutions. I provide mutual help for my colleague. Having that support is important for your sanity. I network with some school counselors when I was in a counseling program. I keep in touch…for questions, updates, or just support. I find comfort in speaking with counselors compare to someone outside our field. I can't agree that staff comprehends what we do. I get asked the ridiculous things…it's frustrating when you expect more

from adults. I am grateful to work with the counselor...collaboration eases my work. It is not good when left alone to carry the burden. I meditate and find a quite space to decompress with stress.

FP6: I will ask for help. I try to make a to-do list. But I like to prioritize what needs to happen first. Most of the time…it goes out the window. I end up going in different ways, but I get things done after hours. If I'm having a struggle, I will ask for assistance…because we work as a team. My 2 colleagues and I work closely together and help each other. My co-workers can tell when I am stressing. It's the way we work cohesively as a department. I'm blessed in that aspect. I also spend time with my husband and children. It's important to enjoy family time. They noticed my long hours at work. My husband reminds me not to think about work on the weekends. My family keeps me grounded despite the concerns going on at the high school. That's how I cope.

FP7: I tend to rest, sing, do puzzles, other hobbies, and use my inner strength from my God. That gives me a lot of rest. I finished my one thousand puzzle pieces. You know how many times I wanted to give up on it? It is a light house. I'm going to put it in my office. I'm going to start another puzzle…the pieces allow me to maintain flexibility and see different perspectives. Knowing that each piece cannot be missing. Otherwise, it would not be perfect. I love gardening…different spices. I also have help from the bilingual counselor in Spanish. She is experienced in the schools…works mainly with bilingual students.

She is my mutual support. There are times she doesn't want to answer me. We can disagree with each other, but still be supportive. In our office, we have six school counselors…glad they include me.

FP8: Over time, I learned to set boundaries and speak up against the nonrelated school counseling tasks. I focus on students because they are the most rewarding part of my job. I often have students in my office so no one can bother me…I tend to teenagers who need my help. They are the reason why I love what I do. I get help from the school counselor and social worker. We have different responsibilities, but still help one another. It decreased that fatigue of trying to do everything for everyone. To deal with the stress, I take breaks and do hobbies. I enjoy reading, cooking, and nature walks. It's a breath of fresh air on Saturdays and Sundays. Everyone needs a break, especially working with high demands, frequent crises, and insufficient resource options. That's why I look forward to vacation days and summer break…it's a rest button.

Overall, participants acknowledged using multiple techniques to maintain a work-life balance despite feeling overwhelmed. The participants sought proactive approaches to coping with burnout because of the high demands of their urban public high schools. Goodman-Scott (2015) postulated that professional school counselors should collaborate with others in their field to reduce the adverse effects of being overworked due to the economic and other factors associated with marginalized districts. The participants' experiences aligned with the need to handle worksite stressors in Northeastern districts.

Despite their notable adverse side effects from work, the participants continued to explore and use multiple strategies to persevere and perform to their best.

Subtheme B: Creating Balance for Underprivileged Students

Along with the data examples in Subtheme A, Subtheme B focused on the participants' efforts to create a balanced setting for urban minority students. The second theme resulted from an emergent pattern in the interviewees' lived experiences of seeking to achieve balance. According to the ACA (2014), successful school counselors create a universal CSCP for all students by applying different strategies and skills to ensure the students' progress. The participants in this study acknowledged their goal to establish balanced environments despite the stressors and socioeconomic-related adversities at work. The eight participants provided insight into how to achieve balance for disadvantaged student populations in Northeastern districts.

> FP1: A lot of them are fleeing violence or situations that are not desirable, but it's important to make them feel safer here at the high school. I create a safe space for students and check-in on them often. I hold weekly meetings...many new immigrants speak little to no English. I encourage them to see me and address any difficulties. The purpose is to establish a safe and supportive environment. I encourage teachers to help students feel comfortable. I'll ask if anyone can check and see what she or he says. If the teacher feels it's beyond their scope, then they refer them to the counselor. I do parent and community outreach…make sure students get what they need. It's through referral…that's the biggest help. The

holidays get busy in the office. Home life may not be ideal for teenagers. I hold a winter break party for them with another counselor.

FP2: What I can do for someone's life, especially for students from urban lower socioeconomic standings. I love them even though that's kind of corny. We nurture our teenagers more than most high schools. There's a lot of black art all over the place. We're feeding them through our food pantry. We have fun things…second grade visits us 4 or 5 times a year. We decorate every season or holiday. It is spring all over the school…seems elementary, but it works. We have our reputation of loving them back into a safe space. I welcome seniors to my office to create resumes and fill out college applications. We went on 11 college trips last year. I'll find a university to connect them. A lot of business trips…show students' careers. We've worked with Applebee's. We're setting up with Amazon, so students who aren't interested in college see work.

FP3: I want students to come to me as needed. Based on whatever the situation is at the time, it might be academics, but sometimes ranges into personal family issues, etc. I make accommodations and connect them to any available resources or supports. We have a lot of students whose parents are ill, incarcerated, or deceased. I offer whatever services they need. Through funding, I offer clothing or supplies…food, metro cards, and outside referrals. Our students lack motivation…I remind them to turn in assignments or projects. At this high school, students don't take regents exams. We have standard grading…students

work on projects or on testing until they've gained mastery. I'm seeing students

waiting last minute to turn in things. I come in to encourage them to get things

done to avoid feeling stressed. I conference with the teacher and student to serve

as a connection.

MP4: I try to help as much as possible. I promote when we're having an

event next month to promote college awareness. I work with the other high school

counselors to make it more appealing for students. At certain times, I know it can

get hectic for us counselors, but we plan and schedule events for students. We

promote when having an event for college awareness…March Madness and

NCAA basketball tournament. We're trying to promote that and have a party. I

think students who attend will sign up for the S.A.T. prep and exams. We're

trying a lot; sadly, I don't even think they watch college basketball anymore. So,

we're trying our best to make it more exciting and enticing…pizza and other

foods. I noticed that not all students like sports. I see those students individually

or in small groups to discuss college awareness.

FP5: I would introduce myself and say hi I'm your counselor. Let me

know whatever you need; I'll check back with you later. Every time they get

acceptance letters, email, or something comes up on their program, we look at it

together. They tell me what do you think? I'm glad they confide in me. Every

time I see a student sitting alone in the hallway, I ask if they are okay and invite

them to my office. The loss of a parent…it's hard to comfort the student when

everybody moved on. That's difficult for students and teachers not knowing what to do. I say give them time and space. They can feel overwhelmed in class and cry. I tell students come straight to my office…let me deal with the teacher. That's a challenge because I can't tell students how long to grieve.

FP6: I told them as long as I am sitting here at this high school, you can always come back and talk to me, and I will help you. If I don't have the answer, I can find out who does. A student that I worked with graduated, took him 5 years. He had issues with the law…lash out at everybody in the building. I say, come sit down relax. We don't need to talk if we don't want you too. I'm take your lead if you don't want to talk. I say why are you doing this? You're going off course. He would say, I'm dropping out. I'm like, no, you're not. He did graduate. My principal was like; he did it because you were fighting for him. That was a huge accomplishment. Sadly, things didn't go good in the direction of his life afterwards.

FP7: Not giving up is something I've been teaching the kids. I never give up on helping students and parents. I sent multiple emails or make phone calls to reach parents, so students get referrals. My office is super busy. They referred a student to me because of issues… problems with attendance. They've been working with this student since the beginning of the year. The referral was given to me in the middle of the year. I met with the student and reached the parents. Talking to them in many meetings, phone calls, referral centers. Even asked the

coordinator of a program to come to school to do the initial screening because student was not able to go. I was the only other adult there…through the screenings and questions. It's a happy ending because I kept trying. That's why my colleagues asked me to take over this case.

FP8: I know low-income students have to do a lot on their own since parents are busy working. I often reach out and meet with them one-on-one. I have an open-door policy so students can see me for anything. They come to my office once they see their friends speaking to me. Students put up this tough persona. Urban students are fearless compared to suburban students. Parents in poor communities treat their kids older and can handle things on their own. I hold counseling, career search, and college advising hours. I often have students in my small office…gets crowded. I tell them I grew up in the suburbs…learning about students in urban settings was new to me. I listen and ask questions. I enjoy working with students in the city; their perspective is different. They are independent and resilient. That does not stop me from giving them what they need.

The findings showed the resilience exhibited by professional school counselors working in urban educational sites. The participants described their techniques to support students' academic, social-emotional, and postsecondary development, regardless of hardships. Tina et al. (2012) suggested that student success results from prepared and strategic professional school counselors who can manage their work in overpopulated,

high-paced, and low-SES communities. Regardless of the daily challenges, the participants considered it essential to prioritize the urban students. Through their determination, the participants inspired the culturally diverse students to persevere.

Theme 3: Reactions About Received Training/Master's Program

Before entering the education system, adults in school counseling programs gain exposure to different graduate courses and training experiences within the field. According to Steele and Rawls (2015), accredited school counseling programs (CACREP) require master's-level students to participate in rigorous courses and internships to prepare and learn about best practices. Furthermore, school counseling professionals continue strengthening their skills and knowledge by attending yearly professional development. Griffen and Hallett (2017) found that professional training enabled school counselors to try new techniques and network with similar professionals to address inequalities in the education setting. The participants in this study described their experiences with their master's programs and professional training. All eight participants provided detailed accounts of their past experiences.

> FP1: I found that training and courses on different races are very limited. You don't learn until you're in it. I believe experience in the field gives so much insight. The professors at the college emphasize the multicultural aspect of counseling. I took classes in counseling psychology and mental health…a few for school counseling. I was not prepared because post-secondary planning and college readiness were not taught. The biggest thing that helped me is the

internship. It taught me about urban students' upbringings…their relationship with their parents. That's something that I'm curious about. When students answer those questions, I find they open a door for me to explore. For my training as a professional, I receive supervision once a month from a retired counselor. But I would like to meet regularly…answer questions handling vicarious trauma or complications with race. I rarely find those workshops.

FP2: I always make myself available to participate in more PD's because our students run a gamut of issues. Wednesday's is PD Day…staff stay after school. I usually end up finishing up my paperwork and notes. School counselors for my district holds monthly meetings. We're always discussing what kids need to graduate, activities, and trauma training. I like the meetings with just the counselors to instill best practices. The school counseling program didn't help prepare me in college because the framework and curriculum. What we did in the classes does not speak to what we do in the field. Where our formal education could get feedback is teaching counselors how to integrate their voice with administration…the value of what we do so it doesn't get ignored. We're referred to as school counselors instead of the old title, guidance counselors. I'm always correcting colleagues.

FP3: I've gone to several training and don't necessarily find it helpful because it's for the suburban and wealthier students. Thinking back to my teacher ed. and counseling programs, I see a distinction on the things we were learning.

Some professors provided real examples in schools where others stuck with the textbook. I can't think of a training that I went to recently where I can use for students. Trainings were about new programs online or classroom management techniques. The PD's failed to talk about issues and solutions for urban students. Training varies depending on who's giving it, their intent, or needs of the school. Professors were vague about the realities in school…some strategies did not work. For internship, my assistant principal was supervising me. He taught us how to program, conduct orientation, fill applications, and hold college fairs. The courses did not teach me how to do these tasks.

MP4: Recently, a lot of the professional developments have been more for data-driven information, instead of discussing the urban students. I remember going to many...it was different back then. Professional developments have been more about data with the computer and college awareness. Now we have this college access for all students. We had many workshops on that…it's for awareness of college at an early age. I support students on the college and career path even if there is a dedicated college counselor. The most important aspect of my school counseling program was the internship and practicum compared to other courses. I recall it was at a large high school. I did above the seven hundred hours per semester…learned a lot. The supervisor taught me how to interact with students. She gave me a caseload…learn to program students. The internship was the most helpful, the psychology classes were good too.

FP5: The PD and counseling courses were nonexistent in preparing to work with the urban population. I came from a counselor's initiative program that provided training for assigned school counselors in high at-risk communities. The amount of professional development outside that program in the last few years does not compare to what I do as a counselor. Nothing I've attended in the last two years met those expectations. To my grad school experience, the school counseling program didn't prepare me to work with urban students. But the multicultural course did help me for the veracity of working with minority students. The program felt segregated…I was the only black person. I was reluctant to ask peers things…my treatment was different. One course I did an amazing project, and she took off points…always found a reason. I learned not to allow her feedback to determine my entire experience in the program.

FP6: I'm not going to sit in a PD and pretend the testing agencies know everything about my minority students. It is taking time from my day. It's aligning with different organizations that are going to give you what you need. The best PD I attended was the college access for all. It is the most awesome experiences because it's uplifting, gives solutions, resources…talks about students in NYC. My students have different struggles…not everybody is the same. I select PD's that relate to my student population. I started my counseling program in 2004. In college, they gave some multiculturalism class that wasn't much of anything. It was teaching you about respect. They needed to discuss more real-life

work scenarios. Until I got into the field, I saw what I was missing. At my transfer high school, we had 3 days of training.

FP7: Ironically, I don't remember everything because at that time it was only 45 credits. I had to have 60 credits to get my license for New York state. I don't remember what I was taught or what I got from any college. I also went to get my bilingual extension. I remember taking 3 to 4 classes…it was a boot camp. I didn't learn anything. At the University, I remember the psychotherapy theories textbook and human sexuality classes. The drug lessons I forgot. Recently, I heard about the comprehensive school counseling program requirement. Only the counselor in the college office has it. We need good professional training to help the urban students and families. I recently liked 4 professional training they offered online. I was surprised by the new online training this year… it is flexible with my schedule. It's hard to get us away from the building.

FP8: Certain PD's can be a little repetitive. Some are great, and some are not. I attended many and learned from some. I did options training through the G.R. program for counselors. Not all training discussed disparities associated with low-income kids. I look for PD's that focus on our students to get resources, tools, or new information. I participated in the college access for all. No one is excluded from this network…I like this one the most. I attended a restorative circles training. It is good, but not realistic unless you have admin support. The internships and practicum allowed me to work with different student populations.

Interned in Brooklyn, where I learned everything…including the DOE system. I

liked interning with students and learning from supervisors. My master's program

was a hurdle...classes were more theory counseling focused. I learned what I

needed in internship…nothing compares to participating in schools.

The findings showed that participants' training and coursework contributed to

how adequate they felt when serving underprivileged high school populations. Most of

the participants' experiences in their master's programs did not adequately prepare them

for being school counselors. A few participants recognized their multicultural courses as

insufficient preparation for the challenges of counseling in low-SES neighborhoods.

Dodson (2013) and Parikh (2013) described multicultural skills as beneficial for school

counselors striving to develop trusting relationships to support diverse learners, overcome

personal issues, and achieve goals despite economic barriers. The participants

emphasized the need for internships and practicum hours to gain exposure to the realities

of working in public schools. However, they felt their professional development did not

address the current concerns impacting less-privileged students.

Theme 4: Need for Additional Training/Educational Changes

The participants also described the need to improve and modify professional

workshops and master's-level coursework based on their experiences as graduate students

and professional stakeholders. School counselors in underprivileged communities, in

particular, require specific knowledge and skills to tackle existing limitations. According

to Gysbers (2013) and Epstein and Van Voorhis (2010), master's programs and

professional training aims to enhance school counselors' skills, share helpful resources, and provide tools to maximize counselors' abilities. This work-related experience could have an academic or personal influence on urban students' success. As passionate advocates, the interviewees in this study emphasized the need for additional training and educational changes.

> FP1: It's important for school counselors to attend more equitable training to support the minority groups. The school counseling programs should have interns experience working with culturally diverse students instead of just predominately white students. That way, they will be fully equipped to work in all types of school settings. I think that the professors and every class…must have the students think about being multicultural complement. I remember having to include it in all my papers, and the same can be applied for counseling students. For me, it wasn't diverse in terms of the students in the college classes. It was mainly White, unfortunately. Hopefully, things have changed since I last attended. Diversity in school counseling programs contributes to everyone's learning experience. The reality for future school counselors in New York is that they will most likely work with a mixed population. I learned that firsthand.

> FP2: I think the solution is to have the PDs to target the low-income demographic of young people. There seems to be constant modification without the proper training, and it makes it hard to keep up. Counselors in overpopulated sites have to be informed of the updates to help seniors and juniors meet

graduation plans. School counseling programs need aligning with the new curriculum in schools. Admins and other staff come across as if we do everything without knowing our part. I don't think that helps…makes things confusing and time-consuming. It requires, a national understanding about what we do or the intention of what we will do. I don't think that's had by school systems...people work differently from building to building. Getting the whole country is going to take more time. The comprehensive school counseling program rolled out recently…a start to establishing a universal understanding with the curriculum.

FP3: For the most part the school counseling program was very abstract. It was a good program, but the specifics of working in culturally diverse districts were missing. I was lucky to be working as a teacher at an urban high school while in the counseling program. For the time, I was in the master's program, I already gained experience in the school. This eased my anxiety and prepared me for the challenges. I did gain most experience during my internship days. I think counseling programs should teach graduates about writing IEPs and discuss the different student populations. You gotta be ready to work in a high paced environment. New professional training is needed because they're always changing the regulations…it's not entirely helpful. I go to a few training-like students in temporary housing. When it's time to implement the training…it doesn't work for students.

MP4: Before technology expanded, the PDs were focused on programs for students. It's important to learn how to approach challenging situations with urban students. PDs focusing on student behavior would help school counselors brush up on their approaches and deescalate situations. A few years ago, I attended a training on restorative practices…learned so much from it. But that was a while ago. It would be nice to see that training offered serval times since our schedules are busy. The internship was beneficial compared to the other courses. The fieldwork at the high school offered me real-life experience. Interns have to gain experience in different sites to figure out where they prefer. The counseling program did not help me find a school stie…I searched on my own. Why not assist and offer options to inexperienced counselors? I was lucky to find one. School counseling programs can offer more internship opportunities.

FP5: Attending counselor-related PDs like the new comprehensive program and the ACSA Model is needed for counselors in grad programs. After grad school, there was no mention of the model in workshops. This September, they're trying to implement the comprehensive counseling program…our department is not. Professionals and graduate students need to keep up with changes. Graduates should be encouraged to try different school settings as I did at the urban school. During my grad program, I was the only one traveling and interning in the city at a public school. I knew that I wanted to work with students of color like myself. It's important in the program to have support. How can you

feel adequate if people make you feel inadequate in the master's program? More supportive and unbiased professors are necessary. It is not always easy; you may hit a few bumps in the program.

FP6: This year I decided to pick only PD's that work for my kids at the high school. There needs to be changes on professional training days. I think you should only go to the training that are important. It isn't always feasible to attend a PD, but the Department of Ed. can reevaluate the school calendar. Offering more training that focus on urban communities to learn what might be happening in different settings. You're going to have kids whose parents are incarcerated…don't know where their next meal is coming. You might feel uncomfortable regarding race in an urban school. Discussions about such topics can teach counselors how to handle the list of challenges. The school counseling program didn't give us enough real-life tangible experiences. And I wanted more. I didn't learn by sitting there reading a textbook. Doing work that's incredibly beneficial for future counselors.

FP7: Yes, the professional training is a must. Has to be a good quality one with relevant topics. I attend workshops that will help urban students. The counselors complain since it doesn't focus on urban youth. Some believe they already know everything. I disagree because things are always changing in education. We need good training…I only liked 4 online because of the pandemic. Not all workshops are relevant for counselors because it is for teachers.

Experienced counselors find training redundant because they already attended. We need quality professional training on graduation requirements. School counseling programs should have online assessments available for graduate students to access. It's a tool used by school counselors to focus on college and career planning. I remember Holland's theory was taught by professor…it was a great class. We're using it in our counseling work…students go online to take it.

FP8: Professional training needs to talk about the different cultures, how to work with them, and the economic deficits transpiring. I like more training to address and decrease the on-going disparities in urban communities. Graduate students must feel prepared as to what to expect. I did not necessarily feel that as a Caucasian woman. These kids are forced to grow up quickly with fewer opportunities. Suburban students don't have the same struggles…it's disheartening to see. Every day I'm learning something new at my high school…using technology programs for counseling and college advising. I would advise professors to discuss the different tools, resources, computer programs, and other systems in place at schools now. A site supervisor with a counseling background is an asset, especially in urban schools. Administrators don't know the role of a counselor…changes could improve our line of work.

The participants' responses produced a common theme about wanting more workshops and educational recommendations. As graduate students and current professionals, the participants provided insight based on their lived experiences,

indicating the need for more changes to better serve learners in urban neighborhoods. Professional training and school counseling programs show counselors-in-training how to enhance their skills or apply strategies to confidently work with young people and their families (ASCA, 2018a; Gysbers, 2013). The participants in this study shared what they thought existing workshops and master's programs lacked. In addition, the participants described the impact of their professional development and school counseling courses on their role in working with urban high school students. The participants' responses indicated they were advocates who continuously sought solutions to enhance their role. Furthermore, the respondents emphasized the need for additional training and educational changes to prepare future school counselors adequately.

Theme 5: Limited Resources/Supports at Urban Settings

School counselors in low-SES districts frequently deal with real-life problems that impact today's young people (Clark & Horton-Parker, 2002; Gamble & Lambros, 2014). The minimal funds for resources or support at urban high schools caused the respondents to feel frustrated and stretched when trying to provide for students' needs. The participants indicated the need for ample, readily available educational resources and professional support staff to assist professional school counselors in helping students achieve their academic expectations.

All eight participants described how their high schools lacked the resources to foster and improve students' academic success, social-emotional development, postsecondary goals, graduation rates, and attendance. The participants also described

their experiences with the resources and support required to promote graduation rates, tackle existing problems, and prepare urban minority students for the future. The theme that emerged from their responses focused on the participants' experiences with resources and support at their urban high schools.

> FP1: The budget is what I always hear. We don't have enough counselors and other support staff to assist the at-risk or mandated students. Maybe that's the same problem other urban schools are having with money. We get many students who are new to the country and cannot speak English. Right now, we do not have a team of school counselors who are bilingual except for me. The majority of students speak Spanish and seek my assistance regularly. They already gone through so much and are slowly learning a new language. We currently have a special ed. teacher who pushes into the class to work with the newcomers. They do not have an IEP…the extra push-in support is not every day. This doesn't fully support immigrant students in learning. This urban high school does not have an after-school program for newcomers.

> FP2: There is no full-time school social worker and psychologist now. I think an outside psychologist and social worker come to the campus twice a week. Students wait to be seen by them as a result. There are a total of six schools in the building who we share the social worker and psychologist with. The challenge is if it can work, knowing that many urban students have PTSD. Additional support staff would be nice to balance out the service provided to our students. Many do

not want to go home after school…we've had kids come confess that my mom died last night, or my brother got shot. I provide that extra comfort once I hear these sad stories. The urban population requires the most help on many levels. Resources and staff ought to be easily accessible to handle the crises going on at urban high schools.

FP3: Ratio wise it seems like the resources and supports we have is still not enough at our high school. We have a substance abuse prevention and intervention specialist (SAPIS) and mental health counselor, but it seems like it's still not sufficient. The supports are limited for our student population, and it becomes hard for me to manage. We have seniors that have parents who are incarcerated or sick. This year I saw an increase of parents who had serious medical issues like cancer. I also have students in temporary housing who need supplies and constant check-ins with attendance. It gets hectic trying to tend to different needs of our urban teenagers. Students seek instant services as supposed to being placed on a waiting list to be seen by someone. So, they end up coming to see me.

MP4: The budget has been cut so much the last couple of years that we lost staff and extra programs. Money is always an issue, and we're only able to offer the bare minimum, which is just tutoring and after school. We have a large population of students from different ethnicities and learning abilities to service. Many have difficult upbringings at home with single or deceased parents. It's

hard to give them everything they need when we are deficient in educational resources, staff, and supplies. School leaders need to reevaluate the school budget to bring back the abundance of programs, organizations, and faculty we once had at school. I miss having that extra support to refer students easily. It is challenging trying to do everything like meetings, counseling, paperwork, and programming. I have to focus on getting our students ready for graduation.

FP5: The high school has a lot of turnaround. When I started, 75 percent of the staff were new to the building. The students were always with a new counselor…this is not good for students or staff. Schools should be consistent year-round. Most of our urban students require emotional support, but we don't have the necessary resources. This is a grey area that takes up most of my time as a school counselor. We have a mix in our urban school community, but not enough counselors of color. Our Black, Hispanic, and Asian students should have someone they can identify with the most. When I migrated to the states, I did not have a school counselor with my background growing up. Many assumptions are made about the black and brown students over the years.

FP6: I am overworked, we only have the social worker and psychologist at the building once a week. It is unfair to school counselors who pick up the slack to resolve some of the student concerns. We have some funding for resources, but urban students could use more because of the economic hardships at home. They are forced to grow up quicker and need someone there to guide them constantly.

Many parents are working and can't find time to help their kids. I wish parents would be somewhat more involved…this is a problem across the country for minority students. As a result, school counselors and teachers are feeling burned out without the full-time staff available. My plans often get thrown out the window with all the demands asked. I would welcome collaboration with faculty and administration to deal with this issue.

FP7: We need more staff at the urban high school because of the large population. When there are issues, everyone comes to the school counselors first. We try our best, but we need more help too. It is not fair when everyone is asking for something. We don't have enough full-time staff to balance all the work. The social worker is not long term...this impacts the counselors and students who require a lot of our attention. I end up having to figure out other options…kids are referred to an outside agency. I feel restricted because of the limited resources offered at our high school. If we had more resources, I would not have to work beyond my hours. If we don't have it on our system, we search for it. If people don't get back to us, we continue reaching out. I don't always get quick results for students.

FP8: We could use more support staff for administrators to distribute different duties instead of always relying on the counselors. We do not have enough school counselors in our department. It has been challenging with no help…I often stay after school to catch up with work. I do not feel people

comprehend what school counselors do regularly. We are used for different tasks at random times…which causes conflict. I think delegating duties, adding resources, and hiring employees or interns could alleviate some stress and time spent trying to give everyone what they need. I'm afraid next year, our resources will be reduced again because of the pandemic impact. I witnessed students having fewer opportunities because resources have dwindled at the high school. Counselors in urban high school's face obstacles because of economic barriers…the pandemic made things worse.

The participants indicated concern about the lack of funding for additional resources and support for overcrowded, low-SES high schools. The participants' responses aligned with the extant literature, which shows that more economically disadvantaged young people need increased social and emotional support (Hutchison, 2011; Wax, 2017). The participants found that economic problems presented barriers to their daily responsibilities. Hence, urban high schools require balanced budgets for running after-school programs and hiring additional school counselors. Other scholars have recognized that overpopulated and underfunded school districts in impoverished areas lack the resources needed to successfully address student concerns, improve student attendance, and prevent dropouts (Colbert, 2013; Cox & Benson, 2017). This study's findings suggest that existing inequalities in urban public schools impact the school counselor role.

Subtheme A: Impact on Role from Restrictions

Along with the inadequate resources and supports, the participants discussed their

lived experiences of managing their role in the confines of the Northeastern high schools.

In low-income communities, students of color face more significant challenges in

receiving equal educational funds than their counterparts in wealthier districts (Cole &

Grothaus, 2014). Economic disparities are barriers to having sufficient school counselors

or support staff to address the needs of large student populations. The participants in this

study noted that the urban minority students depended on the free resources provided by

the schools. In addition, the participants reported that professional school counselors

require extra support and resources to prevent work overloads. In Theme A, the

participants described the impact of insufficient resources and support on their role.

> FP1: It's hard because there's not enough school counselors to address the needs
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> of our urban community. It becomes challenging when the student to counselor
>
> ratio is higher. We have way more new international students enrolling at this
>
> high school now. I wish we had more counselors to help with students and
>
> parents. We have one program, but it doesn't entirely reduce my work. The DLC
>
> program contacts parents who can't come to the building to discuss interventions.
>
> It's inspiring for our students. But on a district level, some things are
>
> disheartening with this program. The sessions tend not to be engaging…not many
>
> students check back with the DLC members. I have to stop my work to follow-up

with them. I don't know if they're being mindful of reaching out to our kids since I have much to do.

FP2: I have to wiggle around in the system to make our program work the best for minority students. If we had enough resources or support staff, I could easily make appropriate recommendations for students. But that is not the case...I cannot provide things quickly as I like to service everyone. Students and teachers come to school counselors first since the social worker and psychologist are part-time. Not having them full-time makes it difficult to get things done without interruptions like student emergencies. I cannot leave them waiting and get them help. I cannot do it all…it is not possible for any school counselor, or you will see burnout fast. I asked my colleagues to develop a mentorship system. We rotate and run smaller groups of students every week. I hope to continue this system with more full-time support staff.

FP3: It's been challenging because of limited resources that's time, people, and money. We only receive funding from students in temporary housing at the moment. Our students always require more because of the high trauma and many students with special education needs. For me, connecting them with the services and support that they need after graduation is challenging. I worry they will be underserviced and not transition well after high school. It's easy to get students into college, but to get them through the college is a long process. At this urban school, the challenges range from short to long term as a school counselor.

We are missing full-time mental health practitioners in the building and a summer

program that could relieve my stress and burnout. I am feeling it this year.

MP4: I get interruptions throughout the day, so it is hard to schedule

meetings with students and make time to complete paperwork or other projects.

The budget limits the students and school counselors. The last couple years our

budget was cut by a lot. I find other solutions to continue encouraging and

engaging urban students despite money issues. Not many school counselors in

urban schools have support from administration. In high school, we have many

deadlines related to the state that require more support from the principal and

assistant principals. The expectations are not realistic with the short timeframe

and downsized budget. No one can do student counseling effectively with what is

lacking in our department. I am left to offer the bare minimum for our students.

Things can change with more programs and visitors like we once had.

FP5: By having to find outside resources from the community takes more

time out of my day. It is frustrating when resources are not in place at the high

school. I end up having to stop my work and do further research. It does not help

that this high school has many employees coming and going. The students feel it,

and so do I. Students come to the person they built a relationship with compared

to new staff. Students are always in my office, even if they are no longer assigned

to me. It is certainly a fire hazard with all the students visiting my office. I remind

them to visit their school counselor so I may focus on my kids. I remember one

student…they're like, you thought you were going to leave? I need to help other

students too.

FP6: Administration tries to push student discipline on the school

counselors instead of taking care of it themselves or assigning it to the deans. This

does conflict with my role and the trust I've built with my high school students.

They are unreasonable, knowing all the things we jungle instead of offering help.

I refuse to jeopardize that with disciplinary tactics…we counselors push back.

We're not going to be involved with the disciplinary process. If the kid starts,

divulging about the admin that this happened, they will get upset. Then,

everything we're supposed to do that day gets left last. They don't ask the school

psychologists because they are here for testing and IEP…that includes the social

worker. Both are assigned to our building 1 time a week. Missing support is an

ongoing problem…I can't dedicate more time to students.

FP7: There are just too many things going with my role and work as a

bilingual counselor. I do not have time to spare when former graduates come to

visit me. That is a big problem on how I can serve everyone most effectively.

Even the computer system for staff is old in the NYCDOE system. All the school

counselors have a problem trying to get work done in time with the slow software

program. I store the student's grades in my personal computer and email

documents to the other guidance counselors…it is a lot easier. The transcript

system is too new, and the technology system is old. The counselors can't easily

access it at work…we need upgrades to do our job quicker. A functioning computer system would resolve delays and taking work home to do on my computer.

FP8: The limited resources and supports have made it more challenging for my role and responsibilities. I do not have time to plan and prepare since it is a busy environment. Our urban students need counseling services all day and sometimes after dismissal. The only time things slowdown is when people leave the school. That's why I end up staying extra to complete paperwork and catch up with phone or email messages. It is crazy, but I met with my school counselor supervisor 1 time this year. I prefer a steady schedule to meet with my supervisor. I am worried about losing our current resources and staff members next year because of the COVID crises. The urban students need it and feel it the most. That will also weigh on my role and other staff at this school.

For Subtheme A, the respondents shared similar experiences about some barriers to their role at the urban high schools. In particular, the participants discussed their concerns about their ability to deliver effective services because of limited resources and support. The lack of resources caused the interviewees to feel overwhelmed and burnout.

The participants commented on the adverse effects of restricted circumstances on the success of adolescents underachieving in school. Aladag (2013) and Colbert (2013) also expressed concerns about the education provided to culturally diverse young people in low-income communities due to inadequate funds, resources, opportunities, and

technology access. These obstacles were barriers to the high school counselors' ability to deliver a productive CSCP. Even so, the participants strove to remain positive and encourage the urban minority students.

Subtheme B: Solution-Focused Approaches Proposed for Low-Income Districts

As advocates for a culturally diverse teenage population, the participants sought solutions to alleviate the burdens faced by the students in their schools. The ACA (2019) indicates that school counselors should explore different avenues and minimize the student achievement gap by building a unified system. The participants in this study described how difficulties have created a strain in their role in urban settings and when facing economic adversities. The patterns extracted from the data produced Subtheme B of a solution-focused approach. The participants shared various ideas for resolving problems, even with the adverse impact of reduced resources and support on their daily responsibilities. The following responses show their resilient efforts to implement change to benefit current and future school counselors working in low-SES districts.

> FP1: I feel like there's so many school counselors in need of support. They should hire more bilingual counselors and social workers to help service the newcomers. Like having people come to school to support school counselors…many parents cannot leave their job or home to attend meetings. Some parents expect counselors to solve the problem without their involvement. I explained to parents that is not how it works. I invite them to discuss an intervention plan for the student…they don't want to hear it. Having more professionals at the high school

to work with the parents would help us out. I am tasked with focusing on many things at once as their counselor. My immigrant and other urban students are a top priority. I do not believe everyone knows the school counselors' role and what we need to work efficiently.

FP2: Well, getting more resources with funding is always helpful. I think school counselors can collaborate with other schools in urban districts. And have assigned full-time social workers and psychologists in high school. It is more than just an academic focus; our students need just as much social and emotional support from counselors regularly. Clinics should be included in the educational buildings so students can have more support to prevent further long-term effects. It would be nice to receive extra assistance and educate staff. I am for proactive approaches to decrease the challenges at this urban high school. I think informed trauma practices should be a universal language and model for teachers, administrators, and anyone else in the care of young people. All need to be ready to address trauma since it is common with our urban students.

FP3: We can seek more funding through grants to hire more employees and fund more programs at the urban high school. We have a community-based organization (CBO), but they need more therapeutic members at the school to address the collective trauma with students every day. Any additional resources are useful, like access vocational rehabilitation, previously as VESID. It seems that is a state-run program that continues to support students with an IEP after

they've graduated with long term job training. This resource allowed me to plan early with students and parents. But they are downsizing…we are losing that educational resource. There's always that tension in the back of my mind to seek other alternatives. If the school cannot fund more programs and add staff, I brainstorm different ideas and talk to the CBO.

MP4: I think we need more school counselors and social workers available to work in these urban high schools. And I do think, we need somebody their full time every day. Even school leaders who were once social workers, psychologists, or school counselors are experienced enough to deal with the student mental health issues. Administrators should be more involved and delegate the tasks equally for school counselors to balance work in overcrowded schools. I think that would be extremely helpful for counselors and students. However, I also firmly believe that many urban elementary and middle schools do need more school counselors. Most of these public schools with younger children only have one school counselor, unlike the high schools in the city.

FP5: Well, some of the supports needed are having more black school counselors to relate to the urban teenagers at the high school. I think our non-black counselors need to learn the difference between certain things. If you are more culturally competent as a school counselor, then you are in a better position to make a proper determination about students and families. I haven't network with other school counselors…that can be applied next year to share ideas. Mental

health services are needed for our students of color. That's because mental health

is overlooked or not valued as much as the student's physical health. I would

advise multiple after-school and weekend programs to promote graduation,

increase attendance, and support mental health. School counselors should not be

the only therapeutic professionals assisting students.

FP6: Again, one hundred percent we need more mental health agencies to

help our students out. I don't know why they keep closing. It would make my job

easier because the kids are having a tough time. So many students go undiagnosed

in the education system. I know there's a lot of mental health counselors out

there...don't know why we don't have more of them at unban high schools. I think

there needs to be more professional support for parents and their kids acting out. I

hear a lot of this with parents not knowing what to do with the behavior problems.

Also, there needs to be ample resources that I can recommend supporting urban

students that are victims of violence or have also been homeless.

FP7: I believe admins need to hire more guidance counselors because of

the increase of urban minority students at our high school. New York state has a

new program that school counselors have to have a comprehensive school-wide

program. The 9th-grade counselor has it, but I don't, and the other guidance

counselors. I am missing important information to carry out plans for our

students. I need to be prepared so my students do not miss any

opportunities…urban schools need that comprehensive program. Another idea is

to add resources and grants to allow counselors to try different options, so students reach their goals. Without resources, technology, or money, guidance counselors are at a loss in changing the stigmas associated with low-income schools. I require different tools and supports to advocate for our struggling students. I refuse to give up.

FP8: I think more centralized supervision and PD allied lessons for school counselors in urban schools. I am not sure where to turn when I need support. It is good to have an experienced expert in our field. It is necessary for school counselors in urban schools to be assigned a site supervisor to prepare, train, or ask questions. I didn't meet my supervisor until COVID-19. It is a great for less experienced counselors. Since working at different urban schools, my time and planning is neglected. Admins need to consider setting a schedule to permit us to keep up with the large caseload and obligations. Another solution is distributing the work or hiring more counselors. High school counselors are bombarded and end up staying later to catch up. My work gets pushed to the side because of interruptions and emergencies.

Overall, the participants' discussed solution-focused approaches to addressing the setbacks that impact their role and duties. Some were former public school students of color, which inspired them to work to help urban minority students succeed. Their passionate efforts drove them to continue seeking solutions to improve their work. The participants also acknowledged the influence of restricted resources and support on the

outcomes of urban minority students. Milsom and McCormick (2016) encouraged professional school counselors to own their roles by analyzing and researching how to help less-privileged populations. The statements in Subtheme B showed the participants' determination to help young people in disadvantaged situations, regardless of ongoing struggles at their urban high schools.

General Narrative

All the participants had similar lived experiences of working in urban public high schools in Northeastern districts. As indicated in their quotes, the participants answered the interview questions by sharing their positive and negative experiences serving a high-needs minority population. Five main themes emerged from the data and showed the school counselors' perspectives about the phenomenon. Furthermore, multiple subthemes emerged from the central themes. All eight participants identified their rewarding experiences with urban minority adolescents, as noted in Theme 1. Most respondents found the students' encounters relatable due to attending public school or as culturally diverse students themselves. However, a few felt misunderstood or less informed about the marginalized population they served daily. Even so, an overwhelming number of the participants shared the common subthemes with responsibilities, challenges, supportive efforts, and positive outcomes in their roles as high school counselors.

In the responsibility subtheme category, only one participant said they oversaw caseloads for at least two grade levels. The participants also had various responses about the adversities they faced. A few mentioned that some individuals in the low-SES

population did not accept mental health support due to stigmas or religious beliefs. Moreover, most respondents acknowledged dealing with inequalities and limited parental involvement in their urban communities. However, two of the eight participants struggled to understand urban minority students and their schools' cultures.

The participants also described their experiences with implementing supportive efforts in this subtheme. All participants sought to assist the urban minority students with different support groups and initiatives, listen, and provide educational supplies. A few invited teachers to student meetings, advocated for the young people, and welcomed guest speakers to their urban high schools.

The participants listed the positive outcomes of working in Northeastern public schools for the final subtheme. Most interviewees had witnessed many high school students graduating and returning to visit the schools as successful alumni. Some former students had received college scholarships and gave back to their community by working at urban high schools. One participant described watching a student's progress with special needs, while another recognized the high school graduates who were adult parents.

For the second theme, the participants elaborated on how they felt overwhelmed by their experiences at their low-income educational facilities. The participants described struggling to keep up with their role as high school counselors. All respondents felt overwhelmed due to a lack of adequate employees at their urban schools, such as other school counselors, psychologists, and social workers. Many participants only had part-

time support staff members and struggled with the paperwork, programming, and large caseloads. More than half of the participants admitted setting their school counseling work to the side to address later. Others reported taking their work home when they ran out of time at school. As noted in the subtheme, most participants experienced burnout and frustration because of a lack of support in providing services to the growing student populations at the urban schools. Some respondents felt overworked by the administrators and handling the high volume of student crises by themselves.

The interview responses in Theme 2 resulted in two subthemes. All the participants described how they strove to cope with burnout and achieve balance for the urban minority students. Some relied on colleague counselors or the CBO when they felt overwhelmed with work. The rest reported taking breaks, creating to-do lists, engaging in hobbies, or practicing self-care. The participants also strove to develop a balanced environment for the adolescents from low-SES environments.

All the participants described their efforts to create safe, welcoming, and caring environments. Half the interviewees reported doing check-ins and inviting their urban minority students to various events at the high schools. One participant described her approach as transparent as she sought to teach students not to give up through her actions.

In the third theme, the participants reported mixed reactions to their master's programs and professional training. Some noted the limited diversity and ambiguous lessons on addressing urban communities in their master's program courses. As a result, a few participants felt unprepared for the realities of less-privileged districts. One

participant described taking a multicultural course that focused only on respect. However, the consensus was that the participants found internships and hands-on experiences helpful in preparing for the school counselor role in their practicums.

The participants also discussed their professional development experiences. Although they were all NYCDOE school counseling professionals, they had attended different professional training over the years. Many participants found the training opportunities inadequate for various reasons. In addition, some participants found their professional development experiences irrelevant and rarely focused on students in marginalized schools. A few participants found the professional development more data- and suburban-driven. Also, most acknowledged the repetitiveness of their professional development presentations.

Thus, the participants sought specific training focused on their student populations. One participant opted to participate in virtual training due to COVID-19 restrictions, which enabled her to select sessions related to students from underprivileged communities. Overall, the participants described the professional development with the college access for all as essential training for high school counselors.

The participants also gave similar responses about their training experiences and indicated the need for additional training and educational changes. In Theme 4, all the interviewees emphasized the need to modify existing training to improve future school counselors' college programs and professional fields. Most participants sought additional

counseling courses, real-life experiences, and up-to-date lessons on developing an effective CSCP.

Many participants said their professors did not introduce them to low-income neighborhoods' different cultures and disparities. For example, some learned that their school counseling programs did not align with the curricula in underserved school communities. Other participants noted that future school counselors need exposure to the ASCA National Model and CSCP before entering the education system. In addition, two of the eight participants mentioned the necessity to access modern technology and use online programs. Also, some participants noted the need for graduate students to learn how to use online assessments and other software programs in their courses. The participants reported using various computer programs to assess, guide, and monitor the students from low-SES populations.

All eight interviewees also deemed it essential to modify future professional training for high school counselors. Many participants wanted to see more professional development presentations on the urban minority adolescents they served. Based on their past experiences, the participants found the training redundant or adequately for properly supporting the urban adolescent population.

All the participants acknowledged the economic impact and the hardships faced by the students with whom they worked daily. One participant indicated the need for upgrades because of frequent regulation changes. Another participant recognized that the trainings offered now focus on online programs, which took precedence over topics

related to disadvantaged students. Most of the participants said they would like to attend professional development tailored to the school counselor role and the student demographics of Northeastern districts. One participant admitted not having the preparation or information needed to develop a CSCP for the department.

Many recipients suggested providing up-to-date professional development instead of the same training every year. A few participants described the existing professional development as more data-driven than student-friendly. Multiple participants identified professional development about "college access for all" as the latest and most relevant training for all school counselors. Thus, all the participants advocated for up-to-date and urban-centered training for school counselors to address the achievement gap in low-SES communities.

Next, in Theme 5, the eight participants described feeling restricted by limited educational resources and support staff at their urban schools. All the participants experienced limitations due to tight school budgets in low-SES communities. Most participants worked with a few school counselors, part-time psychologists, and social workers. Because their schools had low funds, hiring additional full-time staff at the overpopulated high schools was challenging. A few participants noted the increasing severity of budget cuts over the years, which had resulted in downsized faculty and programs. One participant witnessed a significant turnaround with faculty leaving her high school, and another noted the need for additional staff to keep up with growing caseloads.

Multiple participants voiced the need for more support to help urban minority students due to increasing student enrollment and staff deficits. Over half would have liked their administrators to hire additional staff to distribute workloads more equitably. The participants also emphasized the need to increase funds at the urban high schools to provide extra resources for low-SES populations.

Five of the eight school counselors described the struggle of trying to help students in disadvantaged situations without sufficient educational resources. Collectively, the participants said they required increased access to resources and after-school programs to which they could quickly refer students. A participant noted that research and outreach were more extended processes without readily accessible resources within the school building. The participants reported having minimal educational resources that were insufficient for meeting students' needs. Overall, all the interviewees expressed feeling the burden of working around limited resources and support.

Last, for the follow-up questions in Theme 5, the participants' responses resulted in common subthemes about the impact of insufficient resources on their role and solution-focused approaches. All participants encouraged hiring more school counselors in low-SES districts due to the pressures of their work duties. Most noted they found it challenging to keep up with the obligations of their jobs due to financial confines and other related factors. In addition, most interviewees noted that the restrictions placed upon them resulted in compromising positions and additional tasks. Five of the eight participants received many tasks from their administrators that did not align with their

school counseling role. One participant firmly refused when the principal asked her to take on student discipline instead of the administrators or deans. In addition, some participants said their leaders' requests caused a strain on some of their student relationships. Some also described experiencing constant interruptions, which adversely affected their ability to give students the attention they needed. All participants reported not having enough time to get things done daily because the other school staff continuously relied on them to handle more tasks with fewer employees.

Despite their burdens, all the interviewees applied solution-focused approaches to resolving problems at their schools. Most participants indicated the need for increased funding to hire more full-time school counselors in low-SES districts. Two of the eight participants advised hiring more Black and bilingual school counselors to better service urban minority students. Another participant proposed that school counselors in nearby schools collaborate because they lacked enough colleagues at their high schools. A few interviewees suggested obtaining additional funds through grants to hire more staff and provide educational programs. One participant suggested changing the monthly professional development days at the high school to get more work done or only attending training related to the school counselor role. Half of the participants indicated the need to assign skilled school counseling supervisors. Some participants had supervisors without school counseling titles or lacked supervisors altogether. None of the interviewees opposed trying different ideas to serve adolescents from low-income backgrounds better.

The participants who engaged with urban learners in Northeastern communities revealed several experiences while in the present moment of the horizon. As a result, the participants described the rewards of serving adolescents in low-SES schools, overwhelming feelings, reactions to training, requests for more training, and the need for increased resources and support. Although the participants identified some triumphant outcomes, most had encountered multiple hardships while working in marginalized districts. Therefore, the participants remained on one horizon of the negative experiences as their needs remained unmet. Many interviewees had a lot to say about the setbacks of working in low-SES educational settings. However, the interviewees could not see past their current situatedness in fixating on the limitations.

The participants shared how frustrating and unfair they felt their situation was when working without the supports or tools needed to serve the students from disadvantaged communities. Some participants described their circumstances as "hard" or "challenging." Their past work involvements also resulted in less job satisfaction at their urban high schools, which may have contributed to them remaining stuck in the horizon. Nonetheless, the participants strove to remain resilient and persevered to help the adolescents at underprivileged high schools succeed through intentionality.

General Description

The school counselor role consists of monitoring and supporting young people in the education system. As advocates for urban minority students, school counselors must prioritize their students' needs, regardless of school circumstances. Many school

counselors in low-income communities work with large groups of diverse students and newly arrived immigrants. As a result, many students from underprivileged backgrounds rely heavily on their school counselors for daily guidance in navigating school. School counselors focus on providing learners from disadvantaged backgrounds with accessible programs and extra support at school. Currently, schools in marginalized neighborhoods have more restrictions than those in wealthier areas. Due to economics and other constraints, school counselors continue to face challenging dilemmas that can impact the success of the urban minority population.

Despite the barriers of less-funded public schools, school counselors in low-SES high schools can apply different approaches to establish a sense of normalcy for students. Public school students spend 9 months of the year in school settings, which results in less time spent at home. Thus, school counselors should strive to develop nurturing and safe student environments with open-door policies and extra support. School counselors can also use the CSCP to enhance academic achievement, provide mental health support, and present new opportunities for all students. High school counselors can use the CSCP to monitor learners' needs, create graduation goals, and implement interventions. Statewide, school counselors must follow and use the CSCP to create plans to promote student success. Thus, school counselors who proactively strive to help marginalized populations could contribute to closing the achievement gap and establishing equality.

Along with comprehending and addressing hardships in urban school districts, school counselors depend on their prior experiences in graduate school and training to

provide services. The participants in this study felt ill-equipped to address urban minority students' realities compared to students in more affluent schools. The master's-level participants acknowledged the lack of relevant training they had received; as a result they lacked knowledge of what to expect while working with students in underprivileged schools. Based on their past experiences, the participants emphasized the need to add more school counseling courses so future counselors could confidently address ethical concerns.

Modifying CACREP standards could be a way to rebuild master's programs and better prepare future school counselors to work in urban areas. In addition, new professional development opportunities could be a means of better training school counselors on providing services to students from underserved populations. The school counselors in this study described past training as repetitive or irrelevant for addressing the needs of minority adolescents underachieving in school. Therefore, reevaluating graduate and professional training could be an effective strategy for training those entering or currently working in the school counseling field on how to work with students in low-SES schools.

Overall, the participants in this study described working with urban minority students and the highs and lows of working in low-SES districts. Although limited, prior research has presented school counselors' perspectives and solutions to foster positive changes in their work environments and solve problems for minority learners in less-privileged communities. Gaining additional information from school counselors' points

of view could help future and current school counselors apply different skills or tools to

intervene and possibly revamp the training offered. Many school counselors seek ways to

enhance their knowledge and master new techniques to help students from marginalized

populations overcome adversities. The school counselors in this study understood how

their preparation at the graduate and professional levels influenced the outcomes of

learners from disadvantaged communities. Therefore, the results suggest the need to

explore the school counseling population further to learn about the true essence of the

phenomenon.

The participants in this study provided a deeper understanding of the phenomenon

by reflecting on their experiences working in underserved school communities. The

participants described engaging with urban minority students or faculty and the ups and

downs of working in urban schools. However, the participants focused more on the

adverse outcomes while on the horizon because of hardships associated with low-SES

districts. The participants described the challenges of meeting their leaders' expectations

with scarce resources and staff. Despite the situation, they strove to find the best possible

solutions for helping urban adolescents.

The principal and assistant principals set requirements based on the needs of their

student populations. However, this study's participants did not understand their

supervisors' rationale, as the demands led to pressure and frustration. Within the horizon,

the participants focused on their supervisors' assignments and felt burned out as a result.

Many participants said their leaders asked them to perform duties outside their role,

resulting in conflict and frustration. Therefore, the participants could not bracket everything while elaborating on the phenomenon of their experiences. However, despite feeling overworked, the participants sought to carry out their assigned tasks and work with students in low-SES schools.

Furthermore, the participants in this study recognized that the goal of the CSCP is to build a solid guidance curriculum for students, regardless of economic status. Thus, the participants sought to use the CSCP to develop fair and encouraging school cultures to promote academic, social-emotional, and postsecondary success. However, although the participants grasped the importance of the CSCP during the horizon, they did not address if school counselors need training to ensure effective CSCP delivery to support students in disadvantaged schools. None of the school counselors in this study discussed workshops for learning more about the nationwide CSCP. Thus, the participants stood in the horizon while intentionally confirming and adhering to the ASCA mandate to utilize the CSCP. Due to the situatedness in their obligation to develop and execute a new CSCP for urban minority students, the participants did not stop to consider if professional development was a necessity. Thus, the findings suggest that further clarification in attending CSCP workshops could contribute to preparing and teaching new methods to all school counselors. Overall, the participants used the CSCP yearly to address the challenges faced by the students from marginalized backgrounds in urban public schools.

Summary

The transcendental qualitative methodology presented in Chapter 4 was the approach used to identify the findings from the pure data. The eight participants shared their experiences and shed light on the phenomenon under study. This chapter presented the step-by-step approach utilized for the data collection and analysis. The descriptive patterns from the sample's transcripts showed the pure essence of the participants' lived experiences with urban minority students. The participants reported feeling overwhelmed, shared their reactions to their training and master's programs, indicated the need for additional training and educational changes, and discussed the limited resources and support in urban high schools (see Appendix D).

The emergent themes confirmed the gap in research, as indicated by previous studies on marginalized learning communities (Cooper & Liou, 2007; Goodman-Scott, 2015; Savitz-Romer, 2012). The participants in this study described the parallels between socioeconomic constraints and other factors in Northeastern public high schools and the impact on their role and responsibilities. The participants also suggested achieving social justice for urban minority learners and preparing school counselors for work in low-income districts. In a continuation of the data analysis, Chapter 5 presents an interpretation of the study's outcomes, the limitations, recommendations for future research, implications for social change, and conclusions.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to explore and understand high school counselors' perceptions of their experiences working with urban minority adolescents in Northeastern school districts. According to an NYCDOE (2020) data report, there are 72.8% of students classified as low-income based on their eligibility to receive free lunches. In addition, the U.S. Education census report has indicated rising dropout rates among Black and Latino students in public high schools (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016b). Thus, a need exists to hear from the school counselors who rely on their daily expertise and skills while working closely with adolescent students amid economic constraints and other related factors (White & Kelly, 2010). The five interview questions and subquestions in this study focused on school counselors' involvement with and lived experiences of learners at low-SES schools and urban public high schools. The open-ended interview questions were the means used to extract rich data from the participants from this transcendental qualitative study.

The collected data showed the interviewees' awareness of positive ideas or solutions for addressing the challenges in urban neighborhoods. Similar to previous studies (Aladag, 2013; Colbert, 2013; Hutchison, 2011; Savitz-Romer, 2012; White & Kelly, 2010; Young & Kaffenberger, 2011), this qualitative study produced multiple key themes. Five themes and subthemes emerged in the thorough analysis, as shown in the meaning units and descriptive statements (see Appendix D), indicating that a research

gap remains. The primary themes and subthemes showed some of the positive and negative experiences of working with learners in urban high schools. The emergent themes also presented the rewarding experiences of working with students in low-income schools, feelings of being overwhelmed, professional development and master's programs, the need for additional training opportunities and changes in school counseling programs, and limited resources and supports. These findings aligned with the literature in Chapter 2. The interviewees helped illuminate the experience of working as a high school counselor in an urban community.

The ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2018a) indicates that professional school counselors must focus on all students' academic achievements, personal-social progress, and postsecondary goals, regardless of SES status. However, little research has addressed high school counselors' lived experiences of servicing adolescents in urban schools. In this study, the participants reported that adequately serving the growing population of urban minority teenagers and effecting change in Northeastern neighborhoods require increased support, funding, preparation, and opportunities.

The transcendental phenomenological design was the approach used in this study to comprehend the phenomenon, grasp the participants' experiences, and provide meaning to their shared experiences. School counselors, graduate students, and counseling educators could use the study's findings to help minority learners. A goal of this study was to inspire those in the school counseling field and provide up-to-date research. A need remains for further exploration of the existing inequalities contributing

to declining graduation rates, poor student aspirations, restricted postsecondary opportunities, and limited accessible resources (Savitz-Romer, 2012; White & Kelly, 2010). The interpretation of the key findings from the eight participants in this study indicates what school counselors face and the need to improve the profession to provide better services to low-SES populations.

Interpretation of Findings

This study had unique findings because it focused on high school counselors' perspectives; previous scholars have studied elementary- and secondary-level school counseling staff in low-income public schools. The limited research on high school counselors in urban schools indicated the need to explore the phenomenon of NYCDOE high school counselors serving urban minority students in Northeastern areas. Husserl's transcendental phenomenological framework was the strategy used to gain firsthand knowledge of human experiences from the participants' points of view. This section presents the participants' detailed responses, a comparison with the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, and identifies the interviewees' different horizons through a Husserlian lens.

Demographics

The participants had direct involvement with the urban minority adolescents in low-SES neighborhoods. In this study, the participants elaborated on their school's student demographics and rewarding experiences. They reported working with Asian, Central American, Black, Middle Eastern, European, and Caucasian students at the high schools. However, most participants emphasized that Blacks and Hispanics were the

predominant student populations at their schools. FP2 said, "98% of the student population is Black." This finding was in line with previous studies. In addition, the literature aligned with the finding that the participants found it more common for Latino and Black learners to enroll in public schools in poverty-stricken communities (Hussar & Bailey, 2011; Plata et al., 2017). These findings suggest professional school counselors are the stakeholders at the forefront of helping urban students transition to new schools. Most immigrant teenagers know little to no English or live with relatives temporarily; several participants acknowledged this as a challenge and a growing trend in impoverished neighborhoods throughout New York City. Most of the participants reported learning about urban populations through experiences in the field. According to Tucker et al. (2010), Black students attending low-SES schools may feel culturally detached when not fully supported by a school counselor. Therefore, the literature and this study's findings suggest that school counselors working with culturally diverse populations must seek guidance to help students navigate high school and prepare for the future.

The findings showed a descriptive trend about student demographics; however, I also noticed the participants' horizons as they explained their experiences with the urban minority student population. Many professional school counselors worked at different urban high schools, and reported certain ethnic groups as more prominent than others. The different horizons showed that some participants had more urban minority students at their school sites than others. This finding could have resulted due to the size of the high

school buildings or the locations of the schools in neighborhoods where Latino and Black families predominantly reside. Only one participant suggested a reason why specific ethnicities had higher populations within certain Northeastern neighborhoods. A possibility for this finding is that, while in the horizon, most interviewees might have disregarded the frequent enrollment types for the urban minority population because there were several. As a transcendental phenomenological researcher, I noticed the demographics of the urban high school students because the school counselors reported experiencing a higher demand for services.

Rewards

The goal of the study was to explore school counselors' encounters with adolescents underserved in schools. Therefore, this study also produced knowledge of the participants' rewarding experiences in the school counselor role due to their actions. The participants proudly shared their lived stories of learning about the students' diverse cultural backgrounds and communicating and collaborating with the disadvantaged minority students' parents or guardians. Most participants enjoyed working with marginalized populations and reported opening up to and learning more about the various ethnicities of their students at their urban schools. Some participants identified their experiences with minority populations as "connecting" or "enlightening." I found it humbling to hear FP6 say, "I tell the urban students that I wasn't aware of that in your culture."

A few participants admitted to relating more to underprivileged learners because they had similar backgrounds as public school students. This finding suggests that school counselors with backgrounds similar to their students can communicate better with disadvantaged student populations. Cole and Grothaus (2014) found that school counselors with different ethnic backgrounds considered it easier to approach the low-SES minority population and support students' families during tough times. This study's findings aligned with the literature, as the two participants with nondiverse upbringing, found it more challenging to relate to or were misinterpreted by the urban adolescents in their schools. FP7 acknowledged her nondiverse upbringing as a setback but said, "I think I need [to make it] a point to do more research about the different cultures." Similarly, FP8 "learned to listen more and be open to learning about [students'] cultures and beliefs." Whether they felt misunderstood or connected to the students in less-privileged settings, all the participants did their best to help the urban minority learners feel comfortable and thrive.

The participants in this study credited their rewarding experiences with urban students to their "welcoming" and "nurturing" approaches, regardless of the students' cultures. The participants described how underprivileged learners frequently visited their offices and refused to leave to go home. One participant said, "We have created a safe environment where it feels like home." These findings align with the 2014 ACA Code of Ethics, which requires school counselors to engage with their clients, establish trust, and promote diversity with different techniques. The participants' responses showed that all

of them, even those who felt disconnected from the students, strove to establish safe and trusting relationships with the students at low-SES schools.

However, the study's findings suggest the need for all school counselors to enhance and expand their knowledge about urban student populations. Multicultural competency can have an impact on school counselors and urban minority students. Culturally competent school counselors may feel less apprehensive about addressing social injustices, mental health stigmas, and racial assumptions. Parikh (2013) and Holcomb-McCoy (2001) indicated that school counselors' awareness of multicultural competency could influence and contribute to student success. The findings of this study suggest that school counselors with multicultural awareness may feel more prepared to work with marginalized student populations. In addition, rewarding experiences could enable school counselors who become multiculturally skilled to serve more ethnically diverse students in low-income areas. However, although the high school counselors delivered rich information about their rewarding experiences, I could not realize everything described while in the moment of listening to each reported story.

Achievements

Hard work and consistency were prominent factors among the participants. The participants described their different strategies for achieving positive outcomes for their urban minority students. In the horizon, all the participants recognized the triumphs that had resulted from their relentless efforts to support low-SES student populations. During the interviews, the participants frequently used the words "encourage," "support,"

"ensure," and "try" to describe how they had achieved success with some of the students from disadvantaged communities. As indicated in the literature review in Chapter 2, the ASCA National Model suggests that school counselors focus on each student's academic, social-emotional, and postsecondary goals to promote growth (ASCA, 2018a). All eight participants in this study happily described how some of their urban minority students had graduated, received scholarships, completed paid internships, found employment, attended Ivy League universities, became parents, and overcome issues with the law. In addition, the participants shared accounts of students from low-income backgrounds becoming lawyers, doctors, nurses, educators, hygienists, motivational speakers, principals, and chefs. Thanks to their efforts, the participants felt "proud" or "excited" that their alumni had matured and progressed in the real world as adults. The findings showed how the participants contributed to the needs of underprivileged students by listening and creating plans based on their individualized needs. The situatedness of the professional school counselors resulted in positive outcomes for many students at the low-SES schools. These findings contributed to the minimal research in the peer-reviewed literature (Hannon, 2016; Holcomb-McCoy & Mitchell, 2005; Parikh, 2013).

Although I gained a deeper understanding of the students' achievements, I was also surprised during my situatedness to learn that the participants had so many success stories with underserved adolescents. This finding was unexpected due to the increasing numbers of struggling, underprivileged youth in Northeastern communities who do not overcome adversities. Impoverished districts tend to have lower graduation rates than

wealthier ones (Colbert, 2013; Morgan et al., 2015). Students from marginalized populations face various obstacles and require additional support and resources to succeed with their school counselors' assistance. Previous studies have shown that ongoing inequalities, limited resources, and economic confines have resulted in low aspirations for many urban minority students (Aladag, 2013; Colbert, 2013; Hutchison, 2011; Savitz-Romer, 2012; White & Kelly, 2010; Young & Kaffenberger, 2011). As a result, many school counselors struggle to help learners in disadvantaged communities meet academic expectations and fulfill their postsecondary goals.

During the horizon, one participant mentioned an overage student who wanted to drop out of school due to his frequent fights. Another interviewee shared how an urban student who had issues with the law graduated on time but did not leave street life after high school. The findings showed how the participants extended their guidance to help the adolescents in low-income communities. However, the results suggested that it is up to the students to decide their futures.

In addition to the surprising finding that many of the students overcame obstacles, the participants reported persevering to help the students from low-SES schools graduate. The participants worked with urban minority students so they could succeed despite the existing deficits. Overall, past research and this study contributed to the knowledge of difficulties that school counselors experience with the phenomenon.

Challenges

The participating school counselors described their interactions with underprivileged student populations and their daily challenges at their high schools. During my situatedness in hearing from the participants, I understood they encountered different adversities while working in less-privileged communities. The findings suggest that the interviewees experienced obstacles in urban public schools for similar reasons, such as surges in traumas, mental health stigma, limited parental involvement, behavioral concerns, scarce resources, achievement gaps, and other complications. Many participants expressed frustration while describing the challenges of serving students and their parents in low-SES high schools. Many had received pushback from some parents when trying to collaborate with them for student interventions. Therefore, the participants wanted to see more parental involvement to improve the achievement gap for students in underprivileged schools. This finding aligned with Cole et al. (2015) and Wax (2017).

The findings of this study connected with the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. Molina et al. (2016) indicated that disadvantaged students with economic constraints tend to have consistent behavior problems, socioeconomic confines, poor academic standings, and declining dropout rates. However, not all school counseling members have the awareness needed to address multiple challenges and change societal norms in school districts with culturally diverse students (Cole & Grothaus, 2014). Similarly, in the horizon, some participants acknowledged they did not learn about the adversities faced by students from marginalized populations until they began working at their urban high

schools. In addition, only a few participants knew about urban student populations due to internship experiences. This finding presents concerns, as more than half of the participants reported feeling uninformed and ill-equipped to address the ordeals faced by urban minority learners in Northeastern areas. The findings suggest that the participants learned about the setbacks faced by urban students only upon entering their roles. Therefore, this study's results indicate the importance of educating and preparing school counselors to work in impoverished school settings.

In my situatedness with the interviewees, the findings suggest that counselor educators must prepare future school counselors before entering the field. Many of the participants in this study expressed struggling with "large caseloads" of urban minority students with absenteeism, immaturity, temporary housing, economic hardships, decreasing graduation rates, and inequalities. Most participating school counselors struggled to overturn these setbacks and help the students succeed in low-SES high schools. The participants' experiences caused them to feel inadequate to address the hardships in Northeastern schools. While in the moment of their self-told stories, the participants indicated making several attempts to offer parents and urban learners help, but that some had rejected their offers. FP8 said, "The approach of meeting them halfway over the phone sometimes is not reciprocated." This finding could have resulted from the participants' cultural disconnect or lack of trust.

Although there was no guarantee I could bracket everything in the horizon, I later thought about other methods school counselors could use to connect with struggling

urban student populations. For instance, how can counselor educators better prepare future and current school counselors by teaching them techniques to resolve the adversities found in this study and past research on poverty-stricken districts? Based on this idea, future researchers could evaluate how counselor educators teach school counselors different approaches to working in low-SES communities. The findings of this study suggest that school counselors face many difficulties in dealing with all the challenges associated with the economic confines of underserved students. School counselors serving disadvantaged student populations will continue to experience frustration if they do not address these challenges early in their careers.

Overwhelmed

The participants said that in addition to facing several challenges at their urban schools, they also experienced yearly stressors. All participants reported feeling overwhelmed working at low-income public schools due to different assignments and large caseloads. Further exploration showed that the participants had to handle numerous responsibilities at once while striving to ensure that the urban minority students met the expectations of the 2018a ASCA National Model. During the horizon, all the participants described their lived experiences in their role as "tiresome," draining," or "taking a toll."

Several participants mentioned feeling pressured to take on many simultaneous obligations without having time to spare in the school day. Half of the participants admitted to finishing their work after school or at home to keep up with their work demands. The findings showed that the participants lacked time management because

they had to work outside their contractual hours. Therefore, the study's results suggest that high school counselors' leaders should reevaluate counselors' workloads and hire additional counselors or other mental health experts. A concerning finding was that the interviewees had to quickly and simultaneously comply with multiple requests while dealing with student crises. As a result of their current predicament, I understood why these volunteers felt overwhelmed.

The participants may not have provided all of the details while describing their experiences due to their stressed status. The stressful circumstances could have also caused them to make rushed mistakes or forget something important. For example, one participant said, "I do not feel as effective when I am trying to do everything at once." This finding suggests that the administrative team at the participants' urban high schools may have lacked awareness of the toll of their requests on the burned-out school counselors. The participants sought to prioritize their urban minority students' needs; therefore, I was not shocked to hear during my horizon how the participants had to seek alternatives themselves to alleviate the burdens placed on them. The school counseling members' perspectives aligned with the previous research, which has indicated that administrators may set unreasonable expectations and have little collaboration with school counselors (Camadan & Kahveci, 2013; Wilkerson, 2010). In this study, MP4 reiterated that he often felt overwhelmed because the "administration won't support us consistently despite all of the paperwork and other duties."

Furthermore, in my situatedness during the participants' testimonies, I learned that the participants had to juggle additional duties outside of their roles due to insufficient staff at their schools. Their supervisors' demands often caused the participants to feel flustered or guilty about fulfilling the dual-role requests. For example, FP8 said, "I feel pressured or guilt-tripped to get the admin request done." All eight participants reported that their administrators determined the workloads of their departments, which did not have enough school counselors. Therefore, the findings suggest that unrelated counseling requests in underserved communities could increase high school counselors' burnout throughout the school year.

This study aligned with the literature, as the participants experienced burnout earlier in the school year compared to the last day of school (Mullen & Gutierrez, 2016). Chapter 2 presented some work environment stressors that can quickly cause school counselors to experience burnout in marginalized communities (Camadan & Kahveci, 2013). The data from this study aligned with the research showing that school counselors who serve high-needs populations and have substantial caseloads experience burnout earlier in the school year rather than later (Butler & Constatine, 2005).

This study's data and the extant literature showed the growing trend of professional school counselors exhibiting early and rapid burnout due to feeling overwhelmed with extra, unrelated assignments while serving urban minority students. The participants' lived experiences indicate that other or future school counselors employed in urban districts may feel fatigued and unsatisfied in their roles. The minimal

research has shown that school counseling professionals in low-SES schools regularly feel unhappy and exhausted at work because of constant, multiple requests and expectations unrelated to their job title (Camadan & Kahveci, 2013; Karatas & Kaya, 2015; Pérusse et al., 2017).

Training

The participants described their school counseling training encounters as graduate students and professionals in this study. They reported attending different workshops, courses, and internships, but their reactions to those experiences helped me understand the meaning behind the collected data. School counselors should strive to increase their knowledge and skills annually by remaining actively aware of the changes in modern society (Baker & Moore, 2015). All the participants noted participating in professional development opportunities throughout their educational careers. However, a surprising finding was that many participants confessed to no longer attending most workshops due to topics irrelevant to urban minority students' adversities in Northeastern regions. Most of the respondents referred to professional training as "limited," "repetitive," or "disconnected" from the harsh realities facing underprivileged student populations. In addition, MP4 said, "Recently, a lot of professional development has been more about student data with the computer." This participant's response indicates a shift in the topics presented to school counselors since the evolution of technology. This finding suggests that student data and new online programs could be ways to educate school counselors.

While in the horizon, I became mindful of how disenchanted the participants had become with the training received. The findings of this study aligned with the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, showing that school counseling professionals do not receive specific training on how to support low-SES Latino and Black populations (Martinez et al., 2017). The professional development sessions provided today could be a cause for concern, as minority economically disadvantaged students comprise the largest population in the public school system (NYCDOE, 2020).

Three of the eight participants in this study reported attending only workshops they found beneficial for working with less-privileged student populations. More than half of the participants preferred the new training on "college access for all." The participants explained that the goal of the "college access for all" program was to foster postsecondary education and plan students' futures across NYC public schools. FP5 referred to the program as "the best workshop." Similarly, FP7 said, "[The training] gives you different choices of solutions." In addition, FP8 reported that all school staff had access to the "college access for all" training throughout the year. The findings suggest this professional development opportunity has numerous benefits for all school counselors and students, regardless of their backgrounds. The participants' responses provided additional knowledge of the topic, as little research has focused on positive training experiences for school counselors.

The participants also described the preparation they received from their master's programs before becoming school counseling professionals at urban high schools. The

interviewees elaborated on their different school counseling courses and internships and how they gained expertise from the counselor educators. Using a Husserlian lens, I recognized that the participants should have obtained firsthand knowledge of the school counseling profession in their master's programs. Gysbers (2013) noted that the goal of a school counseling program is to educate and introduce adults to the education field. After bracketing my speculations through journaling, I found that the participants had mixed feelings about their experiences at their graduate schools. Most participants considered their master's courses and credits insufficient preparation for working in low-SES districts. One participant described her master's program as uninformative and similar to a "boot camp."

Although a few interviewees found some of the courses beneficial for their careers, half the participants referred to their professors as "vague" or "disconnected" from the challenges of impoverished school communities. The participants' experiences were a barrier to their progress in dealing with the hardships faced by adolescents in less-wealthy high schools. The findings from this exploratory project aligned with the extant research, as many professional school counselors may feel unprepared to tackle challenges and organize programs based on students' needs because of the minimal rigor provided by institutions (Bobby, 2013; Branthoover et al., 2010). The results of this study and the extant literature indicate rigor as a critical trait for inexperienced school counselors entering public schools in Northeastern communities.

An unexpected finding was that five of the eight participants in this study chose to complete their internships and practicum hours in underserved neighborhoods. According to the participants, the fieldwork and supervision in underserved neighborhoods enabled them to understand what to anticipate when working with disadvantaged student populations. Although hands-on experiences in higher education had advantages, the participants reported experiencing unforeseen challenges along the way. Therefore, I agree with the ASCA's (2019) suggestion for school counselors to develop a CSCP through informative training and courses. Counselor educators could incorporate the CSCP into their courses to prepare graduate students better. Half the participants in this study admitted to not knowing much about the CSCP, as it is still a new concept for school counselors. The findings in this study aligned with the research that has shown the need to ensure school counselors' competency by expanding their knowledge of urban minority students during their master's programs (Even & Robinson, 2013).

Needed Changes

Another finding was that the participants expressed the need to change the training offered at the professional and college levels. The participants voiced the need for more "equitable training" relevant to the marginalized populations to decrease disparities. School counselors must be equipped to inform, motivate, and support disadvantaged students, especially those in low-income neighborhoods (Mau et al., 2016: Nichols et al., 2017).

During my horizon, I perceived that some of the interviewees felt frustrated because they often unknowingly encountered situations for which they felt unprepared. One participant said, "There seem to be constant modifications without proper training." Based on the responses, I understood why most participants wanted to attend new professional development opportunities. Due to their situatedness, the participants suggested conducting future workshops on urban school curricula, regulation updates, restorative practices, student behaviors, graduation planning, CSCP outlines, ASCA model updates, and online tools.

A positive outcome identified by the participants was virtual training for school counselors. One participant reported that the virtual training provided the flexibility needed for the "hectic schedules" of school counselors. However, a need exists to improve the versatility of lessons on disadvantaged minors for professional school counselors. This finding aligned with the literature, as previous studies have shown that workshops require modification so school counselors can gain the multicultural skills needed to confidently address or resolve dilemmas in impoverished districts (Holcomb-McCoy, 2001; Holcomb-McCoy et al., 2008; Parikh, 2013). None of the participants in this study disclosed attending multicultural competency training. School counselors may experience delays in student progress when they underutilize multiculturalism (Yih-Jiun, 2017).

The findings of this study suggest that outdated training also impacted the urban minority students in the participants' high schools. Therefore, it is essential to modify

professional workshops to support the school counselors serving disadvantaged student populations. Kozlowski (2013) emphasized that school counselors at low-income schools should master new strategies and different tools to ease students' burdens.

The participants in this study also indicated the need to modify the preparation experiences of master's degree programs. Based on their experiences, all participants suggested improving graduate school counseling courses. The interviewees shared stories of their graduate programs, which half described as lacking rigor and information about the realities of urban minority districts. This finding aligns with the literature indicating the need to examine if school counseling programs provide adequate preparation for all areas in the educational system (Gysbers, 2013). The participants in this study reported that their graduate programs did not focus on urban minority student populations while in their situatedness with the phenomenon. I felt disappointed that most of the respondents considered their graduate courses too "vague" or "abstract" to prepare them for the hard realities of high schools in impoverished regions. School counselors must be equipped to motivate, inform, and support disadvantaged student populations (Mau et al., 2016; Nichols et al., 2017).

While in the horizon, the interviewees suggested that counselor educators address different school settings, current systems, and student demographics. Three interviewees reported feeling unprepared to work with urban students. A surprising finding was that the participants sought additional courses on urban minority students and extra internship hours to build their multiculturalism. The participants' feedback suggests graduate

students could benefit from gaining more hands-on experience with different student demographics to compare and learn the needs of their students. The finding that some participants lacked diverse experiences inside and outside of the school counseling program indicates the need to expand training opportunities. FP5 said a master's program "contributes to everyone's learning experience."

The school counselors without diverse backgrounds wished they had completed their fieldwork in urban settings before working in low-SES areas. Therefore, internships or practicum hours with mixed ethnic groups could be a way to expand the perspectives of master's-level students. The findings and peer-reviewed literature showed the need to upgrade the training process for inexperienced graduate students. The 2016 CACREP standards for school counselors require that all colleges and universities have accredited programs of 48 credits for graduate students. In addition, the CACREP seeks to enforce a 2024 deadline for the leaders of all higher education institutions to unify and reorganize school counseling programs to universally reflect the accredited 60 semester credit hours (CACREP, 2018). This revised requirement for all master's degree programs could be a way to add courses with extended fieldwork hours with low-SES schools. Increasing the number of credits could also enable graduate students to keep up with the growing deficits of less-privileged districts. This study and past research indicate that, without change, school counselors may find it challenging to keep up with society and strengthen their competencies.

Deficits

Poverty-stricken communities present higher challenges, and so do schools in Northeastern zones. The participants in this study described the limitations of working with inaccessible resources at urban high schools. While bracketing my preconceived ideas, I realized the participants continued to seek ways to help their students despite a dearth of educational resources. Only one of the eight participants confirmed having recently received extra resources at their urban school. I honestly did not expect all the interviewees to encounter inequitable access at the impoverished high schools. The participants required more student programs to tackle the everyday adversities faced by the adolescents in low-SES schools.

The participants also described how the funding had decreased in marginalized educational settings over the years because of "budget cuts." Therefore, the participants found it challenging to address the needs of the urban minority students with depleted funds. For example, one participant noted that "money is always an issue," while another already anticipated that "resources will be reduced again." The findings aligned with the extant literature showing that ubiquitous economic predicaments in low-income regions obstruct the progress of disadvantaged students and the school counselors seeking to serve them properly (Camadan & Kahveci, 2013; Hannon, 2016; Mahatmya et al., 2016).

The shortage of resources had an impact on both the participants and the students in low-SES schools. This finding aligns with the literature that has suggested that budget cuts may continue to occur at higher rates in urban neighborhoods than in affluent

communities (Cameron, 2018). This finding also indicates inequitable access to government funding in less-privileged districts; school counselors cannot offer after-school programs, supplies, trips, technology, and extra resources without funding. Like the 2014 ACA Code of Ethics and the 2018a ASCA National Model, I firmly believe all students should have the ability to receive all educational resources, no matter their SES.

Regrettably, I noticed that the participants in this study struggled to help urban minority learners reach their academic, social-emotional, and postsecondary aspirations. The underfunding of the participants' schools caused the participants to "offer the bare minimum," although the urban students were "requiring the most help on so many levels." This evidence suggests that the ongoing imbalance of funding between low- and high-SES schools do not allow school counselors to provide urban minority students with the best recommendations; the opposite occurs in well-off districts (Cox & Benson, 2017; Molina et al., 2016). One of the participants in this study concluded that the insufficient resources prevented school counselors from targeting all the needs of students of color. I progressively grasped how this key finding has remained unresolved for school counselors working across all grade levels in low-SES neighborhoods. Counselor educators who speak about these restrictions should prepare and brainstorm alternatives with future school counselors. Although I recognized many examples from the sample group, I may have disregarded some educational resources that are no longer available at the urban sites while in the horizon. Nonetheless, the study produced subjective data relevant to the extant literature from an exploratory lens.

While probing for more answers, I found that the participants experienced support staff shortages at their low-SES high schools. The participants reported struggling to keep up with the responsibilities of their jobs without the faculty needed to provide for a high volume of urban minority students needing extra support. The student-to-counselor ratio has increased considerably across educational settings (ASCA, 2019b; Hussar & Bailey, 2011). FP1 validated this finding in this study by stating, "[Counseling] becomes challenging when the student to counselor ratio is higher."

More than half the participants in this study confirmed that they had large student populations needing consistent help; however, they were without adequate support staff to meet students' needs. One participant said the staff shortage was a disservice to the students because "the high school has a lot of turnaround." Two respondents acknowledged lacking "a team of bilingual school counselors" and enough "counselors of color" to properly work with the urban teenagers. I was stunned to hear that three of the eight participants only received help from social workers and school psychologists once a week at their high schools. The participants' responses aligned with Cox and Benson (2017) and Sheets (2011), who found that the misuse of educational funds and refusal to hire additional support staff resulted in school counselors compromising their positions. The older and more recent findings have indicated the importance of hiring additional school counseling staff, particularly those with diverse ethnic backgrounds, who can connect with the students from underprivileged populations.

While in the present moment of the descriptive stories, I also uncovered that the participants resorted to seeking other solutions to meet their students' needs, such as relying on teachers, making referrals, or working extra hours. The feedback from the interviewees showed their solution-focused approaches to resolving the shortcomings of less-privileged communities. Despite the actions taken, I feel the participants engaged in temporary solutions; therefore, administrators or counseling supervisors should address this situation.

The participants in this study frequently had to handle situations and help urban minority students independently. The staff shortages could have been the reason for the participants' overutilization and their inability to focus on each urban adolescent's individual needs. The interviewees strongly suggested hiring additional school counselors, social workers, and school psychologists to tend to high-needs student populations. I expected this finding because most schools in low-income neighborhoods present confines; however, school counselors continue to address the needs of young learners regardless of circumstances (Aladag, 2013; Butler & Constantine, 2005). The study's findings align with the growing concern that urban students experience delayed service in poverty-stricken schools because of financial confines beyond their control (Alavi et al., 2012; Colbert, 2013).

After sitting with this finding from a different perspective, I realized most school leaders tend to hire a small team of support staff but many teachers. Upon further review, the key finding of limited support professionals contributed to the knowledge of previous

relevant studies. However, public school leaders should rethink hiring additional full-time school counselors and other clinicians to resolve this trend. Overall, school counselors in low-income areas require more support staff to provide equitable services for all disadvantaged adolescents. This suggestion also aligns with the literature (Colbert, 2013; Harper et al., 2016).

Limitations of Study

Like other studies, this transcendental qualitative research study has limitations. As indicated in Chapter 1, this research project had some limitations. The initial limitation was disruptions and the participants' schedules for the virtual interview. The interviews occurred via video conference calls, and the participants experienced no interferences because they engaged in the interviews in private locations. However, a few discrepancies occurred during the data collection process. A setback was the delayed proceeding of some interviews and losing participants due to personal reasons or the COVID-19 pandemic. I had to recruit additional participants by sending out a second round of email invitation letters with the assistance of the LCO.

I considered the participants' availability and timeframes while arranging the live interviews before and during the COVID 19-pandemic. Ultimately, I gained additional volunteers who engaged in private interviews via Adobe Connect. The participants scheduled their interviews at times convenient to them. I also sent courtesy email reminders for the interviews. The interviews did not occur during the participants' holiday breaks and the first or last workdays due to potential burnout. The purposeful and

snowball sampling methods produced eight professional school counselors who willingly participated in the study.

Another limitation is that only high school counselors who worked in the Queens, Brooklyn, or Bronx Northeastern regions participated in this study. Purposeful, random sampling commenced recruiting as many high school counselors as possible, as I had no expertise at that level. The goal of the study was to explore and learn about the school counselor role from a foreign standpoint. Unfortunately, the collected data did not include feedback from high school counselors employed in the other New York City boroughs (Manhattan and Staten Island) for a broader understanding of the research gap.

Of the eight participants, seven identified as female and one as male. Thus, another limitation was the gender imbalance due to the majority of female participants in this research study. Despite the gender disparity, the eight participants presented detailed narratives addressing the research gap. According to Creswell (2013), data saturation in qualitative research can occur with at least four participants if the scholar gathers enough descriptive data to expose new themes. In this study, saturation occurred with a sample of eight participants recruited through purposeful and snowball sampling. Although this study produced detailed empirical data, a sample representative of all boroughs could provide additional insight into the perspectives of high school counselors working in low-income public schools.

The next limitation of this study was the assumption that the participating school counselors truthfully described their experiences. The participants did not provide

physical proof of their recollected accounts, which they related from a first-person perspective. However, the subquestions provided a means to connect the interviewees with their experiences and probe for more detailed narratives. The participants reported subjective experiences; therefore, they could have forgotten to disclose some details about their lived experiences while in the horizon. I posted the five interview questions in the virtual meeting room to decrease inaccuracies, but the participants might not have paid attention to them. In addition, some of the participants might not have shared additional information about their experiences due to their situatedness with feeling tired or worried about time. Therefore, future researchers should conduct interviews when the school counselors feel better rested while off work or on vacation from work.

There is also a need to acknowledge the ramifications of conducting this transcendental qualitative research design with the participants. As the interpreter of the collected data, there was no guarantee that my thoughts or assumptions did not affect the study's outcomes. Husserl's epoché technique occurred during the data analysis phase to defer speculations about the school counselors' phenomenon. In addition, I journaled to document and suspend my preconceptions or ideas before commencing with the private interviews. Journaling allowed me to reflect on my thoughts and judgments and view the phenomenon objectively. However, there was no guarantee that I would realize every thought during the horizon process while in the research experience. According to Perry (2013), humans cannot know everything because they lack omniscience; there is no

guarantee that inquirers can bracket the horizon entirely during the research process. As a result, I may have overlooked something while interviewing the participants.

When thinking back to the reported experiences during the horizon, I realized the school counselors' situatedness could have obstructed their views or ideas of the needed resources and supports because their administrators ultimately made the decisions. All participants acknowledged that their principals and assistant principals oversaw school budgets, after-school programs, and school counselors' distribution of duties. Camadan and Kahveci (2013) found that professional school counselors felt the least satisfied working in low-income areas because of urban districts' economic constraints and leadership expectations. As a qualitative researcher, I had to slow down and look carefully at the different horizons of each participant's lived experiences.

Another limitation is the use of additional data analysis methods for this transcendental qualitative research design. In addition to Husserl's phenomenology process, I also implemented Moustakas' seven action steps to check the collected data thoroughly. Moustakas (1994) referred to this analysis procedure as a "research-based protocol" for reviewing and organizing the evidence from the sample group. However, some scholars may oppose using both Moustakas' philosophy and a Husserlian lens. In this case, I used Moustakas' action steps only as a second technique to follow up the analysis phase. Due to the philosophical differences, I referenced 15 journal articles and found they all cited Moustakas' analysis method in qualitative research. Exploratory researchers should delve into a research gap and adopt multiple methods to get to the true

essence of a phenomenon (Weinbaum & Onwuegbuzie, 2016). Thus, in this study, Moustakas' methodology was the alternative used to explore, analyze, and establish key findings.

The final limitation was my inexperience with research. A novice inquirer, I used the qualitative transcendental phenomenological method to investigate, gather, transcribe, code, and analyze high school counselors' perspectives of their lived experiences. Vass et al. (2017) postulated that qualitative researchers should explore, organize, and interpret the findings from the participants' perspectives. As a proactive approach, I created documents to present the research process to the participating school counselors. The participants received the invitation letter and informed consent form before their virtual interviews to learn about the research process and build trusting relationships (see Appendices A and B). I also verbally described the procedures, posted the open-ended questions in the online conference room, and provided the participants with the opportunity to ask questions. The IRB's responses to their self-check approval application assisted in protecting the human rights of the participants of my first research study. I also adhered to the dissertation chair and committee members' guidance in monitoring my progress with the qualitative plan from beginning to end.

Recommendations for Further Study

The participants' descriptions showed the positive and negative outcomes of today's urban districts. The rich details of this transcendental phenomenological research provided an understanding of school counselors' lived experiences of working with urban

minority students in Northeastern urban schools. The identified themes and subthemes from the data could be a guide for improving the support of school counselors serving students in low-SES schools. Furthermore, school counselors could use these findings to develop and execute a resilient CSCP to address the adversities students face in disadvantaged communities (Lapan et al., 2014). Researchers could also utilize the study's results to prepare for and proceed with studies on the same topic. This section includes recommendations for future studies.

This transcendental qualitative research included data from a purposeful sample of one male and seven female participants. Although school counselors of both genders received invitations to the study, the female recipients appeared interested in participating. Therefore, future scholars should interview more male school counselors employed in urban public school districts. Narrowing the sample's scope to male school counselors could provide a broader range of results. As indicated in Chapter 2, Hannon (2016) emphasized the importance of inviting participants in qualitative studies to share their perspectives to avoid missing any information. Therefore, researchers should exhaust every possibility by interviewing as many male school counselors as possible to capture their authentic experiences as lived in the everyday public setting (Husserl, 1960; Weinbaum & Onwuegbuzie, 2016). Such research could be a way to increase the probability of gaining an equal amount of feedback from male and female school counselors in urban areas.

Another recommendation is to research the experiences of school counselors working with other support staff in the field of education. Many participants in this study described working in understaffed departments and relying on the help of part-time social workers or school psychologists. The participants admitted they needed more school counselors and mental health professionals to avoid being overextended when striving to meet students' needs. Some participants confirmed that outside agencies also assisted the urban minority students; however, they considered that assistance insufficient for addressing the large volume of mental health concerns.

As indicated in Chapter 4, public high school counselors must tackle the obstacles associated with graduation, mental health, truancy, immigration, overpopulation, and low academic standing. Students from low-SES communities are more likely to feel unmotivated to achieve academic goals due to family financial constraints, single-parent households, restricted technology access, and limited medical care (Lee, 2005; Nasir et al., 2011). The participating school counselors in this study described overcoming these student barriers as time-consuming and exhausting without full-time social workers and school psychologists. As a result, the participants felt unsupported and overwhelmed. Therefore, administrators could use this study's findings to improve the jobs of school counselors in large urban settings by hiring more support staff.

Along with insufficient staff, all eight participants in this study described barriers to providing services to adolescents in underserved public schools. In particular, the respondents recognized the disparity of services for Hispanic and Black students. Based

on their lived experiences, the participants described the differences in funding available for urban districts compared to suburban districts. Therefore, future researchers could focus on the present discrepancies in funding to help school counselors better support students of color.

According to Colbert (2013), adolescents in low-SES schools in New York City faced more troubling inequities than learners in affluent high schools. Plata et al. (2017) indicated that most struggling students in low-income communities come from Latino and Black populations. A recent U.S. Census report showed a higher dropout rate of 10.6% and 7.4% among Black and Hispanic high school students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016b). The NYCDOE (2020) found an overall dropout rate of 7.5% of high school students in 2018. These statistics suggest that school counselors in marginalized neighborhoods could benefit from having the same funds as privileged communities so they can provide free resources to learners in disadvantaged schools. In addition to the current data and outcomes linked to low-income student populations, the scarce research addressed in Chapter 2 indicated the need to fill the gap in the literature on high school counselors under budget constraints striving to provide services for urban minority adolescents (Colbert, 2013; Goodman-Scott, 2015; Militello & Janson, 2014; Savitz-Romer, 2012; Vega et al., 2015).

Despite the disproportionate funding, school counselors have the ethical obligation to encourage and help all students overcome personal and financial obstacles (ASCA, 2018b). The participants confirmed that their high schools had fewer student

programs at the time of the study than in previous years. The participants voiced the importance of urban students having access to a myriad of after-school programs to enhance their academic and social-emotional success. A recent funding gap report showed that high-poverty districts with large populations received $1,000 less in local and state funds for each enrolled ethnically diverse student (Cameron, 2018; National Center for Education Statistics, 2018).

Some of the interviewees in this study verified having reduced budgets that only provided the opportunity for SAT and Regents prep classes at their urban high schools. Other participants' schools had more funding for after-school clubs, prep exam programs, and technology for large populations of urban minority learners. Based on these findings, future researchers should discuss how school counselors can better support struggling adolescents with extra education programs. For example, some of the participants in this study recalled seeing higher graduation rates in the years with enough funding for guest speakers, college trips, attendance programs, and other after-school options. Urban high school counselors, principals, and teachers could benefit from seeking grants and holding fundraisers to reduce the dropout stigma linked to students in disadvantaged, poverty-stricken Northeastern areas.

Like the recommendations for funding educational resources, the study's participants advocated for having additional support staff to address students' high needs in urban neighborhoods. The participants shared their setbacks with serving increasing populations of urban learners with fewer support staff. For example, one participant

recognized how the student-to-counselor ratio had increased over the years. Therefore, future scholars should research the phenomenon of insufficient employees in overpopulated urban districts to encourage school leaders to hire additional school counselors, social workers, and psychologists.

Some of the interviewees noted their schools had only one full-time school counselor, a part-time social worker, and a psychologist who visited their schools twice a week. Unfortunately, they found the staff insufficient to address the students' mental health concerns, attendance gaps, negative behaviors, and academic decline. Rowe and Perry (2020) confirmed that inequalities and low educational funds are prevalent concerns in low-income public schools.

The recommendations of this study could enable school counselors to balance their large caseloads, decrease their paperwork, find more time, eliminate burnout, and tend to each student individually. All eight participants articulated feeling overwhelmed due to receiving limited support in New York City public schools. Future scholars could strive to affect positive change for school counselors by researching the distribution of school counselors or other external staff in urban elementary, middle, and high schools. Current studies have indicated that hiring additional school counselors could be a way to improve poor academics, truancy, stress, suspensions, dropouts, and low aspirations among students from underprivileged populations.

The final suggestion emerged from correlating the data from this transcendental qualitative study. The study addressed the universal promotion of CACREP credit hours

in master's degree programs and the request for specific urban topics during professional training. The required CACREP 60 credit hours should be in place by 2024 (CACREP, 2018). Therefore, future researchers should investigate school counselors' experiences in school counseling programs before working in the NYCDOE urban high school setting. In preparation for the accredited changes in institutions, school counselors, graduate students, and counseling educators should learn about public school counselors' perspectives of whether their learned experiences enabled them to prepare for the adversities of low-SES urban communities.

Due to limited research on socioeconomic confines and other related factors, scholars should conduct additional descriptive research so counselor educators can adjust and implement competent multicultural interventions for graduate students. For instance, counseling educators should tailor their multicultural lessons to address the hardships of urban districts. Also, master's programs should provide additional opportunities for hands-on experience via internships or extended practicum hours in urban communities.

School counselor educators could also use the insights of this study to prepare future school counselors to apply their skills to create CSCPs to address the achievement gaps in low-income neighborhoods. Furthermore, additional information about school counselors' training experiences could contribute to modifying and focusing more on the challenges impacting urban minority students than data-driven topics. Further research could provide school counselors with the tools they need to foster students' academic, social-emotional, and postsecondary success.

In conclusion, the results of this study indicate the need for more research from the perspectives of school counselors from high schools in all New York boroughs. The high school counselors in this study described socioeconomic constraints and student challenges similar to those in urban elementary and secondary schools. Researchers have emphasized the need to focus on the phenomenon in all high poverty-stricken urban schools, as adversities is more evident among students transitioning from middle to high school (Yavuz et al., 2019). Urban minority learners dealing with family-related SES concerns may disengage from their learning environments, seek alternative coping outlets, or give up on future aspirations. The best outcomes noticed among the interviewed high school counselors are when culturally diverse adolescents feel understood, supported, and encouraged to fulfill academic expectations, regardless of stigmas (Parikh, 2013). As a proactive approach, additional research on school counselors could be a way to aid both inexperienced and veteran professionals in helping urban minority students succeed.

Positive Social Change Implications

The goal of this transcendental phenomenological study was to heighten awareness of the literature gap of high school counselors' experiences of working with urban minority populations in Northeastern public schools. Few studies have focused on this phenomenon at the high school level, as indicated in Chapter 1. Colbert (2013) and Morgan et al. (2015) emphasized the importance of investigating school counselors in low-income districts due to pressing challenges and an alarming decline in the graduation

rates of minority students. This study's findings could have implications for social change implications based on the participants' views and experiences. Teachers, administrators, support staff, students, and families in low-SES communities could benefit from social change based on the school counselors' perspectives. In addition, this study's findings could influence changing graduate school counseling programs and prepare inexperienced school counselors to develop appropriate CSCP. Due to the inevitable societal changes, counselor educators could use this study's findings to modify training, support school counselors, and address inequalities in urban education.

This study has several implications for positive social change based on the rich information gathered from the rigorous data analysis phase. First, most of the participants in this study acknowledged not knowing much about urban adolescent populations before becoming school counselors. The participants' lived experiences showed the need to better prepare and inform school counselors before entering the educational field. Potential school counselors must become familiar with disadvantaged populations to provide the best services, build trusting relationships, and align with the CCSS. Anderson (2016) noted that less-privileged students struggle to meet the rigorous CCSS. An equipped school counselor should know which interventions to use to address the dilemmas faced by urban students.

Obtaining information about students' diverse backgrounds could enable inexperienced school counselors to work confidently with urban students and their families. The participants in this study believed that proper preparation for serving

underprivileged neighborhoods could be a way to minimize the existing academic achievement gap. Ultimately, the 2018b ASCA standards indicate that school counselors must be familiar with the students they oversee despite academic or personal adversities. Future school counselors employed in low SES communities are expected to know how to support the urban minority student population effectively. In addition, enhancing school counselors' multicultural knowledge could be a way to change the stigmas impacting urban learners. Professional school counseling advocates aware of the needs of urban minor students could break the trend of students remaining in poverty-stricken situations. Such school counselors could enable students to earn high school diplomas and fulfill realistic postsecondary plans.

In conjunction with implementing new preparation measures, the high school counselors in this study suggested modifying the training experiences at the master's and professional levels. CACREP has begun revamping the standards for accredited institutions by increasing the required semester credits from 48 to 60 hours (CACREP, 2018). This development could provide additional support for future counselors, as the participants in this study deemed their preparation as graduate students and professionals less extensive and relatable for working with urban minority students. Due to minimal training, the participants suggested newer topics, real-life multicultural courses, and additional internships as strategies for learning how to navigate the economic hardships affecting urban students in Northeastern districts.

Many of the more experienced participants reported that much of their professional development and training focused on data, software programs, or privileged students. Therefore, this study's findings could contribute to social awareness by indicating which resources, programs, and skills school counselors can use to help urban students overcome obstacles. According to Bischoff and Owens (2019), adolescents in low-income schools may lack the skills needed to find decent jobs after graduation due to insufficient educational tools and resources. Broadening future training for school counselors could enable them to learn how to guide students and administer different guidance lessons in low-SES schools. Graduate students, K–12 school counselors, and school counseling educators could use the results of this study to advocate for altering the training for professional counselors.

Another implication for social change is the finding that not everyone understands the school counselor role. The participants' perspectives of their daily experiences could enable administrators to shift their views and approaches. Many high school counselors experience challenges and obstacles while working with principals and assistant principals. Bickmore and Curry (2013) indicated that school counselors must adhere to the many requests of their building leaders, regardless of the growing number of enrolled students in poverty-stricken locations. The participants in this study felt they had to disregard or compromise their roles when their administrators asked them to complete duties outside of their rigorous obligations. However, such requests could present

challenges because school counselors must uphold the ASCA (2018a) National Model and ACA (2014) Code of Ethics.

School leaders could use the participants' narratives in this study to change how they delegate tasks and consider school counselors' professional standards and competencies. Raising awareness of the school counselor role could be a way to help administrators understand school counselors in urban schools, decrease everyday pressures, and demonstrate more support. Furthermore, leaders who take the time to learn about school counselors' profession can build collaborative relationships and foster problem-solving for students in low-SES schools. Administrators who take the initiative to support school counselors will ensure that new and seasoned professional school counselors can meet the high demands of marginalized districts.

Along with their administrators' leadership styles, seven of the eight participants mentioned that they lacked site supervisors with a school counseling background and a CSCP in motion at the urban high schools. Therefore, another implication for social change is to assign supervisors who can guide, answer questions, train, and ensure compliance with caseloads for novice and veteran school counselors. Supervisors could alter the supervision of school counselors so that not only administrators oversee school counselors. For example, meeting monthly with a school counseling director could contribute to school counselors' professional growth and enable them to gain the knowledge and skills needed to tackle everyday adversities in Northeastern schools. Boes et al. (2006) proposed that school counselors should receive extra assistance and insight

from experts with experience working at PK–12 schools in low-SES areas. In addition, supervisors could ensure the school counselors have and follow the CSCP for supporting urban minority students.

The participants also recognized they felt unprepared due to the lack of a current CSCP, which presented additional challenges to aligning with the school curricula. As of 2019d, ASCA officials developed the CSCP initiative for school counselors to create a unified program with different prevention methods, interventions, and additional resources for enhancing student performance. The finding that not all high school counselors in urban communities practice with an active CSCP is a concern. Therefore, this finding indicates the need to reevaluate a school's mission by implementing a CSCP to build a collaborative spirit between school counselors, facility staff, students, and community members to progress in a positive direction. Present and future school counselors should prepare to establish equitable services for all urban minority students by accessing the CSCP in low-SES public schools.

The participants described the work barriers they encountered daily as high school counselors in economically restricted communities. Research has shown wealthier districts receive more funding for resources or support than impoverished districts (Colbert, 2013). Thus, the participants in this study found it challenging to support urban teenagers without extra resources and support. For example, the interviewees reported losing after-school programs and staff due to budget cuts over the years. The findings showed the evident disparity in funding for school counselors in Northeastern public

schools. Presently, most adolescents in low-income schools are not equipped with the skills needed to find decent jobs postgraduation due to insufficient educational tools and resources (Bischoff & Owens, 2019).

A suggestion of the study is to increase the equity of NYC public schools in segregated areas via the allocation of funds to bring back afterschool programs, guest speakers, field trips, free resources, and technology for students from low-income populations. Students with access to advanced educational resources are more likely to build their confidence, identify their interests, strengthen their skills, and plan for the future (Owens & Candipan, 2019). However, all the participants in this study mentioned urban minority alumni who took advantage of their limited resources and became successful adults. Therefore, those in the educational field could consider this study's findings when addressing the issue of equal fund distribution and economic status. Removing the roadblocks of limited resources could enable school counselors to shorten the time needed to provide services and resources to urban minority students and involve more mental health experts.

The implications for positive social change are that modifications to training preparations could contribute to school counselors' growth and increase their ability to provide services to low-SES student populations. Current and future school counselors have a unique and demanding role. Therefore, a need exists to rethink the structure of master's programs, offer new training, assign supervision, and provide support so school counselors can serve students in low-income neighborhoods to the best of their abilities.

According to this study's findings, such modifications could be a way to restructure the existing programs to promote a modern societal shift.

Goodman-Scott (2015) and Parikh (2013) found that school counselors enhanced their multicultural skills, gained confidence and knowledge, and proactively tackled challenges in marginalized districts after gaining more exposure in the field. The outcomes and recommendations of this qualitative study could contribute to instilling positive social change in the field. School counselors could consider the implications of this study to improve their ability to support disadvantaged learners and overcome socioeconomic adversities in urban communities.

Conclusion

The themes and subthemes of this study showed high school counselors' perspectives of working with urban minority students in Northeastern schools. The participants' subjective responses provided the raw data used to address the research gap. Past studies have suggested exploring the individuals who work consistently with low-SES student populations to understand the true phenomenon (Lapan et al., 2014; Savitz-Romer, 2012). The participants provided meaningful insight into their lived experiences in urban schools.

The participants' self-told stories provided answers to the main research question. This phenomenological research project produced five key themes: (a) rewarding experiences with urban minority students, (b) feelings of being overwhelmed, (c) reactions to training and master's programs, (d) the need for additional training and

educational changes, and (e) limited resources and supports at urban high schools. Multiple subthemes also emerged from the follow-up questions asked during the virtual interviews. The extracted subthemes focused on school counselors' responsibilities, challenges, supportive efforts, positive outcomes, strategies for coping with burnout, strategies for creating balance, the impact on the role, and solution-focused approaches.

The interviewees shared their positive and negative experiences as school counselors and graduate students in the emergent themes and subthemes. School counselors working in less-affluent neighborhoods tend to face more challenges because of economics and other factors impacting students (White & Kelly, 2010). Colbert (2013) and Gysbers (2013) stressed the importance of the school counselor role in developing an effective CSCP to address different concerns, develop prevention plans, and focus on the needs of marginalized student populations. Research has shown that students from low-income families tend to have fewer expectations, restricted access to educational resources, below-average grades, and higher dropout rates (Molina et al., 2016). This study focused on the phenomenon of school counselors working in urban high schools. The findings provided an awareness of how to achieve social justice for learners in underprivileged communities. Furthermore, the results could contribute to reevaluating and modifying the training provided to current and future school counselors so they can effectively serve students in low-SES schools.

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Appendix A: Letter of Invitation for the Participants in the Study (Email)

Dear School Counselor,

My name is Lisette Velez. I am a PhD student enrolled in the Counselor Education and Supervision program at Walden University. The title of my qualitative research study is the *School Counselors' Lived Experiences Working with Northeastern Urban Minority High School Students.* Walden University granted me IRB approval to pursue this research study. Therefore, I have reached out to the NYSSCA to extend this invitation letter. As a professional school counselor like yourself, I am interested in exploring your everyday work experiences with today's youth in the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE). All participants who would like to join in this research study <u>must have</u> a school counselor license with three or more years of experience in the field. The volunteers must also have worked for the NYCDOE in an urban high school setting.

My goal is to invite New York high school counselors from Northeastern public-school districts to participate in the interview via video conference call. Currently, there is limited research addressing this research topic. The data collected will be used to help explore your perspective working with the urban minority teenagers. If interested, you will answer a short demographic questionnaire before participating in the virtual interview. The meeting will approximately take 30 to 60 minutes in a private and quiet location of your choice. All information shared will be kept confidential to ensure any identifiable details associated with your name, and school site remains private.

Interviewees have the right to opt-out of the study at any moment since the interview is optional. There is no compensation for the participants in this research study. Please feel free to contact me via email at xxxxx@waldenu.edu or phone at (###) ###-#### to receive the consent form and demographic questionnaire. Once returned, I will schedule the one-on-one virtual meeting.

Thank you for your participation and time for this research study.

Lisette Velez, M.S.Ed.

Doctoral Candidate at Walden University

Appendix B: Demographic Questionnaire

1. Name of Participant _____

2. Gender _____

3. Are you a licensed school counselor? Yes _____ No _____

4. Do you have three or more years of experience as a professional school counselor in

    New York? Yes _____ No _____

5. Have you been employed by the New York City Department of Education

    (NYCDOE) as a high school counselor? Yes _____ No _____

6. Are you currently working as a school counselor in the NYCDOE public school

    system at an urban high school? Yes _____ No _____

Appendix C: Interview Questions

1. Tell me about your experiences as a professional school counselor at the urban high school community. (You mentioned working at the XXY high school; can you elaborate more about it?)

2. What was it like working individually with the urban adolescent population? (What more can you tell me about that experience?)

3. Please share your experiences in supporting urban minority high school students. (Can you share some student challenges and achievements you encountered?) (I am interested to know more about what you meant when you said XYZ.)

4. Describe your experiences with professional training and school counseling education in preparation for working with urban high school students. (How did you find these preparations and learning experiences beneficial to work with the urban adolescent population?) (You said Y, but other folks have said Z; what are your thoughts on that?)

5. What are your experiences with the resources and supports at the urban high school? (Thank you for the feedback. What do you and other high school counselors currently implement as resources and other supports at the urban site, if any?)

Appendix D: Meaning Units

FP/MP	Themes	Statements	Subthemes	Statements
FP1	Rewarding experiences with minority student	I am able to relate culturally a little bit more especially if I did go to New York City public schools. I'm working with mainly international students who recently arrived in the country.	A. Responsibilities	I help develop the urban students' social-emotional skills and also support them with academic and career planning and things like that.
			B. Challenges	It is challenging trying to reframe from guessing what students go home too. Although I have a public school and minority upbringing, I have to remind myself that today's adolescent group is different.
			C. Supportive efforts	I encourage teachers to get to know their students with attendance issues instead of referring them to me. I invite teachers to student meetings to build trusting and supportive relationships.
			D. Positive outcomes	There was a student with special needs who came into ninth grade. Through counseling, I worked on him managing the situation and knowing how to advocate for himself.

Continued

FP/MP	Themes	Statements	Subthemes	Statements
	Feeling over-whelmed	I wish there was more people coming to the high school to support school counselors because I'm overwhelmed right now.	A. Coping with burnout B. Creating balance	I rely on the two school counselors I work with. And I network with other counselors in urban high schools. A lot of them are fleeing violence or situations that are not desirable, but it's important to make them feel safer here at the high school.
	Reactions about received training/ master's program	I found that training and courses on different races are very limited. You don't really learn until you're in it.		
	Need for additional training/ educational changes	It's important for school counselors to attend more equitable training to support the minority groups. The school counseling programs should have interns experience working with culturally diverse students instead of just predominately White students.		

Continued

FP/MP	Themes	Statements	Subthemes	Statements
	Limited resources/ supports	The budget is what I always hear. We don't have enough counselors and other support staff to assist the at-risk or mandated students	A. Impact on role	It's hard because there's not enough school counselors to address the needs of our urban community. It becomes challenging when the student to counselor ratio is higher. We have way more new international students enrolling at this high school now.
			B. Solution-focused approaches	Some parents expect counselors to solve the problem without their involvement. I explained to parents that is not how it works. I invite them to discuss an intervention plan for the student. Having more professionals at the high school to work with the parents would help us out.
FP2	Rewarding experiences with urban minority students	I was once an urban adolescent student. I went in thinking, that I would be able to relate to the urban minority students. But I was badly mistaken.	A. Responsibilities	I focus on the high school students' transcripts in order to meet graduation regulations.
			B. Challenges	Many students do not want to see me or other counselors to deal with mental health issues.

Continued

FP/MP	Themes	Statements	Subthemes	Statements
			C. Supportive efforts	I always try to support all the urban minority students. We get a lot of students who shut down easily. We started an initiative to feel ready for college.
			D. Positive outcomes	We had quite a few students graduate from us and then come back and become employees at the urban high school.
	Feeling over-whelmed	I'm handling all the urban students' crisis and getting back to the paperwork later.	A. Coping with burnout	We finally did get a second counselor this year. It helped to balance out the work responsibilities at the transfer school.
			B. Creating balance	What I can do for someone's life, especially for students from urban lower socioeconomic standings. I love them even though that's kind of corny.
	Reactions about received training/ master's program	I always make myself available to participate in more PDs, because our students run the gamut of issues. The school counseling program didn't help prepare me in college.		

Continued

FP/MP	Themes	Statements	Subthemes	Statements
	Need for additional training/ educational changes	I think the solution is to have the PDs to target the low-income demographic of young people. I think the school counseling programs are in need of aligning with the new curriculum in schools now.		
	Limited resources/ supports	There is no full-time school social worker and psychologist now. I think an outside psychologist and social worker come to the campus twice a week.	A. Impact on role B. Solution-focused approaches	I have to wiggle around in the system to make our program work the best for minority student. Well, getting more resources with funding is always helpful. I think school counselors can collaborate with other schools in urban districts.
FP3	Rewarding experiences with urban minority students	I work well with all my urban students. I'm not sure what it is, but there seem to be students needing a lot more.	A. Responsibilities B. Challenges	I work with the 11th and 12th grades primarily and do most of the college counseling. The challenges I think have to do with the culture of our high school.

Continued

FP/MP	Themes	Statements	Subthemes	Statements
			C. Supportive efforts	I'm always trying to support and offer whatever services is needed. We have funding through students in temporary housing. I give those students supplies without labeling them.
			D. Positive outcomes	Last week, we had alumni day. It's always great to see and hear them talk about their achievements.
	Feeling over-whelmed	After all these years, I don't have a handle on anything to do with mandated counseling and anything with special education.	A. Coping with burnout	When I have a lot on my plate, and a number of students are in need of more help, I refer to the CBO.
			B. Creating balance	I want students to come to me as needed. Based on whatever the situation is at the time it might be academics, but sometimes ranges into personal family issues, etc.

Continued

FP/MP	Themes	Statements	Subthemes	Statements
	Reactions about received training/ master's program	Thinking back to my teacher ed. and counseling programs, I see a distinction on the things we were learning. Some professors provided real examples in schools where others stuck with the textbook. Some strategies did not work for my urban students. Trainings were about new programs online or classroom management techniques. The PDs failed to talk about issues and solutions for urban students.		
	Need for additional training/ educational changes	For the most part, the school counseling program was very abstract. New professional training is needed because they're always changing the regulations.		

Continued

FP/MP	Themes	Statements	Subthemes	Statements
	Limited resources/ supports	Ratio-wise, it seems like the resources and supports we have is still not enough at our high school. The supports are limited for our student population, and it becomes hard for me to manage.	A. Impact on role	It's been challenging because of limited resources that's time, people, and money.
			B. Solution-focused approaches	We can seek more funding through grants to hire more employees and fund more programs at the urban high school.
MP4	Rewarding experiences with urban minority students	When working with urban minority students individually, I am able to be more honest, and they can be themselves. I'm upfront with students, so they get to know how I work as a school counselor. My honest approach helps me work together with students to get to the root of problem. Gradually they open up to me.	A. Responsibilities	When our new principal came, he transferred me to work with 10th and 11th graders.
			B. Challenges	That was challenging for me because the minority ninth graders are just coming from middle to high school, and they're still a bit immature.
			C. Supportive efforts	They don't have much hope. I support the urban students as much as I can if I know their situation.
			D. Positive outcomes	I had students come back this week to visit me at the high school. It feels great to see that growth as young adults.

Continued

FP/MP	Themes	Statements	Subthemes	Statements
	Feeling over-whelmed	I don't have enough time to do counseling because I am busy doing a lot of paperwork and programing throughout the year.	A. Coping with burnout B. Creating balance	I tend to ask the other school counselors for assistance when I have a lot going on. I take breaks whenever I can. I try to help as much as possible. I promote when we're having an event next month to promote college awareness.
	Reactions about received training/ master's program	Recently a lot of the professional developments have been more for data-driven information instead of discussing the urban students. The most important aspect of my school counseling program was the internship and practicum compared to other courses.		

Continued

FP/MP	Themes	Statements	Subthemes	Statements
	Need for additional training/ educational changes	Before technology expanded, the PDs were focused on programs for students. The internship was beneficial compared to the other courses.		
	Limited resources/ supports	The budget has been cut so much the last couple of years that we lost staff and extra programs.	A. Impact on role	I get interruptions throughout the day, so it makes it hard to schedule meetings with students and make time to complete paperwork or other projects.
			B. Solution-focused approaches	I think we need more school counselors and social workers available to work in these urban high schools.
FP5	Rewarding experiences with urban minority students	Our students come from all different walks of life. I connect, learn about them, and their story.	A. Responsibilities	This is my first year having seniors at the high school. I monitor the 12th graders' credits and develop plans with them.
			B. Challenges	The other challenging part was the students with mental health issues and parents not coming to terms with that issue. I think that brings us to no progress.

Continued

FP/MP	Themes	Statements	Subthemes	Statements
			C. Supportive efforts	We do have international students. I talk to them about experiences migrating to the states as a high school student.
			D. Positive outcomes	My former students tend to email, text, or call me. One of them went to my alma mater.
	Feeling over-whelmed	I get a lot of paperwork that's unnecessary at the urban high school.	A. Coping with burnout	We have one school counselor that I often rely on and work collaboratively with to help me out.
			B. Creating balance	I would introduce myself and say hi I'm your counselor. Let me know whatever you need; I'll check back with you later.
	Reactions about received training/ master's program	The PD and counseling courses were nonexistent in preparing to work with the urban population.		
	Need for additional training/ educational changes	Attending more counselor-related PDs like the new comprehensive program and the ACSA Model is needed for counselors in grad programs.		

Continued

FP/MP	Themes	Statements	Subthemes	Statements
	Limited resources/ supports	The high school has a lot of turnaround. When I started, 75 percent of the staff were new to the building. Most of our high students require emotional support, but we don't have the necessary resources.	A. Impact on role	By having to find outside resources from the community takes more time out of my day.
			B. Solution-focused approaches	Well, some of the supports needed are having more Black school counselors to relate to the urban teenagers at the high school.
FP6	Rewarding experiences with urban minority students	I love it, honestly. I will tell the urban students that I wasn't aware of that in your culture. It's enlightening for me.	A. Responsibilities	I'm responsible for the 11th and 12th- grade students.
			B. Challenges	There is a lot of hoops that I and other counselors have to jump through with bureaucracy and things of that nature. I see differences in equity.
			C. Supportive efforts	I am happy to be a resource for the kids. I get speakers to come in and talk with the high school students.
			D. Positive outcomes	They're parents now and have great jobs. It's the biggest achievement I can have as a school counselor.

Continued

FP/MP	Themes	Statements	Subthemes	Statements
	Feeling over-whelmed	The burnout is real because there's a lot of paperwork, even though they said they would reduce it.	A. Coping with burnout B. Creating balance	I will ask for help. I try make a to-do list. But I like to prioritize what needs to happen first. I told them that as long as I am sitting here at this high school, you can always come back and talk to me and I will help you.
	Reactions about received training/ master's program	I'm not going to sit in a PD and pretend the testing agencies know everything about my minority students. In college, they gave some multiculturalism class that wasn't much of anything. It was teaching you about respect.		

Continued

FP/MP	Themes	Statements	Subthemes	Statements
	Need for additional training/ educational changes	There needs to be changes on professional training days. I think you should only go to the training that are important The school counseling program didn't give us enough real-life tangible experiences. And I wanted more.		
	Limited resources/ supports	I am over-worked; we only have the social worker and psychologist at the building once a week. We have some funding for resources, but urban students could use more because of the economic hardships.	A. Impact on role	Administration tries to push student discipline on the school counselors instead of taking care of it themselves or hiring more deans.
			B. Solution-focused approaches	Again, one hundred percent we need more mental health agencies to help our students out.

Continued

FP/MP	Themes	Statements	Subthemes	Statements
FP7	Rewarding experiences with urban minority students	I follow up with a call if for an ethnic group. Some parents call back if they are not busy at work to talk about the student. Parents of the ethnic groups like when I schedule appointments later in the day. After all the calls and meetings, they thank me.	A. Responsibilities	I have a bilingual license, and they wanted me to work with ENL and general ed. students.
			B. Challenges	The students don't always come back to me. They have more connections with the teachers.
			C. Supportive efforts	I believe in using my title as a resource to advocate for minority teenagers. And speak up for the students.
			D. Positive outcomes	I love to see the students graduate. And end up going to a good college that they want to go to. A student from 2 years ago went to Yale.
	Feeling over-whelmed	I feel burned out and overwhelmed at the high school because of a large population.	A. Coping with burnout	I tend to rest, sing, do puzzles, other hobbies, and use my inner strength from my God. I also have mutual help from the bilingual counselor.
			B. Creating balance	Not giving up is something I've been teaching the kids. I never give up on helping students and parents.

Continued

FP/MP	Themes	Statements	Subthemes	Statements
	Reactions about received training/ master's program	Ironically, I don't remember everything because, at that time, it was only 45 credits. We need good professional training to help the urban minority students and families.		
	Need for additional training/ educational changes	Yes, the professional training is a must. Has to be a good quality one with relevant topics. School counseling programs should have online assessments available for graduate students to access. It's a tool used by school counselors to focus on college and career planning.		

Continued

FP/MP	Themes	Statements	Subthemes	Statements
	Limited resources/ supports	We need more staff at the urban high school because of the large population. We don't have enough full-time staff to balance all the work. I feel restricted because of the limited resources offered at our high school.	A. Impact on role B. Solution-focused approaches	There are just too many things going with my role and work as a bilingual counselor. I believe admins need to hire more guidance counselors because of the increase of urban minority students at our high school.
FP8	Rewarding experiences with urban minority students	It has been a learning curve working in the urban high schools. I found myself learning about the different cultures in the public school.	A. Responsibilities B. Challenges C. Supportive efforts D. Positive outcomes	I currently work with 11th and 12th grade. I constantly check-in with my kids. Some of the challenges I'm faced with the students is mental health issues, truancy, students in shelters, and lack of parental involvement. I try to be flexible and carefully listen to the high school students to support them. I frequently check in with them. It feels amazing to see students thrive. I am happy to share this year we had a 95% student graduation rate.

Continued

FP/MP	Themes	Statements	Subthemes	Statements
	Feeling over-whelmed	I feel overwhelmed and burned out because of the roles and responsibilities put on me by administration.	A. Coping with burnout	Over time, I learned to set boundaries and speak up against the nonrelated school counseling tasks.
			B. Creating balance	I know low-income students have to do a lot on their own since parents are busy working. I often reach out and meet with them one-on-one.
	Reactions about received training/ master's program	Certain PDs can be a little repetitive. Some are great, and some are not. The internships and practicum allowed me to work with different student populations.		

Continued

FP/MP	Themes	Statements	Subthemes	Statements
	Need for additional training/ educational changes	Professional training needs to talk about the different cultures, how to work with them, and the economic deficits transpiring. Because of my college experience, I would advise professors to discuss the different tools, resources, computer programs, and other systems in place at schools now.		
	Limited resources/ supports	We do not have enough school counselors in our department. I'm afraid next year, our resources will be reduced again because of the pandemic impact.	A. Impact on role	The limited resources and supports have made it more challenging for my role and responsibilities.
			B. Solution-focused approaches	I think more centralized supervision and PD allied lessons for school counselors in urban schools.