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Grade 3 Teachers' Perceptions of Challenges and Supports in Addressing Socioemotional Needs of African American Students

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This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Lavina Nicole Covin

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

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Walden University
2023

Abstract

Grade 3 Teachers' Perceptions of Challenges and Supports in Addressing Socioemotional

Needs of African American Students

by

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EdS, Georgia Southwestern State University, 2018

MEd, Georgia Southwestern State University, 2017

BSEd, Albany State University, 2015

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

November 2023

Abstract

Empirical evidence from researchers suggested that socioemotional learning is essential to academic success, reducing negative behaviors, and building confidence and resilience. The problem explored in this basic qualitative study was that Grade 3 teachers in Title I schools were not adequately equipped to handle African American students' socioemotional and mental health needs. Guided by Seligman's positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishments theory, the purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the perceptions of 10 local district Title I Grade 3 teachers regarding the challenges they face, and support they need to provide adequate socioemotional and mental health interventions for low-income African American children. Research questions examined participants' perceptions of the challenges faced with implementing socioemotional learning and the supports they need to teach socioemotional education effectively. Grade 3 Title I teachers completed semistructured interviews using Zoom. Data were analyzed looking for patterns to produce codes, categories, and themes. Using Saldaña's 3-cycle coding process, 51 codes were collapsed into 11 categories. Three themes emerged to answer the research questions: challenges with using more than curriculum and program to support African American students, shared experienced setbacks with teaching socioemotional learning, and district leaders' consideration of using cultural experiences to support teachers' culturally relevant approaches. Findings from this study can be used to create positive social change by considering the perceptions of Grade 3 teachers for local district leaders to effectively tailor to the socioemotional needs of African American students.

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Dedication

This qualitative dissertation and my doctoral journey are dedicated to my

beautiful children, Jalisa, Bernard, Timilia, Julia, and glam baby Janova. I am grateful for

the growth I have acquired as a single teen mother living in poverty for many years.

Vowing to change my circumstances and become a lifelong learner has helped shape me

into a caring, loving, and understanding mother and educator. I would also like to

dedicate this study to all the students I have and will teach in the future. I vow to

continuously instill in my children, granddaughter, and students that they can be anything

they want regardless of their upbringing and current situation. To my wonderful mother

and father, thank you for never giving up on me, even when you had many reasons.

Finally, to the love of my life Jemari, thank you for entering my life and showing me the

meaning of unconditional love. I love you all and am forever grateful for your support.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

This basic qualitative study was conducted to address the problem that local

district Grade 3 teachers in Title I schools are not adequately equipped to handle African

American students' socioemotional and mental health needs. Research supports a long-

overdue need to consider implications such as inequality, poverty, and racism to

implement cultural interventions within schools that promote socioemotional learning in

African American communities (Gardner-Neblett et al., 2023; Hayashi et al., 2022;

Legette et al., 2022). African American children have been historically neglected in

society based on race, culture, or economic and educational status (Humphries et al.,

2018; Legette et al., 2022; Rogers et al., 2022; Stephens, 2023). Neglect of

socioemotional developmental health needs does not fall short of the marginalization of

African American children's educational services. (Rogers et al., 2022).

Conducting this study contributed to social change by understanding local district

Grade 3 teachers' perceptions of challenges faced and the support needed when

implementing socioemotional learning interventions for African American students.

Findings from this study contribute to social change by making local district leaders

aware of the importance of culturally based practices suitable for a predominantly low-

income Black learning community. Findings also identified specific challenges and

further support teachers' need to adequately support African American students in the

local Title I school district. A rationalization of the background, problem statement,

purpose of the study, research questions, conceptual framework, nature of the study,

definitions, assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, significance, and a summary are provided in Chapter 1.

Background

Researchers found that African Americans experiences related to poverty and culture, such as instability and crime, can play a role in the development of children's socioemotional or mental state (Boatwright & Midcalf, 2019; Legette et al., 2022; Rogers et al., 2022). According to the Kids Count Data Center (2022), 23% of students are being treated for an emotional behavior or developmental condition in Georgia schools. Data from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2022) also analyzed that 22% of students in the United States below the 100% poverty line have a mental, behavioral, or developmental disorder. Georgia schools have 461,000 children who live 100% in poverty and serve 503,789 African American students in Title I schools (see Kids Count Data Center, 2022). Locally, 68% of African American students are learning in the Title I district, with 23% of families living below the poverty line (see National Center for Education Statistics, 2022).

Socioemotional learning should be approached according to the cultural context, school climate, and community considerations, when implementing interventions for African American students (Chu et al., 2021; Heimer, 2020; Serpell et al., 2022). Chu et al. (2021) concentrated on well-developed socioemotional learning approaches to support teachers with understanding, implementing, and teaching socioemotional learning throughout daily routines. Chu et al. concluded that leaders must incorporate socioemotional learning in schools by identifying mutual organizational methods, data

collection, and knowledge of what teachers and staff need to implement strategies effectively. Heimer (2020) found that preservice teachers lacked racial awareness. He also concluded there is a vital need for exposure to racial, linguistic, cultural, and economic discussions in underrepresented classroom environments. Serpell et al. (2022) discovered that when compared to Caucasian students, teachers are not as competent in working with African Americans and they recommended assessments, educational placement, and interventions that acknowledges racial factors. It is also vital to consider student well-being and realities of environments when implementing culturally responsive interventions.

Local district Title I elementary school faculty and Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS) meeting minutes documented reports from teachers that students have demonstrated increased socioemotional and behavioral difficulties in classrooms since the COVID-19 pandemic. Such difficulties include low engagement, ongoing interruptions in the learning environment, loss of instructional time, and challenges when working with others. Meeting minutes reflect teachers are reporting increased difficulties with classroom management due to student misbehavior, ability to manage emotions, and social concerns with peers (teacher, personal communication, December 8, 2021). Teachers also voiced concerns about the level of support they receive when dealing with challenges related to socioemotional learning. Teachers still struggle with supporting familiar students even with the research based PBIS program to support positive behavior interventions. PBIS is described as a three-tiered preventative program framed to support

positive student behavior that is commonly used in schools and districts to improve behavior and academics (see Kittelman et al., 2019).

District, state, and nationwide teachers conveyed how returning to in-person learning for the 2021-2022 school year following recent effects from the pandemic played a significant role in additional setbacks for Title I students' socioemotional development (see Boatwright & Midcalf, 2019; Hamilton et al., 2021; district ambassadors, personal communication, October 13, 2021). Experiences from the pandemic added additional layers of stress to African American children. Many destructive effects from the pandemic affected the lives and socioemotional experiences of every student and added to reasoning teachers are not adequately and equally servicing students' socioemotional and mental health (see Beard et al., 2021; Hamilton et al., 2021; Zaiaznick, 2020).

Local stakeholders, including teachers, students, parents, district leaders, and community members, agree that adverse effects from the recent global COVID-19 pandemic have affected student socioemotional and mental health (see teacher, personal communication, September 16, 2021; district ambassadors, October 13, 2021; Stafford, 2021; Zaiaznick, 2020). An evident gap in practice was found within local school meeting minutes from October 2021 to February 2022 on teachers' concerns about student socioemotional development and the challenges faced with incorporating interventions for socioemotional learning. Stakeholders and supporters have begun to realize that teachers need to better address student's socioemotional development.

Prior studies that focused on socioemotional learning were related to cultural responsiveness, racism or fairness, research-based strategies or interventions, teacher knowledge, engagement, training, school and community climate and involvement, and student-teacher relationships (Beard et al., 2021; Ferreira et al., 2020; Hayashi et al., 2022; Larson et al., 2020; Owens et al., 2019). Further studies are needed to address unfairness, school climates, and teacher supports for African American students in lower-income and urban schools to improve socioemotional development (Ferreira et al., 2020; Humphries et al., 2018; Larson et al., 2020). Several suggestions for further research on addressing socioemotional adversities and inequalities for African American students are influential and currently found in the literature (Hayashi et al., 2022; McCallops et al., 2019; Owens et al., 2019; Serpell et al., 2022). Therefore, my basic qualitative study was needed because the lack of addressing socioemotional needs and adversities for African American students in low-income schools both locally and nationally has been identified as a social crisis requiring attention (see Gardner-Neblett et al., 2023; Lambert et al., 2022; Rogers et al., 2022; Schlemper et al., 2023; Stephens, 2023).

Problem Statement

The problem is that local district Grade 3 teachers in Title I schools are not adequately equipped to address African American students' socioemotional and mental health needs. Adversities such as crime that African American children living in poverty face contribute to increased socioemotional and behavioral difficulties (Boatwright & Midcalf, 2019; Hirn et al., 2018). This rise has resulted in increased socioemotional and mental health diagnoses that have started to demand responsiveness (Boatwright &

Midcalf, 2019; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2022; Individuals with Disability Education Act, 2022; McCallops et al., 2019; Serpell et al., 2022; Stephens, 2023). A total of 484,164 Georgia students experience effects from a social, emotional, behavioral, or developmental condition (Kids Count Data Center, 2022). The United States Department of Health and Human Services (2022) reported that 42.2% of emotional disturbance disorders include children and adolescents. Statistics from the Kids Count Data Center (2022) also supported that 503,789 students in Georgia make up Title I school's population. Locally, 68% of African American students are served in a Title I school, 23% of students are living below the poverty line, and 3.7% of those students have a disability within the district (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022). Furthermore, Baughman et al. (2020) supported that lacking socioemotional competence is related to attention deficit disorder, anxiety, depression, or bipolar disorder, which often hinders students' academic achievement.

Efforts at a local level to support socioemotional learning are evident with a district-wide curriculum-based interactive socioemotional learning curriculum and PBIS however, local conversations and research justify teachers need more support in addressing the socioemotional needs for the African American culture (see Dyson et al., 2021; grade level chair, personal communication, November 9, 2021). Dyson et al. (2021) found gaps for further qualitative study explorations on understanding the realities teachers face daily surrounding socioemotional learning. Additionally, Campbell et al. (2023) and Rogers et al. (2022) supported that African American children are long overdue for attention on socioemotional learning to address historical gaps. African

American children are more likely to be born into poverty, continuously experience historical racism, have greater chances of academic failure, and be stereotyped or embraced by the culture and reputation (Boatwright & Midcalf, 2019; Dunn et al., 2022).

Sustainable wellbeing literacy implementations helps produce behavioral change within whole-school programs that incorporate cognitive and behavioral principles of revolution in education with students as active participants (Ronen & Kerret, 2020). Wellbeing literacy is the discussion concerning vocabulary, knowledge, and skills related to improving the wellbeing of individuals (Ronen & Kerret, 2020). Understanding how children's mental, socioemotional, and physical health and well-being is affected by living in poverty remains essential for in-service and preservice teachers. Cultural and community understanding could create equal educational learning experiences that contribute to students becoming lifelong learners (Boatwright & Midcalf, 2019; Heimer, 2020; Humphries et al., 2018). This study was essential as it helped address a significant gap in practice by identifying and understanding realities teachers face daily with socioemotional learning for African American students.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the perceptions of local district Title I Grade 3 teachers' regarding the challenges they face and the support they need in providing adequate socioemotional and mental health interventions for low-income African American children. Local faculty meetings, professional developments, PBIS meetings, and personal conversations with various teachers identified challenges with repetitive socioemotional, mental health, or behavioral patterns for some African

American students (faculty meeting minutes, October, 2021; PBIS team meeting minutes, November, 2021; gifted teacher, personal communication, September, 2021). Previous conclusions guided by researchers such as Boatwright and Midcalf (2019) and Serpell et al. (2022), discovered that more research for African American students is needed related to challenges and supports to deliver effective socioemotional interventions in low-income schools. Boatwright and Midcalf, Jones et al. (2020), and Stephens (2023) proposed that socioemotional learning should involve equality, understanding of racism and poverty, how schools are supporting, and being culturally relevant to African American students. More research on socioemotional learning for African American students will aid in closing historical educational gaps (see Boatwright & Midcalf, 2019; Jones et al., 2020).

Academic achievement gaps are closely related to students' socioemotional development. With proper attention, effective intervention delivery, and stakeholder support, African American students can benefit from adequate socioemotional learning (Ferreira et al., 2020; Hamilton et al., 2021; Lambert et al., 2022). Unlike existing studies, this research could help provide data by pinpointing specific realistic challenges teachers face and what support they may need to effectively implement socioemotional learning for Title I African American students. Experiences, conversations, and gaps in the literature and practice have led to the interest in exploring local district Grade 3 teachers' perceptions on socioemotional learning. Interviews were conducted with 10 current local district Grade 3 teachers that had at least 3 years of teaching experience to

address gaps associated with socioemotional learning for African American children residing in poverty.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

RQ1: What are the perceptions of local district Title I Grade 3 teachers regarding the challenges they face in incorporating positive emotion, engagement, relationship, meaning, and accomplishment (PERMA) to provide adequate socioemotional and mental health interventions for low-income African American children?

RQ2: What are the perceptions of local district Title I Grade 3 teachers regarding the support they need to better incorporate positive emotion, engagement, relationship, meaning, and accomplishment (PERMA) in providing adequate socioemotional and mental health interventions for low-income African American children?

Conceptual Framework for the Study

A fundamental concept of this study is the need to adequately address socioemotional and mental health intervention delivery for African American children. The conceptual framework that guided this research study was grounded on Seligman's (1998) positive emotion, engagement, relationship, meaning, and accomplishment (PERMA) theory. Concepts from PERMA are supported by foundational psychology theories such as Jahoda's (1958) positive psychological functioning theory and Rogers (1959) humanistic psychology theory, providing insight into the mindset and how individuals are responsible for happiness and daily functioning (Fisher & Lerner, 2005). Seligman (1998) suggested using positive psychology to build upon factors contributing

to flourishing within individuals, communities, and societies. Building up the five PERMA domains can help to prevent mental illness and promote overall well-being.

Grounding my study on PERMA provided a framework for essential elements that build upon promoting overall well-being in individuals by incorporating interventions surrounding the elements (Seligman, 2018). This framework is grounded in the PERMA theory and based on the five essential domains surrounding socioemotional and mental illness support and prevention. The conceptual framework guided the research questions answered in this study. In addition, the conceptual framework was used to guide my investigation to answer the questions by exploring local district Grade 3 teachers' perceptions of challenges and supports for effective socioemotional interventions surrounding PERMA elements.

Five of the interview questions I created for collecting data were directly related to PERMA elements aimed at gaining a better insight of how teachers provide interventions relating to overall well-being of African American children. Data collection procedures included semistructured scripted interviews with 10 Grade 3 teachers within a local Title I school district in the southeastern part of the United States. To analyze data, I used open coding during Cycle 1 and descriptive coding for Cycle 2. Summaries of interviews were provided to participants for the member checking process. A more detailed outline of the conceptual framework and how it aligned to this study is presented in Chapter 2.

Nature of the Study

This basic qualitative design with interviews was conducted to explore the perceptions of local district Title I Grade 3 teachers regarding the challenges they face and support they need in providing adequate socioemotional and mental health interventions for low-income African American children. Socioemotional competence is directly linked to student achievement, overall well-being, and health (El Mallah, 2022; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), while socioemotional inadequacy has been linked to destructive outcomes such as mental illness, behavior problems, and lack of academic success (Ferreira et al., 2020). A basic qualitative study was the most appropriate choice for my exploration in addressing the research questions because I could collect nonnumerical data to understand better challenges, supports, experiences, and opinions from perceptions of local district Title I Grade 3 teachers. Qualitative interviews are expanded beyond numeration (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

Early childhood curriculum and pedagogy developed a reviewed and approved interview protocol. Rubin and Rubin (2012) educated qualitative interviews to allow researchers to explore the experiences of individuals by asking questions and or observing to understand situations better. I collected data and incorporated the transcribing addition by using the Zoom digital audio platform to conduct the interviews. I transcribed, coded, recoded, and analyzed findings using a thematic analysis process. In Chapter 3, I further explain the methodology related to this study.

Definitions

Cultural responsiveness: Cultural responsiveness is defined as curricula and assessment approaches to teaching which was developed to characterize schools based on demographical data including race and ethical backgrounds while focusing on embracing the importance of student experience and cultures in educational settings (Cherfas et al., 2021; Murray, 2021).

Positive emotion, engagement, relationship, meaning, and accomplishment (PERMA): PERMA is described as a theory influencing life satisfaction by promoting happiness founded by Seligman in 1998 focusing on five elements: positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment to promote well-being (Hidayat et al., 2020; Seligman, 2018).

Poverty: Poverty is defined as the magnitude an individual undergoes without financial, emotional, mental, spiritual, physical, support systems or role models, and the knowledge of hidden rules (Boatwright & Midcalf, 2019).

Research-based strategies: Research-based learning strategies are defined as a concept linking teaching and research, including outcomes that help enlighten innovative teaching, research processes related to teaching methods, using tools within research, and emerging wide-ranging research content (Khuana et al., 2017).

Socioemotional learning (SEL): Socioemotional learning is defined as a practice of helping students to develop thought, emotion, and behavior patterns to undertake vital social tasks within society such as promoting healthy relationships (Dyson et al., 2021; El Mallah, 2022; Ferreira et al., 2020).

Title I Schools: Title 1 schools is defined as school settings which receive additional federal funds to improve academic achievement for disadvantaged students in impoverished communities with higher poverty level percentages (Hirn et al., 2018).

Well-being: Well-being can be defined as an aspect of positive psychology in which humans live and evaluate meanings of life satisfaction, happiness, regulation of positive emotion, and thrive personally and socially in life (Benoit & Gabola, 2021; Ronen & Kerret, 2020).

Assumptions

Knowledge attained from being an educator, caused to make assumptions based off experiences for this basic qualitative study with interviews. Rubin and Rubin (2012) suggested that assumptions vary in the researcher's neutrality inclining how research is carried out and reported. According to Ravitch and Carl (2021), four philosophical assumptions, ontology, epistemology, axiology, and methodology, assist in informing qualitative studies. Initially, I assumed that the responses gained from interview participants represent educators' actual experiences and perceptions about the challenges they face and support they may need regarding teaching socioemotional learning to African American students living in poverty.

I also assumed that participants specified valid responses related to obligatory criteria: present Grade 3 teacher with a minimum of 3 years of teaching experience and currently working in the local Title I school district. Another assumption was that all teacher participants were familiar with this study's basic concepts. Basic concepts include socioemotional learning, positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning,

accomplishment, poverty, the African American culture, and cultural responsiveness. My final assumption was that each participant provided open, truthful, and accurate responses with compassion for their students. According to Grove (2015), assumptions are guided by conscious awareness of an individual perception through participation and observational experiences.

Scope and Delimitations

Conferring to Burkholder et al. (2020), the scope of a research study frames the broad group for research. This study was focused on exploring the perceptions of the challenges and support teachers may need to implement socioemotional learning effectively. The scope of the study was initially restricted to 10-15 Grade 3 classroom teachers working in the local Title I school district. Only 10 teachers showed interest and solidified interviews within a respectable timeframe. Teacher participation in this study was voluntary. Recruitment selections were chosen by emailing teachers through the local district platform. A letter for recruitment was composed to include a list of approved requirements. I also provided a clear explanation of the criteria for volunteer participation. This documentation was distributed through teacher emails as follows: seeking Grade 3 teachers with 3 years or more of teaching experience currently working in a local Title I school. Any educators who had fewer than 3 years of teaching experience and do not currently teach in a local Title I school were not considered for the study. Teachers willing to contribute to the study received an incentive as a special thank you gift for participating.

Delimitations are based on personal choices and were used in my research study, including participant terms and location (see Burkholder et al., 2020). Personal and professional experiences, my current role as an educator, and my passion for African American children and socioemotional learning in early childhood education has guided my decision to explore teachers' perceptions of socioemotional learning. I aim to help create positive change by increasing attention and awareness by understanding the realities of teachers' challenges and supports when implementing socioemotional learning. Stakeholders and leaders would gain awareness and knowledge about the importance of effectively supporting socioemotional learning in low-income schools and could result in helping close many gaps associated with African American children. My area of concentration is early childhood; therefore, another delimitation was that I only focused on Grade 3 teachers. Due to delimitations of this study, transferability may be limitedly present. Ravitch and Carl (2021) stated that transferability in qualitative research focuses on how the study can be applicable or transferable within a broader context without hindering the richness of the context. I wrote rich, concentrated reports of data collected from Grade 3 teachers with 3 years or more of teaching experience, and currently working in the local Title I district, positioning my transferability (see Munthe-Kaas et al., 2020).

Limitations

Limitations are identified weaknesses in a research design method that have been announced to include possible limits during data collection (Burkholder et al., 2020). Burkholder et al. (2020) suggested that the researcher must identify and explain ways to

overcome any weaknesses that could potentially limit collecting data. Three potential

challenges limiting this study are teacher overload or burnout, pandemic restrictions, and

bias in the researcher. Initially, it was challenging to identify and select teachers for

participation and solidify interview times because of teachers' busy schedules. Teacher

burnout has evolved into a modern epidemic. The global alarm leads to one of the

topmost motives' teachers leave the profession due to stress, mismanagement, and

exhaustion (Georgia Department of Education & University of Georgia, 2022; Russell et

al., 2020). Email communications and snowballing were used to assist with any

recruitment limitations for teachers that possibly met the criteria.

  The second limitation, recent pandemic restrictions, could limit in-person

interviews because of mask mandates and fluctuating spread of COVID-19. Potential

limitations were addressed by using audio recordings for participant interviews. All

interviews were conducted on the Zoom recording platform to limit in person contact.

Additionally, rescheduling of interviews due to participants contracting COVID-19 was

respected. Participants were allowed a respectful amount of time to recover and

reschedule their interviews.

  The final limitation of this study was a personal bias toward the study. Burkholder

et al. (2020) supported the idea that bracketing aids qualitative researchers without

tainting the research process by recognizing personal influences to alleviate

preconceptions. I remained mindful throughout this study of my role as the researcher,

my personality and reflexivity were neutrally interconnected to my views surrounding

early childhood education. Reflective journaling was used to bracket biases (see

Burkholder et al., 2020).

Limitations may have affected the transferability and dependability of this study

as some participants may have been too overloaded to provide in-depth responses.

Restrictions from the pandemic may not affect the transferability because all interviews

were electronically conducted. Nonetheless, with COVID-19 still present in the

southeastern region of the United States, interviews were rescheduled by some

participants and contacting the illness could have been the possible cause. Limitations

could also affect the transferability and dependability of personal bias during transcribing

if participants do not provide clarifying open-ended responses. Reviewing audio

recordings serval times helped with preventing personal bias with nonclarified responses.

Significance

This study's significance will help contribute to the gap in practice by identifying

and understanding the support local district Grade 3 teachers may need to implement

effective socioemotional and mental health interventions that specifically support African

American students in Title I schools. In addition, studies linked to socioemotional

learning for African American students recommend further research to explore racial

equity understandings, cultural responsiveness, and how socioemotional learning

strategies are presented and used in classrooms (Dyson et al., 2021; El Mallah, 2022;

Humphries et al., 2018; Jones et al., 2020). Evidence within Title I schools helped prompt

my study because before the COVID-19 pandemic, early childhood teachers locally and

nationally voiced increased concerns regarding student socioemotional and behavior

challenges (Hamilton et al., 2021). Those concerns aligned with how implementing

positive behavior supports or socioemotional strategies for some of the 484,164 Georgia

students in poverty causes extra strain to meet academic expectations (see Georgia

Department of Education & University of Georgia, 2022; faculty meeting minutes,

October, 2021; Kids Count Data Center, 2022; PBIS team meeting minutes, November

2021; United States Department of Education, 2021). Moreover, Hamilton et al. (2021)

noted that schools' inabilities to support students' socioemotional development was

because of limited in-person learning which significantly affected education during the

pandemic.

During the 2021-2022 school year, conversations and concerns were voiced in

local district Title I school faculty, professional developments, and PBIS meetings that

some elementary students demonstrated a lack of social characteristics and the inability to

deal with emotions causing inappropriate behaviors that hinder school climates.

Examples of behaviors discussed include fighting, negative social interactions with peers,

class disruptions, and lack of motivation. Hamilton et al. (2021) stated that

socioemotional development embraces self-awareness and skillful communication skills.

Socioemotional learning strategies and practices are used to help students develop skills

to support student success beyond school. Providing effective socioemotional learning

strategies for development in underrepresented cultures was vital before the pandemic

and is now more crucial than ever in closing educational gaps for African American

students (Beard et al., 2021; El Mallah, 2022; Kearl, 2022). Benefits of effective

socioemotional learning include improving relationships, expanding self-efficacy,

increasing academic achievement, and the ability to handle societal issues (El Mallah, 2022; Ferreira et al., 2020; Gardner-Neblett et al., 2023; Schnittka Hoskins, 2021). However, students lacking adequate socioemotional development struggle with building relationships, present behavior patterns, exhibit stress, anxiety, or depression, and have lower academic achievement levels (Lambert et al., 2022; Lee et al., 2023).

This study is also significant because stakeholders can better understand teachers' realities of challenges and what they need to effectively nurture students' socioemotional development by evaluating existing programs and identifying necessary professional development. Findings could lead to implementing holistic or nonholistic, research-based, and whole-school interventions supporting African American student's culture. Beard et al. (2021), Cherfas et al. (2021), and Dyson et al. (2021) reinforced the need for teacher support to deliver socioemotional learning effectively using holistic or nonholistic approaches based on the culture to support African American students. Stakeholders that would gain a better understanding include students, teachers, families, administrators, district leaders, and policymakers. Finally, this study is significant because it would help support current positive psychology research using the PERMA theory. It will also support teachers who need to implement socioemotional learning within Title I classrooms and schools effectively. Potential implications for social change could include increasing teacher awareness and understanding the importance of effectively implementing socioemotional learning strategies for African American students based on need, culture, and equality in Title I schools.

Summary

In Chapter 1, I described this basic qualitative study using interviews to explore local district Grade 3 teachers' challenges and support for delivering effective socioemotional learning strategies to African American students in Title I schools. The conceptual framework was grounded on Seligman's (1998) PERMA theory which guided the research questions, methodology, and data collection and analysis. In Chapter 1, I delivered a description of the problem, purpose, research questions, conceptual framework, nature of the study, definitions, assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, and significance relating to this qualitative design. Chapter 2 includes a thorough literature review of previous and current research related to challenges and supports schools, and teachers face with implementing culturally relevant, effective socioemotional learning strategies for African American students in Title I schools (see Cherfas et al., 2021; Dyson et al., 2021; Hayashi et al., 2022; Humphries et al., 2018).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this basic qualitative study using interviews I addressed the problem that local district Grade 3 teachers in Title I schools are not adequately equipped to address African American students' socioemotional and mental health needs. The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of local district Title I Grade 3 teachers regarding the challenges they face and support they need in providing adequate socioemotional and mental health interventions for low-income African American children. Current research has solidified the importance of socioemotional learning including the need for adequate teacher training to deliver practices in urban/rural schools, the relationship to academic success, and overall individual well-being (El Mallah, 2022; Tnay et al., 2020). Research identified that socioemotional learning interventions should be culturally responsive, promote equality, and be tailored to meet student needs (Hayashi et al., 2022; McCallops et al., 2019; Thomas & Sebastian, 2023).

In Chapter 2, I justify using PERMA as the conceptual framework for this study. I also present a review of the literature relating to socioemotional and mental health of African American children residing in poverty and inequities within the United States and abroad. My investigation focuses on gaining a deeper understanding of the socioemotional learning phenomena and isolating gaps within practice. The literature review is intended to ensure that previous literature and topics related to socioemotional learning among African American schools are comprehensively presented. Headings in Chapter 2 involve a review of existing literature sustaining significance of the problem

through a literature search strategy, conceptual framework with a chronological outlook on PERMA, a literature review related to key variables and concepts, and a summary.

Literature Search Strategy

A widespread search for available literature has been conducted over several months. Ravitch and Carl (2021) supported the idea that literature reviews assist researchers with making sense of concepts that help develop arguments for goals, rationales, and significance of studies related to the problem. Literature reviews also demonstrate knowledge obtained by the researcher, isolating what research has been conducted and gaps for further investigations, and the possibility of gaining new or innovative perspectives (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Additional search strategies were suggested when two meetings were held with a Walden University librarian on isolating key terms and utilizing library resources. Literature supporting this study was found from several database sources including Annie E. Casey Foundation, EBSCO, Education Source, ERIC, Google Scholar, Sage Journals, the Urban Journal, and the United States Department of Health and Human Services.

Listed key terms related to literature within this study was used in seclusion or combined in assorted categories to maximize a systematic and inclusive search strategy: *socioemotional learning, emotional behavioral disorder, depression, anxiety, stress, mental disorders, positive psychology, African American children, poverty, Title I schools, urban culture, whole-school approaches, school climate or cultures, socioemotional research-based strategies,* and *teacher perceptions on socioemotional learning.* Other key terms accompanying with the inclusive search strategy are as

follows: *mindfulness, holistic approaches to socioemotional learning, emotion regulation in children, CASEL, teacher effectiveness, professional development, culturally responsive and the relationship between socioemotional learning, transformative model,* and *systematic racism in African American schools.* Key terms were chosen related to all aspects of socioemotional learning, including effects on African American children residing in poverty. Terms related to using positive psychology as it promotes overall well-being and academic achievement were also related to aspects of my search strategy.

Conceptual Framework

PERMA theory is grounded on human well-being by promoting positive emotion accompanying societal flourishment (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Trask-Kerr et al., 2019). Teachers in educational settings face difficulties providing adequate socioemotional learning approaches for African American children in Title I schools, and the problem requires attention (see Beard et al., 2021; Dyson et al., 2021; Faculty meeting minutes, October, 2021; Gardner-Neblett et al., 2023; PBIS team meeting minutes, November 2021). Connecting PERMA to providing practical socioemotional learning approaches will help build foundational skills within students related to overall well-being development. In addition, maintaining positive emotion regulation decreases illness and increases wellness surrounding positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

Positive psychology is linked to the purpose of my study because the perceptions of challenges and supports shared by local district Grade 3 teachers focused on building and nurturing PERMA elements. The connection between the study and theory supported

the need for further research on socioemotional learning for African American students.

Providing interventions at an early age also outlines the importance of promoting

PERMA and well-being for the African American culture linking to the purpose of my

study. Connecting Seligman's (1998) PERMA theory to my methodological choice for

qualitative research by interviewing local district Grade 3 teachers is relatable.

Understanding effective interventions surrounding poverty adversities and PERMA

elements could be crucial for building thriving environments within struggling African

American students' schools and communities.

Chronological Outlook on PERMA

In 1998, Seligman developed a theory from learned helplessness to positive

psychology. Seligman proposed to alter his recent theory of learned helplessness in a

more positive direction to promote characteristics associated with making life worth

living (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Seligman's theory was built upon the

awareness that psychology was more grounded on negative aspects yet introducing

positive human functions and acceptance would help individuals erect themselves into

thriving individuals for society.

Three years later, Seligman and Pawelski (2003) collaborated on providing

answers to address seven surface questions surrounding the newfound positive

psychology theory. One of the seven questions inquired whether positive psychology was

"happiology"? Seligman and Pawelski answered by explaining "thus positive psychology

is not, and has never been, just happiology" and "It is the mere study of three very

different kinds of positive lives the pleasant life, the good life, and the meaningful life"

(p. 161). They defined psychology as work focusing on human problems and is not intended to overlook empirical literature on negative psychology but to focus more on positive psychology when experiencing tribulations.

Positive and negative psychological emotions are not separable, and effects depend on an individual's influence from culture, goals, or purpose (Devlin et al., 2023; Gardner-Neblett et al., 2023; Hidayat et al., 2020; Seligman & Pawelski, 2003). Regardless of how individuals handle negative emotions, they can lead to a better understanding of positive emotions while knowing positive emotions are adversary progressions of negative emotions. Seligman and Pawelski (2003) also noted that positive psychology is not merely about happiness but also about living a pleasant, reasonable, and meaningful life using strengths and virtues. They supported shortcuts from wealthier cultures, such as shopping helps to produce positive emotion without using learned strengths and virtues of character traits.

Individuals' ability to identify and familiarize strengths and virtues is derived and dependent on the success of individual positive psychology regardless of class, culture, ethnicity, nationality, gender, or age (Seligman & Pawelski, 2003). Seligman and Pawelski (2003) also explained that positive psychology research has contributed to discoveries, including the relationship between positive emotion regulation for children, widows, physicians, and individuals that remained optimistic through troubling times. On the contrary, they discovered that wealth does not have a beneficial relationship with happiness across and within nations (Seligman & Pawelski, 2003). Seligman and Pawelski stated, "positive psychology is one of the best ways to help suffering people is

to focus on positive things" and "persons who are impoverished, depressed, or suicidal care far more than merely the relief of their suffering" (p.162). When faced with adversities, an individual's understanding of character strengths and virtues can potentially help with hardships.

Within 2 years, Seligman collaborated with other researchers to provide an update on the progression of positive psychology interventions (Seligman et al., 2005). Seligman et al. (2005) investigated books, meetings, courses, and conference developments that have advanced from the start of positive psychology. The authors found a plethora of valuable information has emerged and argued that findings are intended to supplement solid research on handling human suffering, weaknesses, and health disorders. Seligman et al. supported the notion that positive psychology involves understanding and building positive emotions and character strengths that help individuals flourish in life. The character strengths virtues (CSV) highlights six virtues: wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, temperance, and transcendence are common across worldwide cultures. However, 24-character strengths associated with those virtues are not universal and dependent on various characteristics, including yet not limited to enabling or disabling conditions, gender, or cultural differences. For example, open-mindedness, persistence, kindness, teamwork, forgiveness, self-regulation, and hope are some character strengths related to virtues (Seligman et al., 2005). Positive psychology interventions surrounding character strengths and virtues contribute to embracing favorableness within individuals.

Character strengths such as love, hope, and gratitude are highly associated with life satisfaction (Seligman et al., 2005). Seligman et al. (2005) recognized the positive

association between lasting happiness and interventions aligning with positive

psychology. However, the population for this study included well-educated, financially

stable, White participants, and future research is needed to determine the efficacy for

other populations. Variations in ethical and cultural backgrounds, those that are less

fortunate, and those who are more depressive should be included in future studies

concerning effects of positive psychology (Seligman et al., 2005). Additionally,

meetings, the implementation of graduate and undergraduate courses, and the creation of

websites and research centers, which have helped evolve literature associated with

applying strengths in positive psychology has also been a progression within the

psychological community (Seligman et al., 2005). Promoting positive psychology has

gained attention and discovered that it is important to include various cultural

backgrounds when considering effectiveness.

Kern et al. (2015) conducted one of the first empirical investigations with

adolescents in educational settings as a starting point to build support for Seligman's

PERMA model. The researchers explored if applying the PERMA theory in positive

education through a multidimensional approach could be measured in youth samples.

They examined if PERMA factors could be recovered from well-being assessment items,

if negative and positive aspects are notable, and if there are any cross-sectional

associations with life mapping considering how various positive and negative constructs

are related. The literature emphasizes that Seligman's PERMA model is applicable in

positive education and aligning content and assessments with PERMA domains would

help teachers meet the needs of students or classes (see Hidayat et al., 2020; Kern et al.,

2015; Seligman, 2018; Umashankar & Charitra, 2021). Helping Title I teachers understand how students negative and positive interactions can assist with program implementation and evaluations.

Seligman's (2018) PERMA theory predicts how positive psychology will afford individuals to flourish by measuring, understanding, and building characteristics around five measurable elements for a positive life. In 2018, Seligman advocated individuals use five essential elements that build well-being. The elements are positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment, also known as the PERMA theory (Seligman, 2018). Seligman believed that identifying and nurturing children's strengths helps them live and understand developments leading to a flourishing life. In the PERMA theory, Seligman suggested generating human strengths within youth as preventative measures against mental illness, lack of interpersonal skills, and deficiency in perseverance.

Kern et al. (2015) and Seligman (2018) claimed that multiple correlations were interchangeably associated with well-being and ill-being factors involving positive emotion, engagement, relationships, and accomplishment domains. Seligman mentions that each element of PERMA can be independently defined and measured along with overlapping between each other. Firsthand evidence from Kern et al. has supported the claim that schools should consider multidimensional approaches which tailor and assess student well-being. Multidimensional techniques help ensure educators and schools serve their educational purposes by preparing students for adulthood and assessing student well-being (Kern et al., 2015). Correlations with the PERMA domains work both

collectively and independently, therefore multidimensional approaches in schools ensure that students' well-being is completely serviced.

Lee et al. (2017) investigated using the PERMA model within music. Researchers found that using the PERMA model to conceptualize and clarify the role of music promotes students' well-being (Lee et al., 2017). It was also found that music connects people, which is an important component when promoting well-being. Lee et al. suggested that music does the following: (a) inspire leadership in communities, (b) develop community collaborations, (c) embrace cultural diversity, and (d) increase learning dynamics. Understanding the diversity and incorporating PERMA in music frameworks could have positive outlooks. However, Lee et al. found limitations that there was a need to further research to address music program topics and well-being. Considering diversified music programs could be used to promote well-being in low-income African American communities.

Lai et al. (2018) sought to identify the appropriate use of the Assessment Program for Affective and Social Outcomes (APASO-II), the Subjective Happiness Scale, and the Physical Health Subscale to assess the PERMA-H domains. Lai et al. adopted the acronym H to PERMA (PERMA-H), adding health to Seligman's original PERMA theory. A primary school launched a whole-school positive education program to implement and measure PERMA-H's effectiveness in this study. Researchers explained how theories and empirical evidence substantiated in positive psychology could be taught and progressed to build positive qualities within individuals. Lai et al. found positive correlations between assessment measurement scales and subscales used in their study to

be valuable and applicable when measuring PERMA-H in positive education. One correlation was that positive emotions, positive engagement, positive achievement, and positive health interconnected with character strengths use (Lai et al., 2018). Another correlation found was that all the positive domains positively correlated with themselves (Lai et al., 2018). If appropriately taught, positive psychology could benefit low-income students by building upon their qualities.

It was discovered that elements of the PERMA-H model independently and collectively offered a wide range of engagement levels to promote well-being (Lai et al., 2018). The multidimensional PERMA-H approach provides students with opportunities to use and address character strengths while improving and developing strengths through school interventions. Lai et al. (2018) argued that positive education and academic achievement assessment conclusions can jointly be used by educational stakeholders to inform policies, programs, and management. Researchers recommend educational stakeholders continue to understand positive psychology and education measurements that support student well-being, character strengths and virtues, and the PERMA domains across cultures (Hidayat et al., 2020; Lai et al., 2018; Seligman et al., 2005; Umashankar & Charitra, 2021). Providing students with opportunities to use elements of the PERMA-H model as school-wide interventions can help to improve character strengths including physical health related strengths.

PERMA domains are central to theories of well-being that continued to develop throughout the 20th century. Hidayat et al. (2020) investigated the association between student achievement goals and the five PERMA domains. Achievement goals are various

and generate different emotional effects that interchangeably could be positive or negative depending on the goal or projected outcome (Hidayat et al., 2020; Kern et al., 2015; Seligman & Pawelski, 2003). It was uncovered that a significant and direct relationship (negative or positive) between PERMA existed regardless of the goal type presented. Positive emotions such as being happy are vital to student achievement, and students using higher positive emotions can improve life satisfaction (Hidayat et al., 2020; Seligman & Pawelski, 2003; Seligman et al., 2005). Hidayat et al. argued in favor that PERMA elements are significant influences motivating achievement goals and overall life satisfaction. Student goal setting and achievement can assist with using positive emotions and motivation to improve life satisfaction for African American children.

Umashankar and Charitra (2021) conducted a study to examine the solutions for psychological abnormalities that were caused by strains of development. Researchers built their comparative study on Vivekananda's Karma Yoga and Seligman's PERMA models. Karma Yoga is a holistic treatment approach to psychological illnesses including mindfulness as one of the strategies found in positive psychology (Umashankar & Charitra, 2021). It was recommended that Karma Yoga is not to be looked at within a spiritual text, but as a model that nurtures socioemotional and mental well-being (Umashankar & Charitra, 2021). Researchers also supported the idea that positive psychology focuses on happiness and nurturing positive character strengths and traits that promote overall well-being (Seligman et al., 2005; Umashankar & Charitra, 2021). There is also a need for sympathy and empathy when developing humans into social beings.

Those traits help individuals build and have compassion for others. Positive psychology

is transitioning from disease models and evolving to embrace therapeutic approaches that

are measurable (Umashankar & Charitra, 2021). It was suggested that considering

incorporating Karma Yoga to promote well-being would expand psychological

interventions. Consideration of implementing Karma Yoga in schools could expand

psychological interventions for African American students living in poverty by learning

and practicing the strategy.

Literature Review Related to Key Variables and Concepts

In this section I review literature gaps related to the lack of attention dedicated to

socioemotional learning for African American students in Title I schools (see Jones et al.,

2020; Legette et al., 2022; Rogers et al., 2022; Stephens, 2023). I also review research-

based strategies that have been proven to be effective to nurturing students'

socioemotional development as well as African American students and their need for

culturally responsive teaching. I also review the challenges schools and teachers face in

developing and implementing socioemotional learning interventions for African

American students living in poverty (see Dyson et al., 2021; Green et al., 2020;

Humphries et al., 2018; Kearl, 2022). Information gathered from peer-reviewed academic

journals and studies about socioemotional learning, specifically focusing on African

American children in poverty, was synthesized to compose this review. Several related

concepts are identified to provide justification for perceived gaps in practice promoting

the need for this study. All concepts are associated with the importance of understanding

teachers' perceptions of the challenges and supports needed to address socioemotional

learning needs for African American students. I start this review by providing a detailed review of socioemotional learning. I then identify related terms aligning to this study, including research-based strategies, mindfulness, yoga, African American/urban culture, and cultural responsiveness that identify gaps in practice and justify the need for this study.

Socioemotional Learning

By the late 19th century, the socioemotional learning movement had gained reviews and research from researchers, educators, child advocates, and others along with new findings from Seligman targeting positive psychology and developing the PERMA theory (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Socioemotional learning techniques are used to teach students skills to manage emotions and have social interactions that create positive outcomes. Although socioemotional learning is an older approach, the movement has started to become more important in educational practices and policies (Kuhfeld et al., 2023). Students struggling with emotional behavioral disorders are one of the most marginalized groups of students in U.S. schools that are impacted by practices that impede their education (Melloy & Murry, 2019). Students with emotional behavioral disorders have more difficulties in learning, creating, and building relationships, and displaying age-appropriate behavior or emotional reactions (Benner et al., 2022). Some ineffective practices include suspension or seclusion that can happen to almost half of reported students who are educated in a general classroom setting (Benner et al., 2022). The reasoning behind increased research on socioemotional learning is due to researchers understanding that effectively taught strategies can predict positive outcomes for further

success (Allbright et al., 2019; Dyson et al., 2021; Humphries et al., 2018).

Socioemotional learning has gained significant attention that has shown effectiveness

specifically for students displaying deficits that acquire additional strategies.

Socioemotional learning concepts include five competency domains that promote

positive psychology. According to Seligman et al. (2005), five competency domains

surrounding thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors make up socioemotional learning: self-

awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible

decision-making. Kuhfeld et al. (2023) noted that most attention has been dedicated to

students' self-control. *Self-control* is defined by Kuhfeld et al. as the ability to make

choices and behave to promote long-term goal achievement even when facing adversities

and trauma. Students benefit in academic settings when they learn and display self-

control. Hidayat et al. (2020) and Seligman et al. contended that, when appropriately

taught, thoughts, skills, and attitudes within each domain assist student development in

many ways, including managing emotions and achieving goals. Academic achievement

and assessment scores can increase, whereas emotional stress and behavior problems

decrease when socioemotional learning interventions are effectively implemented

(Amundsen et al., 2020; Hidayat et al., 2020; Khazanchi et al., 2021; Kuhfeld et al.,

2023; van Poortvliet et al., 2019). African American students can experience long-term

benefits when the competency domains are understood and used to manage emotions and

achieve goals in school settings.

Developmental programs, frameworks, and guidelines from the Collaborative to

Advance Social Emotional Learning (CASEL) were created to ensure educational

stakeholders effectively tend to socioemotional needs (Casel, 2022). Kuhfeld et al. (2023) found that socioemotional learning programs can be effective for students struggling with emotional behavioral disorders. Kuhfeld et al. explained socioemotional learning is a process taught within learning programs by providing interventions that teachers and students understand and that help students develop their social, emotional, behavioral, and character skills. Effective socioemotional learning programs and interventions are aligned with self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making (Khazanchi et al., 2021; Melloy & Murry, 2019). Socioemotional learning can support the growing public health concern regarding improving overall well-being by preventing problematic behaviors, diseases, suicide, or disorders associated with socioemotional competence while nurturing positive strengths, qualities, or outcomes (Baughman et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2023). Socioemotional learning programs tailored to African American students can support health concerns within the culture that could possibly lead to a decrease in socioemotional disorder diagnoses.

Researchers have noted that schools are responsible for educating the whole child, including general well-being, and must provide more than academic skill development (Allbright et al., 2019; Gomez et al., 2021). Students living in or experiencing disadvantages such as poverty and crime need special attention when considering caring for the whole child within a school setting. Socioeconomic disadvantages have negative effects on students' cognitive development and future potential: therefore, finding ways to alleviate disadvantages is crucial to closing achievement gaps (Merz et al., 2019). Caparas (2021) concurred with Allbright et al. (2019) and Gomez et al. (2021) by

referring to students as "whole persons" rather "whole child" and that it is the

responsibility of educators to help students overcome disadvantages by developing

socioemotional skills. Teaching can be stressful: therefore, to protect student-teacher

relationships, teachers need to practice personal socioemotional learning skills by

modeling when faced with challenging behaviors. Four approaches recommended by

Khazanchi et al. (2021) for teachers to effectively implement socioemotional learning in

classrooms include: teaching the concept explicitly, embedding the concept into

academics, creating a positive learning environment, and using strategies that promote

concept skills and development. Caparas also added that these skills can be practiced in

many forms including through specialized activities or by integrating within current

academic lessons. Educators' responsibilities to educate the whole child is crucial

especially for African American low-income schools because of the many disadvantages

and levels of stress experienced by students.

Recent literature suggested that effective comprehensive school interventions

focusing on a positive school climate and teacher understanding are vital to student's

socioemotional development (Amundsen et al., 2020; Byrne et al., 2020; Jones et al.,

2020). Green et al. (2019), Owens et al. (2019), and Price (2019) discovered that

effective socioemotional learning interventions in schools are needed because societal

changes have shifted how individuals manage stress, collaborate, solve conflicts, and get

along socially with others. In addition to societal changes, African American children

face historical race and socioeconomic status backlash and treatment for socioemotional

learning, including not having proper health care (Gardner et al., 2021; Gardner-Neblett

et al., 2023; Hirn et al., 2018; Jones et al., 2020; Rogers et al., 2022; Williams & Jagers, 2022). Positive interactions between schools and African American children help with socioemotional development. Implementing effective socioemotional learning programs in African American school settings is a start to providing relatable, adequate, and comprehensive interventions.

Benefits associated with well-implemented socioemotional learning programs include more positive outcomes such as obtaining goals rather social incompetence among K-12 students (Amundsen et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2023; Trask-Kerr et al., 2019). Caparas (2021) found three positive benefits associated with addressing students' socioemotional needs when educating the whole person: awareness of what each student needs; providing safety, healing, and resilience; and teaching essential skills to thrive in the workforce and society. In addition, socioemotional learning intervention programs are valuable preventive measures and offer many long-term benefits (Baughman et al., 2020; Green et al., 2019; Williams & Jagers, 2022). Proactive approaches focus on building while reactive practices focus on repairing, and both offer long-term benefits. Both approaches are restorative practices that can serve as alternatives to discipline while healing to reduce losing instructional time. Gomez et al. (2021) noted that restorative practices alleviate racial inequalities by using practices as an alternative to disciplinary actions while helping to repair harmful situations students have experienced. However, unlike treatment interventions that target diagnosable disorders, schools often ignore socioemotional learning prevention program interventions specifically for the urban and low-income settings (El Mallah, 2022; Jones et al., 2020; Planey et al., 2019).

Preventative socioemotional learning programs within k-12 schools offer long-term

benefits when educating the whole child. Being aware of African American low-income

students needs will help determine if preventative or restorative practices are needed.

Providing preventable strategies for at-risk students can avoid negative future

outcomes as opposed to ignoring the problem and causing long-term socioemotional

developmental delays (Baughman et al., 2020; Williams & Jagers, 2022). Benoit and

Gabola (2021), Campbell et al. (2023), and El Mallah (2022) discovered that prevention

intervention resources are needed in schools; however, many urban schools lack

appropriate resources to provide either treatment or prevention interventions.

Additionally, there are challenges associated with implementing socioemotional learning

including measuring effectiveness, lack of professional development, and not being

meaningfully integrated (Cherfas et al., 2021; Dyson et al., 2021; Gardner-Neblett et al.,

2023). Research indicated that measuring the effectiveness of socioemotional learning

strategies is difficult and that the concept is detached and on the borderline of relevant

school policies (Khazanchi et al., 2021). At risk African American students need

preventative interventions and effective treatment measures in socioemotional learning to

avoid future negative outcomes.

Socioemotional learning has progressed in research and practices related to the

importance of development, research-based strategies, implementation of interventions,

and program and policy evaluations (Amundsen et al., 2020; Baughman et al., 2020;

Hamilton et al., 2021; Williams & Jagers, 2022). There has been a need, however, for

further research to support various ethnic cultures, professional developments, best

practices for integration, and measurement of socioemotional learning practices (see Cherfas et al., 2021; Gardner-Neblett et al., 2023; Lee et al., 2023; McCallops et al., 2019; Thomas & Sebastian, 2023). Recent findings from Borge and Xia (2023) indicated that supporters are challenging policymakers because socioemotional learning needs to be reintroduced. Borge and Xia found that political setbacks defining socioemotional learning within a broad setting involving irrelevant context are being delivered to students. Effective measurement strategies such as surveys and suspension or behavior data can directly and effectively measure student socioemotional development to inform teaching practices (Learning Policy Institute, & Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning, 2018). The importance of a positive school climate and a whole-school intervention strategy for schools has been added to the literature (Ferreira et al., 2020; Kittelman et al., 2019; Larson et al., 2020). Socioemotional learning implementation in schools has progressed, yet the lack of attention dedicated to the effectiveness in practices among cultures is causing continuous setbacks for African American students.

Research-Based Strategies

Educational research-based strategies help incorporate and evaluate effectiveness of programs. Evaluating effectiveness of research-based strategies involves collecting information, using observations, and integrating rigorous systematic and unbiased techniques (Khuana et al., 2017). Moohr et al. (2021) added that teachers incorporate various strategies: more frequently for students with disabilities to enhance student engagement, learning, and understanding. Students at risk or diagnosed with emotional

behavior disorders must be provided with opportunities to practice strategies modeled by the teacher over time for students to implement into their lives (Moohr et al., 2021). Selecting and using research-based strategies for students with disorders is crucial when considering ways to enhance teaching and learning.

Killian (2021) summarized eight research-based teaching strategies that were reviewed, combined, and proven by Marzano and Hattie to have significant impacts on student learning (Marzano and Hattie, as cited in Killian, 2021). Marzano and Hattie collaborated to review and compose a list of strategies that make differences in student learning results. The strategies suggested to use support students academically and socially. The eight strategies identified were: to have a clear focus, offer overt instruction, promote engagement, provide feedback, provide multiple exposure, apply knowledge, opportunities to collaborate, and build self-efficacy. All strategies apart from Strategy 1 and 2 play a role in socioemotional learning and development. Specifically, practices associated with Strategy 7 and 8 are vital to teachers providing instruction focused on students' socioemotional development to promote student success (Killian, 2021). For example, Strategy 7 involves suggestions on strategies that promote collaboration, whereas Strategy 8 focuses on students building their self-efficacy. Research strategies that align with collaboration and self-efficacy promote positive psychology and student socioemotional development. Additionally, Moohr et al. (2021) noted that self-regulation strategies gained from developing self-efficacy over time can help students with developing a positive outcome throughout life. Strategies that teachers select, and use based on student needs play an essential role in student socioemotional development.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic learning loss, the U.S Department of Education (2021) and Hamilton et al. (2021) recommended that districts implement research-based strategies to address socioemotional and mental health needs. Researchers also recommend that districts implement culturally relevant research-based strategies (Schlemper et al., 2023; Thomas & Sebastian, 2023). There are several research-based practices dedicated to socioemotional learning; however, not all practices have been promoted or used in schools (Schlemper et al., 2023). Practices such as mindfulness and yoga can be incorporated into curricula to use effective research-based strategies within educational settings (Jain, 2021; Lee et al., 2023; Shreve et al., 2021). Addressing the socioemotional and mental needs of African American students acquire understanding effective research-based strategies that are culturally relevant where applicable.

Mindfulness

Over the past 25 years, mindfulness has become a popular topic regarding stress reduction. Drigas and Mitsea (2020) noted that mindfulness practices are vital factors for personal and professional development and offer valuable tools in schools. Mindfulness is a positive psychology research-based strategy that has been proven to be effective not only for adults, but for children as well (Baird, 2022; Bazzano et al., 2023; Ivaki, 202; Joy et al., 2019; Mindful Staff, 2017). Mindfulness is a form of meditation that focuses on the present moment without worrying, judging, or thinking about the future or past. Zinn, the founder of the Mindfulness-Bases Stress Reduction program, explained mindfulness as encouraging individuals to pay attention and be aware of the present

moment (Zinn, as cited in, McRobbie, 2021). When practicing mindfulness, the goal is to relax the mind and body by breathing.

Mindfulness in schools has many benefits, including embracing student achievement, managing behavior, and teaching students to sit in stillness for focusing (Baird, 2022; Joy et al., 2019). McRobbie (2021) suggested that mindfulness training improves teachers' abilities to openly students and promotes teachers' resilience. McRobbie also noted that mindfulness training for teachers promotes positive student-teacher relationships. Both students and teachers can benefit from mindfulness-based strategies in schools and classrooms. Over time, there has been an increased interest to incorporate mindfulness-based programs in schools to enhance academic, social, and mental health concerns for students (Kim et al., 2019). Mindfulness-based programs in schools target a variety of psychological outcomes such as decreased negative behavior and increased executive functioning (Drigas & Mitsea, 2020; Lee et al., 2023). According to Drigas and Mitsea (2020), schools adopt mindfulness-based programs to build bodily, cognitive, emotional, and social tools necessary for students to succeed beyond school. Adopting mindfulness in African American low-income schools could potentially decrease negative behaviors, promote student achievement, and act as a preventative measure to socioemotional learning deficits.

Mindfulness-based exercises come in many forms. Meditation, yoga, concentration exercises, breathing techniques, journaling, and practicing gratefulness are a few mindful exercises that can be easily incorporated into an individual's daily life (Joy et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2023). Mindful exercises also include awareness of the body and

the ability to realize where the tension lies for releasing (Bazzano et al., 2023; Joy et al., 2019). Yoga is a common cost-effective mindfulness exercise that has been found to have positive effects on students' anxiety, mindfulness, attention, and memory because of effective practices implemented within schools (Bazzano et al., 2023; Ivaki et al., 2021; Jain, 2021). At least 245 schools across the United States have adopted effective mindfulness-based practices, including yoga, to promote mindful schools supporting students and teachers (Baird, 2022; McRobbie, 2021). Mindfulness-based strategies such as breathing techniques and yoga are cost-effective and can be easily tailored to meet specific needs of individuals, groups of students, or the whole school.

Yoga

Yoga is another research-based strategy related to mindfulness that can be practiced promoting positive psychology, but lacks adoption for children in schools as a preventative holistic intervention for socioemotional learning (Ivaki et al., 2021; Shreve et al., 2021). Although there is a lack of yoga practices implemented in schools, there has been a recent increase in interest implementing yoga in schools because of its effectiveness (Bazzano et al., 2023). Bazzano et al. (2023) found there are promising signs of yoga and mindfulness in school settings pushing for increased interventions in implementing and measuring effectiveness of the practice in early childhood classrooms. Additionally, there is a lack of research on yoga in children in urban communities (Bazzano et al., 2023; Shreve et al., 2021). Originating in India over 5,000 years ago by Patanjali, yoga is a practice of "uniting" the mind and body (Deutsch, 2020; Kabat-Zinn et al., 1992; Shreve et al., 2021). Yoga also originated for spiritual practices, but has

developed into a popular concept to promote mental and physical well-being. Yoga has several benefits for students in schools.

When practicing yoga, the individual focuses on breathing, posture in mastering yoga poses, and practicing mindfulness. Patanjali (date, as cited in Jain, 2021) identified three components of yoga that are vital to the practice: asanas (physical posture), pranayama (breathing techniques), and Dhyana (meditation), along with 196 yoga sutras. Of the many forms of yoga, the common forms practiced in the United States are posture, breathing techniques, and meditation (Jain, 2021). Yoga has been proven to reduce stress, anxiety, depression, and some mental illnesses in children (Deutsch, 2020; Ivaki et al., 2021; Jain, 2021). Additionally, benefits of practicing yoga with children can be modified and done in any setting, including in nature (Action for Healthy Kids, n.d.; Price, 2019). Yoga helps children to perform better academically because of the ability to pay attention (Ivaki et al., 2021; Joy et al., 2019). Jain (2021) noted that school-age children perform better academically because of experiencing lower levels of test anxiety and higher levels of attention and memory. Practicing yoga and mindfulness helps with focusing. When the practice is effectively and consistently done, children learn to focus on the present using strategies (Bazzano et al., 2023). Yoga has been proven to enhance individuals' resilience, mood, and self-regulation skills (Bazzano et al., 2023; Deutsch, 2020; Ivaki et al., 2021; Jain, 2021; Shreve et al., 2021). Implementing yoga in low-income African American schools would support stress and build resilience to overcome negative circumstances within the culture.

Several yoga interventions have evolved, including Hatha, Iyengar, and Restorative yoga benefiting school-age children socioemotional and academic development (Bazzano et al., 2023; Bollimbala et al., 2020; Rosanova, 2004). Despite the scarce literature on school-based yoga for youths, researchers have concluded that the practice is beneficial and has lasting effects when learned (Bazzano et al., 2023; Deutsch, 2020; Jain, 2021). A few minutes of yoga daily can decrease children's anxiety and stress while increasing levels of academic performance (Shreve et al., 2021). Shreve also noted that yoga can improve students' focus, memory, self-esteem, and behaviors. Shreve et al. (2021) indicated that students who practiced yoga for 10 minutes experienced enough emotion regulation for better concentration throughout the day. Practice can reduce anxiety and stress that students or teachers experience (Bazzano et al., 2023; McRobbie, 2021). Considering yoga in low-income African American schools could improve educating the whole child helping to create positive learning school climates.

Schools that implement yoga provide opportunities to involve teachers and staff that help create positive school climates. Yoga is a strategy that schools can consider as a school-wide positive behavior approach. Deutsch (2020) noted that if schools are considering yoga, they should consider the following: assess their community and needs, decide on audience to serve and when to offer, determine needed equipment and secure funding, obtain permission, and provide training. Implementing yoga in diverse populations, such as urban schools, promotes accessibility to all student populations (Bazzano et al., 2023). Bazzano et al. (2023) noted that implementing yoga in low-income schools could be beneficial to students because of the amount of stress and

anxiety experienced due to adversities. Yoga practices are cost effective for schools and can easily take the place of physical education courses to promote desired results for students (Shreve et al., 2021). Introducing yoga in low-income African American schools provides access across other cultures in a cost-effective way that benefits the school climate as a whole.

African American/Urban Culture

The African American or urban culture is known as a way of life based on cultural factors in Black communities. African Americans have been known to face adversities that cause education and economic setbacks (Dunn et al., 2022; Gardner et al., 2021; Rogers et al., 2022). A variety of literature has been presented on the lingering absence in improving African American education, equality, responding to the culture, and socioemotional development (Cherfas et al., 2021; Dunn et al., 2022; Gardner et al., 2021; Morgan et al., 2018; Noguera & Alicea, 2020; Rogers et al., 2022). Rogers et al. (2022) noted that for generations, African Americans have lacked equality, which has caused frustration, continued educational and financial setbacks, or socioemotional problems. Nonetheless, African American cultural norms are what thrive in their communities (Dunn et al., 2022), such as the latest fashion and family gatherings. These norms help define the African American culture (Dunn et al., 2022). Dunn et al. (2022) contended that African American children are typically educated in urban school districts where individuals focus on defining themselves by the cities in which they live and cultural norms. Integrating African American cultural norms in urban school districts

could potentially improve education by respecting and understanding student needs to help them thrive.

Education for African American children has been neglected over time. Historically, negative behavior and student suspension rates from urban schools have been higher, funding has been allocated based on tax-generated revenue, and resource equity has decreased (Dunn et al., 2022; Gardner-Neblett et al., 2023; Morgan et al., 2018; Noguera & Alicea, 2020). The lack of resources and trends in suspension rates for African American students is related to adversities faced within the culture and low-income communities. African American students in urban communities have a greater risk of experiencing adverse outcomes such as lower academic achievement, psychological stressors, and untreated behavioral, mental, or emotional problems (Boatwright & Midcalf, 2019; Campbell et al., 2023; Rogers et al., 2022). Implementing yoga in low-income urban schools can be beneficial in alleviating stress and improving behavior (Bazzano et al., 2023; Deutsch, 2020). Adversities that cause stress have negative impacts on African American students' upbringing and future if they are not provided with proper strategies and resources to overcome adversities (Boatwright & Midcalf, 2019; Gardner-Neblett et al., 2023; Hirn et al., 2018). Financial circumstances, crime, and systematic racism are stress-related factors that play a role in African American cultural stereotypes and gaps in socioemotional education (Dunn et al., 2022; Jones et al., 2020). Providing yoga in African American low-income schools would help with generational stress related factors that have been hard to overcome because of the lack of educational resources.

Socioemotional learning disabilities include difficulties that expand beyond academics, memory, or organization. Garwood and Carrero (2023) noted that African American students are often labeled with an emotional behavior disability when they are not able to properly behave in school or focus on schoolwork. Garwood and Carrero and Skrtic et al. (2021) agreed that many African American students are racially profiled when labeled with a disability and that there is a close relationship to social class. Garwood and Carrero found that Black students aged 6 to 21 are more likely to receive special education services from all categories apart from visual, hearing, or speech-related impairments. Disability categories that often identify African American students with disabilities from a socioemotional standpoint include intellectual disability disorder, emotional disturbance disorder, or emotional behavior disorder (Garwood & Carrero, 2023). Students from low-income backgrounds are susceptible to being diagnosed with a disability because of adversities that affect their growth, development, and achievement (Fallon et al., 2023; Garwood & Carrero, 2023; Skrtic et al., 2021). Cultural understanding could decrease labels associated with how African American students manage emotions, behave, and respond to triggers.

Understanding the African American culture through cultural responsiveness could alleviate socioemotional learning disability diagnoses for students. The lack of cultural competence and negative related behaviors are contributing factors to student classification of Emotional Disturbance among African American students (Garwood & Carrero, 2023; Skrtic et al., 2021). Supporting African American students' socioemotional development in elementary schools provides an opportunity to decrease

related disabilities by providing strategies that are effective based on cultural and racial backgrounds (Garwood & Carrero, 2023; Serpell et al., 2022). Mindfulness and yoga are effective research-based strategies that can be implemented to help decrease social, emotional, and behavioral problems or disability classification (Deutsch, 2020; Ivaki et al., 2021; Jain, 2021). It is important to consider cultural responsiveness for African American students by selecting strategies that improve school climates and socioemotional learning tailored to the culture (Jones et al., 2020). Promoting healthy school climates and building relationships with African American children could end generational gaps associated with equality in education (Chu et al., 2021; Rogers et al., 2022). Understanding cultural responsiveness and norms of the African American culture is essential when considering which research-based strategies could be tailored and best suitable when building healthy environments and relationships in schools.

Cultural Responsiveness

Schools have evolved into diverse settings that educate students from various ethical backgrounds and cultural aspects. Cultural responsiveness involves the ability to understand and respect cultural differences without personal biases while disregarding differences to productively collaborate (McCallops et al., 2019). Addressing cultural responsiveness is vital to education (Yu, 2022) and aligns with effective and differentiated socioemotional teaching and learning (Hayashi et al., 2022). Understanding cultural differences and being responsive to student needs helps build relationships with students while promoting their socioemotional skills that will be vital in the future (McCallops et al., 2019; Serpell et al., 2022; Yu, 2022). Cultural responsiveness requires

that teachers understand differences within various cultures, are aware of any biases, and ignore differences to productively work for and tailor to students, families, and their communities (Fallon et al., 2023; McCallops et al., 2019; Serpell et al., 2022). Culture responsiveness in schools provides opportunities for educators to respect and incorporate cultural differences within socioemotional learning.

Teachers should incorporate aspects of various cultures within their classrooms. Educators need to understand the cultural norms within the community they work in (Fallon et al., 2023; Schlemper et al., 2023). Students in the African American culture who experience adversities and disability labels would benefit from culturally responsive schools and classrooms (Garwood & Carrero, 2023; Serpell et al., 2022). Schlemper et al. (2023) argued that culturally responsive teaching can promote social justice for underrepresented students such as those in African American communities by integrating cultural experiences into curriculums. Marginalized students need culturally responsive teaching and learning to promote equity, equality, and justice in the educational system (Hayashi et al., 2022; Schlemper et al., 2023). Additionally, students are given a voice and are able to understand their communities better (Schlemper et al., 2023). Fallon et al. (2023) found that teachers who implement culturally responsive practices experience improved behavior outcomes and view their students at lower risk for socioemotional disabilities. Bazzano et al. (2023) indicated that implementing yoga in urban schools may be beneficial to improving behavior; however, Deutsch (2020) recommended that first schools should assess what the community needs. Incorporating African American

cultural norms in classrooms and schools could improve the overall quality of learning while targeting students at risk for socioemotional disabilities.

Providing African American students with learning experiences related to their lived experiences in communities is beneficial. Recognizing differences in cultural beliefs, norms, and values helps students to develop social competence (Hayashi et al., 2022; Yu, 2022). Empowering students to understand and expand their knowledge about their culture helps with creating a deeper understanding of their communities and what is needed to seek spatial justice (Schlemper et al., 2023). Schlemper et al. (2023) defined *spatial justice* as a link to the concept that injustice is associated with a specific geographical space contributing to social injustices. Students from societies or communities observe and learn various behaviors within specific cultures (Schlemper et al., 2023; Yu, 2022). Stakeholder understanding of responding to different cultures surrounding socioemotional learning should be culturally relevant, meaning the curriculum and programs adopted should be based on the culture of the students being served (Yu, 2022). A culturally responsive socioemotional learning curriculum better engages students because lived experiences are pointed out, addressed, and incorporated into daily instruction (Hayashi et al., 2022; McCallops et al., 2019; Yu, 2022). Considering learning environments and communities is essential when selecting culturally responsive socioemotional learning curriculum because content should be related to lived experiences.

Socioemotional learning programs tailored to the student's culture can help promote personal and academic success while helping students better understand their

culture and needs (Hayashi et al., 2022; Schlemper et al., 2023). Supporting the African

American or urban culture by understanding norms and developing suitable interventions

will help create positive school climates and improve socioemotional development

(McCallops et al., 2019; Serpell et al., 2022; Yu, 2022). Positive school climates that are

culturally responsive can improve students' socioemotional development by giving them

a voice, helping them build relationships, and helping them be socially competent

(Schlemper et al., 2023; Serpell et al., 2022). Sufficient research has been conducted to

sustain the importance of culturally relevant socioemotional learning in urban schools

(Cherfas et al., 2021; Gardner-Neblett et al., 2023; Hayashi et al., 2022; Schlemper et al.,

2023; Stephens, 2023). African American students in Title I schools could benefit from

socioemotional learning programs that are relatable and tailored to cultural norms versus

broad programs.

Cultural responsiveness in schools is essential and present. However, North

American schools have neglected to dedicate learning centered around students' context

and lived experiences (Hayashi et al., 2022) and the number of professional

developments devoted to learning about different student cultures (Cherfas et al., 2021;

Thomas & Sebastian, 2023). Stakeholders are aware of and understand the importance of

cultural relevance, yet programs used to teach socioemotional learning are similar across

multiple school districts in multiple states (Hayashi et al., 2022). In addition, there has

been ample research and attention on schools and teachers not being culturally prepared

or supportive of Black students (Beard et al., 2021; Hayashi et al., 2022; Heimer, 2020;

Humphries et al., 2018; Kearl, 2022). Beard et al. (2021) noted that teachers who do not

understand the African American culture may experience frequent misbehavior, such as

fighting with peers. Teachers could perceive one reason for the behavior when it could be

another reason because of other adversities. Beard et al. and Green et al. (2020) argued

that educational instructional practices have yet to consider the impact that racism has on

student learning, socioemotional development, and labeling outcomes. Future teacher

preparation programs and current teachers' professional development courses must

confront the challenges students of color face, including systematic racism (Beard et al.,

2021; Dyson et al., 2021; Heimer, 2020). Research indicated that many preservice

teachers were unaware of the impact of racism and levels of cultural diversity in schools

(Heimer, 2020; Kearl, 2022). Teachers could better understand African American

students if placed in culturally, racially, and economically diverse settings to be culturally

responsive (Heimer, 2020; Humphries et al., 2018; Legette et al., 2022). Understanding

Title I African American students is essential for ensuring that schools are providing

culturally relevant content related to promoting socioemotional learning.

Summary and Conclusions

Chapter 2 provided an extensive review of literature on the conceptual

framework. Literature addressing related concepts, including socioemotional learning,

research-based strategies such as mindfulness and yoga, African American or urban

culture, and cultural responsiveness was also reviewed in Chapter 2. The findings aligned

with the conceptual framework and supported the current study's problem and purpose.

Selected topics and subtopics were preferred due to their association with socioemotional

learning. The review provided a comprehensive analysis of empirical evidence related to strategies for improving socioemotional learning for African American students.

Presented literature exemplified the importance of socioemotional learning for African American children from disadvantaged backgrounds (Beard et al., 2021; Campbell et al., 2023; Gardner-Neblett et al., 2023; Hayashi et al., 2022; Katz, 2019; Schlemper et al., 2023; Yu, 2022). In addition, several researchers suggested that interventions to support socioemotional learning should be equal and culturally relevant to support African American students (Dunn et al., 2022; Dyson et al., 2021; McCallops et al., 2019; Serpell et al., 2022; Yu, 2022). Researchers also concluded that there is a relationship between African American students who experience negative situations and the effects on their socioemotional development (Boatwright & Midcalf, 2019; Campbell et al., 2023; Jones et al., 2020). Bazzano et al. (2023), Jain (2021), and McRobbie (2021) indicated that mindful and yoga strategies could be implemented and beneficial to students in low-income schools. Chapter 3 contains a breakdown of the research design and rationale, role of the researcher, methodology, participant selection, and procedures for recruitment and participation. The chapter also includes the data collection technique. I also explain the approach used for data analysis and the processes for creating trust and ensuring ethical practices.

Chapter 3: Research Method

My goal with this basic qualitative study was to gain local district Grade 3 teachers' perceptions of the challenges and supports needed to implement socioemotional learning interventions for African American students in Title I schools. Socioemotional learning for African American students is vital to academic success and overcoming poverty and racial inequities locally and nationally (Boatwright & Midcalf, 2019; Hayashi et al., 2022). Additionally, a local district gap in practice identified in faculty and PBIS meeting minutes from October 2021 to February 2022 documented teachers experienced increased negative behaviors that disrupted learning environments. Nationally, research supported that schools serving students of color, in poverty, or from urban communities are still being systematically racialized in education, and socioemotional learning is not short of systematic racism (Hayashi et al., 2022; Rogers et al., 2022). In Chapter 3, I clarify the research design and explain how conclusions were drawn concerning socioemotional learning for African American students. I also clarify the role of the researcher and methodology for this study. Lastly, I describe the data analysis strategy, trustworthiness, and ethical procedures.

Research Design and Rationale

Two RQs guided this basic qualitative study based on the conceptual framework to study local district Grade 3 teachers' perceptions of socioemotional learning for African American students in Title I schools. The following RQ's guided this study:

RQ1: What are the perceptions of local district Title I Grade 3 teachers regarding the challenges they face in incorporating positive emotion, engagement, relationship,

meaning, and accomplishment (PERMA) to provide adequate socioemotional and mental health interventions for low-income African American children?

RQ2: What are the perceptions of local district Title I Grade 3 teachers regarding the support they need to better incorporate positive emotion, engagement, relationship, meaning, and accomplishment (PERMA) in providing adequate socioemotional and mental health interventions for low-income African American children?

The central concept guiding this study was local Grade 3 Title I teachers' perceptions of challenges they face, and the support needed for African American students' socioemotional development. Therefore, a basic qualitative design was preferred to conduct this study. Ravitch and Carl (2021) noted that qualitative research helps researchers to conceptually recognize individuals, groups, or a phenomenon that translates personal, other, or social experiences within a specific context. Patten and Newhart (2017) suggested an interview protocol using narrative techniques for data collection with dialogues. I analyzed data collected about Title I local district Grade 3 teachers' perceptions of the challenges and supports in teaching socioemotional learning to African American students using this technique (see Patten & Newhart, 2017). Using interviews as the solitary data collection method was appropriate to obtain local district Title I Grade 3 teachers' perceptions based on their experiences (see Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Saldaña (2016) suggested using a three-cycle coding process which I selected to analyze data. A basic qualitative design using interviews as the data collection method was appropriate for this study.

Role of the Researcher

I was the single researcher and the sole interviewer in this basic qualitative study. I persisted in my role to encourage a systematic understanding of socioemotional learning concepts, teachers' challenges and needed support for interventions, and advantages for African American students. Separate interviews were conducted by me using interview questions to collect data that addressed the research questions to explore teachers' challenges and supports to teaching socioemotional learning (see Appendix A). After Institutional Review Board (IRB; IRB approval number: 11-23-22-1061915) and local school district approval, I recorded, transcribed, and analyzed data collected from interviews with 10 Grade 3 teachers in local district Title I schools. Participant recruitment invitations were sent via email. Participants who consented to participate in the study offered preferred interview dates and times. There were no personal, professional, or previous work-related interviews. Volunteer participants met the required conditions to participate in the study.

Any personal assumptions or biases were ignored during the data collection and analysis processes. Burkholder et al. (2020) noted that assumptions and biases could result in pointless research if researcher bias alters the data collection process. Ravitch and Carl (2021) also noted assumptions and biases can adversely affect research. It was my ethical responsibility to acknowledge personal bias and make sure data were collected and analyzed objectively (see Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Biases and assumptions have the potential to increase researchers' awareness while collecting data (see Ravitch & Carl, 2021). From my teaching experience, I acknowledged that I had personal biases about

variations in educational environments. However, I relied on the data to analyze my findings.

Ravitch and Carl (2021) suggested strategies to prevent personal biases. I used two strategies to prevent my personal bias from altering data or dishonoring my ethical practices. Ravitch and Carl noted that consistency should be maintained by using a written interview protocol to collect data by asking the same questions during all interviews (see Appendix B). There also was uniformity with time, redirections, and follow-up questions for additional data (see Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Paraphrasing responses for accuracy took place at times with participants. Zoom, a digital recording platform, was used on my computer to audio record interviews, helping to ensure that all replies were accurately documented. Second, I used a reflective journal to make entries, monitor responses, and identify personal biases. Ravitch and Carl indicated the value of journaling during the research process because it allows researchers to reflect on the influences of personal biases in a study.

Methodology

A basic qualitative design was used to explore the perceptions of local district Title I Grade 3 teachers regarding the challenges they face and support they need in providing adequate socioemotional and mental health interventions for low-income African American children. According to Burkholder et al. (2020), participant selection requires participants to meet eligibility requirements. I recruited 10 local district Title I Grade 3 teachers with at least 3 years of teaching experience in a Title I setting that

educates African American students. Selected teachers who participated in interviews responded to a scripted interview protocol aligned with the following RQs:

RQ1: What are the perceptions of local district Title I Grade 3 teachers regarding the challenges they face in incorporating positive emotion, engagement, relationship, meaning, and accomplishment (PERMA) to provide adequate socioemotional and mental health interventions for low-income African American children?

RQ2: What are the perceptions of local district Title I Grade 3 teachers regarding the support they need to better incorporate positive emotion, engagement, relationship, meaning, and accomplishment (PERMA) in providing adequate socioemotional and mental health interventions for low-income African American children?

Participant Selection

A purposeful and criterion sampling technique was applied to recruit 10-15 Grade 3 Title I teachers working with African American students. However, I was able to recruit only 10 participants. Volunteers who met the selection criteria were acknowledged on a first-come-first-serve basis. Participant recruitment was conducted using staff email and snowballing sampling. The following selection criteria were used: (a) Grade 3 teacher with at least 3 years of teaching experience in a Title I school, (b) currently teaching in the local Title I school district, (c) working with African American students, and (d) willing to participate in audio conferencing interviews. As long as these criteria were met, this study was open to any gender, race, cultural background, knowledge of socioemotional learning, or teacher accreditation level. Ravitch and Carl (2021) indicated that participant selection should include a rich understanding of the research questions

and populations under a study. I selected participants who taught in local district Title I schools and worked with African American Grade 3 students.

Participant sample size depends on what the researcher wants to understand, the inquiry's purpose, what is creditable, and what can be done considering available time and resources. For the current study, 10 participants were appropriate due to the limited scope and needed to answer the research questions (see Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Teachers who agreed to participate were provided with a consent form with a clear description of the purpose of the study, the anticipated time frame for interviews, procedures, and the associated risks and benefits of participating via email. Participants were asked to respond to the email with the expression "I consent" if they understood the informed consent document and agreed to participate in the study. Participants who did not qualify for the study were thanked and were not asked to provide informed consent. My contact information was provided to volunteers if they needed to communicate with me. I assumed that participants would be honest about their eligibility.

Instrumentation

Open-ended questions provide rich and saturated data because participants share their experiences with the concepts explored in qualitative studies (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Ten open-ended interview questions were asked as a data collection tool for this basic qualitative study. A scripted interview protocol was used for data collection (see Appendix B). A template of the interview protocol was developed, aligning with the conceptual framework and research questions. To ensure content validity, I emailed the interview questions to a district-level specialist in socioemotional learning for review.

The district leader responded in a reasonable time frame and reported that "everything looked good." The district leader also asked me to report the findings and wished me luck. To answer the research questions and establish the sufficiency of the scripted interview protocol, I made sure the research and interview questions were aligned with the conceptual framework for this study (see Appendix A). Additionally, appropriate follow-up prompts were included in the interview protocol to ensure in-depth, detailed, and clear responses (see Appendix B).

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Specific recruitment, participation, and data collection procedures were followed. Approval to organize interviews was sought by meeting Walden's IRB requirements. Upon acceptance from IRB and during the recruitment process, participants were required to consent to contribute to the study. Data were collected through individual interviews with participants following a strict scripted interview protocol. Ravitch and Carl (2021) clarified the importance of understanding the goals of the research questions to guide participant selection criteria for collecting data.

Recruitment and Informed Consent

The preliminary phase in the recruitment process for this basic qualitative study was to acquire approval from IRB. Email and snowball sampling were used to recruit 10 eligible teachers as participants. A recruitment email listing described clear criteria for potential participants: Grade 3 teachers with 3 or more years of experience working with African American students in Title I schools. Walden University and my contact information were included if potential participants had additional questions or concerns.

Communication with potential participants was conducted via email. Responses were

quick and professional to participants who contacted me concerning the study, including

an informed consent form explaining the specifics of the study. In addition, the study's

intent and the privacy protection plan were presented to potential participants. Teachers

who qualified and agreed to participate were asked to reply to me via email with the

phrase "I consent." Teachers were encouraged to keep a copy of the consent form in their

files. As consents were received, interview schedules were arranged. Participants

received reminders 24 hours before the scheduled interview date.

Participation

The first 10 qualified teachers who consented to participate via email were

selected for this study. One interview was conducted with each participant via audio

conferencing using Zoom. The duration of each interview varied based on the amount of

information each participant was willing to share. The range of the interviews was from

29 to 57 minutes. The timing of interviews depended on consent acknowledgment and

scheduling availability of the participants. Participants were thanked for taking the time

to participate in the study and allowed to ask questions before the interview. I asked all

participants the criteria questions again to confirm their eligibility. Participants were

asked interview protocol questions (see Appendix B). Interviews took place using an

audio recording platform to assist with providing precise data collection and analysis.

The interviews were recorded and transcribed in Word documents. A transcription

was downloaded and reviewed promptly after each interview with participants. Audio

recordings were played while reviewing transcripts for dictation clarity. After reviewing

the interview data, I provided a summary for participants to check for accuracy and clarification of information. According to Rubin and Rubin (2012), a researcher must confirm accurate data when data are collected, recorded, and transcribed. Harper and Cole (2012) explained that increased credibility, trustworthiness, and validity would justify the member-checking process. Participants were notified of how the results would be shared and were thanked for their time.

Data Collection

Data were collected from interviews with Grade 3 teachers teaching African American students in a local Title I school district. Interview questions and protocols for data collection were followed (see Appendices A & B). In addition, a copy of the interview questions was provided to participants with a reminder email 24 hours before the interview. This gesture allowed participants time to arrange their thoughts and isolate the most relevant evidence. A digital audio recording platform that aids in transcribing and processing dialogues was used to collect data during interviews. Documenting field notes to note supplementary information during the interviews, such as nonverbal language or technology-related distractions, was vital (see Ravitch & Carl, 2021).

A scripted interview protocol recommended by Ravitch and Carl (2021) was applied during participant interviews to mitigate possible ethical concerns or personal biases from varying data (see Appendix B). Furthermore, the order of questions and prompts was followed during each interview for consistency in timing. Interviews were transcribed, listened to, and read multiple times for accuracy after the interviews. With aid from the platform, data were consistently and systematically transcribed after each

interview. Data were then summarized and shared with the study participants during the

member-checking process. The member-checking process involved asking participants to

confirm the accuracy of my summary for the interview (see Motulsky, 2021). Teachers

were asked to contact me if any information had been presented inaccurately. If no

contact was made with me, the data collected were used to complete the study results.

The member-checking process was the last step in the data collection process.

Data Analysis Plan

After data were collected from in-depth interviews following a scripted interview

protocol, I checked for accuracy by listening to the digital audio recordings multiple

times after recording downloads. Upon completing each interview, I downloaded,

printed, and reviewed transcripts several times for accuracy and complete understanding.

Then I organized and analyzed data by connecting it to the conceptual framework and

research and interview questions. Google Drive and Microsoft Excel were the software

used to download, review, organize, and analyze data. No coding software was used. The

researcher must analyze data to fully understand the information obtained (Ravitch &

Carl, 2021). Ravitch and Carl (2021) also explained the steps to the qualitative data

collection process: (a) collect, (b) compose memos or notes, (c) code data with selected

choice, (d) practice writing as an analytical tool, (e) develop categories and themes, and

(f) connect to theory and literature. While following the interview protocol, I took field

notes for further review, ensuring all applicable information was comprehensively

integrated.

As Ravitch and Carl (2021) noted in Step 3 of the data collection process, my selected coding source was Saldaña's (2021) 3-cycle coding process. When the data coding process started, I made sense of the data by fully emerging into them for familiarity (see Saldaña, 2021). Saldaña's (2021) coding system was the most suitable method for analyzing data in this study. Saldaña (2016) also explained coding as a process to analyze, organize, and classify data in qualitative studies. Saldaña (2013, 2016, 2021) also pointed out the value of recognizing important themes and relationships during coding. A descriptive coding strategy was used to summarize the initial concept of the quotations (see Saldaña, 2016). A thematic analysis to establish codes, categories, and themes helped me to answer the research questions.

During the first cycle, open coding was done, aligning with the conceptual framework, and research and interview questions. Open codes break down qualitative data into distinct parts, and according to Saldaña, the researcher should reflect on and take ownership of the contents within the data. For the second cycle, a descriptive coding strategy was implemented (see Saldaña, 2021). A descriptive coding strategy summarizes the initial topic using a superscript number (see Saldaña, 2016). As suggested by Saldaña (2016), qualitative researchers must identify and analyze data for patterns, categories, and emerging themes.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is defined by Burkholder et al. (2020) as when a researcher has confidence in resources and methods used for qualitative studies to ensure rigor is evident in data collecting, analyzing, and reporting findings. Trustworthiness aligns with the

research's validity and procedures to ensure accuracy, quality, and rigorous findings (see Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Ravitch and Carl (2021) and Burkholder et al. informed that triangulation, probing, and extended engagement are additional ways to attain confidence. Credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability are the four main factors of trustworthiness that must be identified in qualitative studies (see Burkholder et al., 2020). The factors are detailed in the following subheadings.

Credibility

A necessary element of trustworthiness within qualitative studies is credibility. Ravitch and Carl (2021) defined *credibility* as being transparent and honest when collecting and analyzing data obtained by the researcher. Restating interview responses to participants to ensure understanding during interviews will help to gain clarity, avoid misinterpretations, and decrease personal bias interference. The interview protocol was respected, deterring bias; therefore, each participant was asked identical questions in the presented order using well-defined dialects (see Ravitch & Carl, 2021). I conducted the member-checking process aiding in data credibility, meaning participants in the study were allowed to review summarized data on their responses and verify conclusion accuracy (see Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Communication with participants was conducted via email. Participants received an interview summary to verify information accuracy within 7 days of the interview. Participants were then asked to accept or decline the accuracy of results within 7 days of receiving the summary. Once all data were transcribed and summarized, participants could comment on the accuracy of the data or provide further clarification within 7 days of receipt of the results summary.

Transferability

Transferability is defined by Ravitch and Carl (2021) as the external validity in qualitative research studies to examine how findings can be applied into varied settings and groups for potential studies. Providing comprehensive explanations of collected data, themes, and procedures in a universal and transferable way to fit into related situations helped to ensure evidence of transferability. I also ensured that readers could clearly understand my study's results. This description was completed within 2 weeks after all interviews had been concluded. There was limited transferability due to the nature of this study.

Dependability

Ravitch and Carl (2021) explained dependability as the solidity and consistency in collected data over time for qualitative studies. Researchers rarely master coding the first time; therefore, the code-recode strategy was effective for dependability by establishing consistency and solidity. (Saldaña, 2016). Saldaña (2016) supported the idea that recording interviews allow the researcher opportunities to develop a saturated and comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon. Finally, I used a reflexive journal to limit bias circumventing alignment with my personal experiences during the study. This journal confirms that my philosophies, culture, opinions, and involvement are not affected by my research.

Conformability

The final component of trustworthiness is conformability and only can transpire when credibility, transferability, and dependability have been proven. Ravitch and Carl

(2021) described conformability as when the researcher refrains from personal biases and remains neutral. Ensuring that my research is rich in conformability, I used a reflective audit trail strategy (see Saldaña, 2016). An audit trail strategy helps with detailed descriptions and how they are consistently used in the study and analysis (Saldaña, 2016). The data analysis process was recognized to include documentations on interpretations of data, coding, and rational for determining common themes (see Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Finally, I followed stern procedures from the scripted interview protocol using prompts consistently and allowed participants to shift interview direction when response clarification is needed (see Saldaña, 2016).

Ethical Procedures

Ethical procedures and considerations are vital for researchers in qualitative studies, explicitly involving people as participants. Therefore, I requested authorization from the IRB at Walden University to address any probable ethical tribulations. With IRB approval, volunteer participants were selected using email and snowballing. A brief invitation listing was provided to potential participant emails identifying clear descriptions of the study and contact information was posted. Contact information was obtained from district officials upon request. Any possible participants that I know or have worked with beforehand were omitted from volunteering for the study. Interview scheduling and conductions transpired outside any contracted work hours for potential or participating teachers and me. Teachers had to acknowledge their informed consent before scheduling an interview and respond with "I consent". Participants were told that their participation was voluntary and could end the interview process without any

penalties against them. Information obtained will be kept confidential by not sharing identifiable information using alphanumeric codes.

Before starting each interview, the process was clearly explained. There also were clarifications on participant responses during the interview and a summary of the results. Interview protocols were followed to guarantee participants a consistent data collection process by not reacting negatively or asking leading questions (see Appendix B). I was the solitary researcher conducting, recording, and transcribing interview results. Transcript results and notes will remain on a password-protected computer to protect confidentiality. Obtained data is housed in a locked file cabinet within my home for a minimum of 5 years after the completion of this study. At that time, it will then be shredded and discarded. To balance and monitor any possible bias, outcomes from the study were acknowledged and noted in a reflective journal to sustain neutrality and subjectivity (see Ravitch & Carl, 2021).

<div align="center">**Summary**</div>

This basic qualitative study with interviews explored local district Grade 3 teachers' perceptions of challenges and supports needed to implement socioemotional learning for African American children in Title I schools. Chapter 3 provides a breakdown of the research design and rationale, the role of the researcher, and the methodology. The data analysis strategy, trustworthiness, and ethical procedures within this study were also explained in Chapter 3. Components presented within Chapter 3 aligned with the purpose and research questions of the study. Chapter 4 will cover a

thorough report of data collection, analysis, results with evidence of trustworthiness, and

a summary.

Chapter 4: Results

The problem addressed in this study is that local district Grade 3 teachers in Title I schools are not adequately equipped to address African American students' socioemotional and mental health needs. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the perceptions of local district Title I Grade 3 teachers' regarding the challenges they face and support they need in providing adequate socioemotional and mental health interventions for low-income African American children. The first research question explored the perceptions of local district Title I Grade 3 teachers' challenges in incorporating the PERMA domains to provide adequate social, emotions, and mental health interventions for African American students. The second research question explored the perceptions of the supports local district Title I Grade 3 teachers need in incorporating the PERMA domains to provide adequate social, emotions, and mental health interventions for African American students. In Chapter 4, I describe the setting and data collection process to include any abnormal occurrences. Data analysis, results, and evidence of trustworthiness are also explained in this chapter.

Setting

Participants were selected from a local Title I school district in southern Georgia. The participants' demographic backgrounds and individualities were essential to this study. All participants were local district Grade 3 teachers with 3 years of teaching experience, worked with African American children, and actively taught in the local Title I school district. After gaining IRB approval from Walden University (IRB approval number: 11-23-22-1061915) during my participation invitation phase, I was informed

that I needed approval through the local district. Unfortunately, between the local district approval phase were calendar marked holiday breaks, and the recruiting process was paused for about 4 weeks. Permission was granted a week before the district's Christmas break, so I continued with recruitment. It was also a requirement from the local district to request and acquire consent from administrators at individual sites in the district to recruit and interview their teachers.

Initially, responses from administrators to approve site research and teachers to participate were slow. The lack of replies was equally understandable because a holiday break was approaching, and faculty were likely looking forward to a long-deserved break. I did not contact administrators or teachers during the holiday break to honor respect. Upon returning from the holiday break, I continued to obtain administrative approvals and participants via email. As administrators approved for me to recruit and interview their teachers for my study, I immediately reached out to those teachers within that school. The process did not move as fast as expected. Several administrators did not respond for approval; therefore, I was unable to recruit teachers at those schools. Nonetheless, administrators' consent and the number of participants needed for data saturation were eventually obtained to conduct interviews.

Demographics

Ten local district teachers participated in this study. Participants were assigned alphanumeric codes to ensure identities remained confidential. For example, the alphanumeric code WC01 symbolizes the first participant that consented to participate in

this study. As Table 1 displays, participants varied in gender and years of teaching experience. There was one male participant, and the remaining were female.

Table 1

Participants Demographic Information

Alphanumeric code	Gender	Years taught
WC01	Female	5
WC02	Female	8
WC03	Female	12
WC04	Female	3
WC05	Female	7
WC06	Female	6
WC07	Female	6
WC08	Male	28
WC09	Female	20
WC10	Female	7

Data Collection

After receiving approval from Walden's IRB, I was able to begin recruitment. However, additional approval from the local district level had to be obtained before attempting to reach out to teachers. After obtaining local district approval, a total of 10 teachers were interviewed after being recruited using email and a snowballing strategy. Additional steps in approval at the local district level, the holiday break, and teacher burnout lingered recruitment and interview solidification for almost 2 months before securing participants interviews. Many teachers informed me during recruitment and some interviews that busy schedules caused delays in agreeing to schedule or participate.

I collected data via interviews (see Appendix B) using Zoom's online audio recording platform. Participants were identified using alphanumeric codes. Field notes were taken throughout interviews to help make note of participant responses, reactions, feedback, or mishaps within the data collection process. Google Drive was used to organize and sort the collected data. Data collected from 10 interviews provided saturation through the interview process to answer research questions. I realized that I had reached saturation as no new information had seemed to emerge during the coding process (see Saldaña, 2021).

The flexibility of participants being able to interview online helped with limitations, recording, and transcribing for accurate documentation of shared information. Interviews were conducted only once with each participant. Individual interviews ranged from 29 minutes to 57 minutes. During the data collection process, there were no uncommon situations besides a few participants being interrupted and connectivity lags with the online platform. Field notes were also taken during the interviews. The coding process is summarized in the data analysis section below.

Data Analysis

The next step after collecting data was to analyze the findings. I analyzed the data in the following steps: organized, coded, recognized patterns and categories, combined categories into common themes, and summarized for comparison (see Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Microsoft Excel was used to organize and analyze the findings. A transcription from each interview was downloaded, printed, and reviewed immediately after each interview. I then listened to the audio recording several times while examining the printed transcriptions for clarity and making any needed corrections in reporting. Field notes also

were promptly reviewed after interviews noting, identifying, and highlighting essential words or phrases. Examining the audio recordings, transcripts, and field notes helped enhance familiarity with the text by becoming aware of similar concepts (see Creswell & Poth, 2017; Ravitch & Carl, 2021; Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

The initial step of the data analysis process was to transcribe interviews; however, the Zoom platform automatically provided transcriptions. The transcripts were still reviewed after for the accuracy of the received information using the audio recordings to help with any mistakes in the transcriptions. Information from each transcript was reviewed several times during this process to help me become familiar with data. Digital audio recordings and transcripts were assigned using alphanumeric codes for privacy protection. Local district Grade 3 teachers were ascribed alphanumeric codes WC01-WC10 aligning to the first initial of the institution this study was conducted under, the local county's first initial, and a 10-valued number in order as participants agreed to participate.

Interview summaries were sent to participants. Participants were encouraged to review summaries for accurate reporting and were asked to respond to the email if there were any concerns about responses. I included this option to consider teacher burnout and the time and effort it took to secure the participants during recruitment (see Georgia Department of Education & University of Georgia, 2022). Participants WC03, WC05, and WC10 all responded that the summary report was fine. Interview participant WC09 was the only participant that responded that information needs to be clarified and the changes were made within Chapter 4. No other teacher participants responded to the

email concerning interview summaries. A final reading of the transcripts and field notes was conducted to help with familiarity before beginning to code and recode data (see Creswell & Poth, 2017; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). I also listened to audio recordings while reading through transcripts and field notes during the final review.

The next step of the data analysis process was to code the data. Open coding was done to correspond with the conceptual framework and interview and research questions. Saldaña (2021) recommended enabling an analysis strategy that will directly assist the researcher with answering research questions. Descriptive coding was used to condense imperative concepts within data and to identify related themes and relationships (see Saldaña, 2016).

For the first cycle, open coding, resulted in 51 codes from which categories started to emerge based on important phrases (see Appendices C & D). No codes with discrepancies were identified. The conceptual framework supporting this study focused on Seligman's (1998) PERMA theory certifying the importance of overall wellbeing and positive psychology by practicing and improving character trait strengths. I derived predetermined codes from the interview questions and their relationship to the research questions and conceptual framework used, the PERMA theory, in one way or another, surrounding concepts aligning to positive psychology. The codes were organized by the framework, research questions, and interview questions. The data was precisely analyzed from participant responses in Cycle 1 including similar words or phrases that became codes. Similar or repeated patterns are considered to be categories (Saldaña, 2021). In Cycle 2 of coding, the 51 codes were collapsed to reveal 11 patterns and categories (see

Appendix D). Categories that emerged from codes during the second cycle included

phrases such as behavior intervention supports lack effective Tier 2 and Tier 3 support,

Rethink ED curriculum is not relatable, time restraints with having to teach as a separate

learning block, and lack of experienced specialists (see Appendix D).

I further collapsed the second cycle of categories into three themes (see Appendix

D). The most frequently used codes from each research question were compiled into

categories to help me identify themes for each research question that lead to answers.

Three themes emerged from synthesizing data and were quite rich: (a) challenges with

using more than curriculum and programs to support African American students, (b)

shared experienced setbacks with teaching socioemotional learning, and (c) district

leaders' consideration of using cultural experiences to support teachers culturally relevant

approaches. Some codes and categories aligned or were relevant to both research

questions. Of the 51 codes, 37 applied to RQ1, and 44 applied to RQ2. The frequency of

the 51 codes were used 188 times to RQ1 and 358 times to RQ2. During Cycle 2 of

coding, 51 codes were combined from the first cycle into 11 categories that revealed

three themes (see Appendix D).

Table 2

Examples of Categories and Themes that Emerged from Codes

Categories	Themes
1. Adequate strategies and interventions for Tier 1 Not enough support in place to address severe needs Positive behavior promoted but no consequences Behavior intervention supports lack effective Tier 2 and Tier 3 support Rethink ED curriculum is not relatable Time restraints with having to teach as a separate learning block	Theme 1: Challenges with Using More than Curriculum and Programs to Support African American Students
2. Time restraints with teaching mandated curriculum Getting parents and students to buy-in Lack in professional development surrounding socioemotional learning and strategies Lack of experienced specialists	Theme 2: Shared Experienced Setbacks with Teaching Socioemotional Learning
3. Use personal and cultural influences during teachable moments	Theme 3: District Leaders' Consideration of Using Cultural Experiences to Support Teachers Culturally Relevant Approaches

Table 3

Codes, Categories, and Emerged Themes

Codes	Categories	Themes
1. Positive Behavior Intervention Supports; reward systems; Rethink Ed; district-mandated; not culturally relevant; taught separately (SEL block); time restraints; daily and weekly exposure; videos, lessons, and quizzes; active listening; behavior matrix; point system; tiered support; supporting outside of SEL block; more responsibility; student choice; promoting positive choices; positive class environment (family oriented); reminders to accept feelings; using SEL during the day as teachable moments; conversations	Adequate strategies and interventions for Tier 1 Not enough support in place to address severe needs Positive behavior promoted but no consequences Behavior intervention supports lack effective Tier 2 and Tier 3 support Rethink ED Curriculum is not relatable Time restraints with having to teach as a separate learning block	Theme 1: Challenges with Using More than Curriculum and Programs to Support African American Students
2. Time constraints; implementing as a separate block; student's absences; focused on academics; primary testing grade; parent/student buy-in; teacher's approach; focusing on positive; getting students to accept strategies; constant misbehavior (not having consequences because of trying to focus on positive); paperwork involved; can't get as personal with students as needed; need more consolers or specialists certified in needed areas; professional development; more besides Rethink platform; accountability @ district levels; more in place for Tiered students; more responsibility; subject sometimes fails to end of the list	Time restraints with teaching mandated curriculum Getting parents and students to buy-in Lack in professional development surrounding socioemotional learning and strategies Lack of experienced specialists	Theme 2: Shared Experienced Setbacks with Teaching Socioemotional Learning
3. Sharing personal experiences; having students share personal feelings; incorporating culture in academics; understanding students and trends; providing student choice; generational adversities make SEL harder; community efforts; need strategies specific to help overcome adversities and resiliency; cookie cutter program (Rethink) needs to be cultivated and natural	Use personal and cultural influences during teachable moments	Theme 3: District Leaders' Consideration of Using Cultural Experiences to Support Teachers Culturally Relevant Approaches

Results

In this basic qualitative study, I addressed the problem that local district Grade 3 teachers in Title I schools are not adequately equipped to handle African American students' socioemotional and mental health needs. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the perceptions of local district Title I Grade 3 teachers regarding the challenges they face and support they need in providing adequate socioemotional and mental health interventions for low-income African American children. A purposeful sampling strategy was used to interview 10 Grade 3 teachers for data collection. In addition, an inductive approach was used to categorize codes, patterns, categories, and themes within data. The conceptual framework aligning with this study was Seligman's (1998) PERMA theory which supports students socially and emotionally. This study's findings reveal Grade 3 teachers' perceptions of the challenges and support they need to implement socioemotional learning for African American students in local district Title I schools. The themes that were developed to help answer RQ1 and RQ2 are as follows:

1. Challenges with using more than curriculum and programs to support African American students

2. Shared experienced setbacks with teaching socioemotional learning

3. District leaders' consideration of using cultural experiences to support teachers culturally relevant approaches

Open codes were rooted in the two research questions. The open codes for RQ1 and RQ2 derived from Seligman's (1998) PERMA theory, which concentrated on five essential characteristics that make life worth living and provide a basis for overall well-

being and positive psychology. Specifically, open codes were the acronyms of PERMA

(positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment). In the

succeeding portions of this study, I break down findings by emerging themes detailing

my analyses, providing short-term synopses, incorporating tables, and using participant

quotes.

Theme 1: Challenges with Using More Than Curriculum and Programs to Support

African American Students

RQ1 explored the challenges Grade 3 teachers face with incorporating the

PERMA domains to provide effective socioemotional and mental health interventions for

low-income African American students. Categories within Theme 1 and Theme 2 were

used to help answer RQ1. The importance and challenges of using adequate strategies

and interventions, not having enough strategies, implementing positive behavior through

the PBIS program, using the Rethink ED curriculum, and incorporating socioemotional

learning in a separate learning block were mentioned in responses to at least eight

interview questions from each participant. All teacher participants stressed the

importance of socioemotional learning for African American students in Title I schools.

They also noted the importance of providing adequate strategies and interventions with

and without the mandated curriculum and program used. Regardless, they are faced with

challenges such as time restraints and the inability to handle severe students when

incorporating the program and curriculum. They also shared that using the current

program and curriculum is a nonnegotiable expectation to teach socioemotional learning.

Additionally, all participants added that they are challenged to go beyond the Rethink ED

curriculum in an attempt to meet student needs. Participant WC02 shared "we don't do a lot of it" and WC03 shared "it is crucial" concerning socioemotional learning for African American students when considering social policies to improve and close achievement gaps. WC01, WC03, WC04, WC06 and WC10 mutually had feelings and shared socioemotional learning is most important because of trauma experiences going on with African American students within their communities. Many teachers believed that due to the many adversities experienced by students served, the school environment is the main source where socioemotional learning is encouraged and supported. WC05 expressed that students need outlets when coming in from trauma. Outside of the taught curriculum on socioemotional learning, building trustworthy teacher-student relationships are important to creating outlets that lead to understanding student needs was mentioned by WC01, WC03, and WC05, WC06, and WC08. Teacher WC01 stated:

> I am always uplifting and motivating my students. I feel like there is a disconnect at home, so just letting them know that I care and am here for them. It really helps me get to them if there's not even something per say in the class.

WC01 confirmed the disconnect from home to school for many of her students is "automatic trouble" including students not being able to express "how they feel, their emotions, or why they did something". Having support from teachers outside of the learning curriculum for socioemotional learning is needed to make connections and help students express themselves was mentioned by WC01, WC03, and WC06. Overall, all participants apart from WC09 and WC10 believed that the curriculum and programs used

is not enough to address or support severe socioemotional needs for students is often a challenge to incorporate.

Teacher participants all shared that they focus on positive behavior through a mandated program titled PBIS, which places a concentration on rewarding students for positive behavior. The program was designed to expect positive outcomes for students however, throughout the positive expectations several challenges were mentioned by teacher participants. Efforts to support positive education as explained by all teacher participants was using a behavior matrix that includes positive character traits. Teachers shared that the behavior matrix acronyms aligned with school mascots and character traits were developed from those acronyms. For example, participant WC09 shared that their mascot is eagles, so they developed "soaring beyond expectations by being safe, being organized, being accountable, and being respectful" (S.O.A.R) for their behavior matrix. Participant WC08 shared that "matrix expectations from the beginning" are set for students however, "not have negative consequences" can sometimes be a challenge because "that does not work for our kids". However, when students display those character traits throughout the day, they are rewarded with points that can be cashed in at school stores. WC07 stated she uses "behavior charts" when rewarding students. Teacher participant WC09 stated she only uses "class Dojo" to communicate with parents while utilizing the schoolwide SOAR PBIS point system monitor and track students exhibiting positive behavior and character traits for the point systems. All teachers shared that there is a school store that is affiliated with the PBIS system to reward students that have

gained points for following the school's behavior matrices and this system is used on a daily basis.

Teachers explained that the PBIS program is a tiered support system and students displaying negative behaviors often must be moved to Tier 2 or Tier 3 for more detailed interventions to correct the behavior. However, it was a challenge for teachers with assisting students with supporting deficits and the amounts of paperwork required to identify students needed the extra tiered support. Participant WC02, WC06, and WC10 stated the program is a challenge when working with students that have deficits and not identified as having special needs. WC02 stated that "Tier 1 is easier, but implementing Tier 2 and 3 is a challenge". Teacher WC06 stated that "some of her students should be in DES or have special needs" but "it is a bit challenging to tap into socioemotional learning with students" and "none have been identified because of the amount of paperwork". Participant WC10 explained how "a student was identified with Emotional Behavior Disorder (EBD) and removed from the Department of Exceptional Service program" yet the teacher participant still struggled with helping the student with deescalating when he is angry and not using the tools to support his disorder. WC05, WC06, and WC07 added that students needing extra support are not using the tools they provide for deescalating.

Additionally, the teachers shared various experiences and perceptions of mandated school-wide curriculum that have been implemented to support socioemotional learning across the district. All participants apart from participants WC05, WC09, and WC10 stressed the importance and challenges of using more than the district-mandated platform, Rethink ED, to support African American students socioemotional learning.

Participant WC01 shared that she is always "uplifting", "motivating", and "building

relationships" with her students. WC03 concurred and stated that she "do a different spin

on it by modeling and building relationships" outside of the district pushing them to teach

socioemotional learning. WC08 also shared that he "builds relationships" and helps

students become comfortable with him and peers to help create "class families".

A category from Theme 1 and a category from Theme 2 was relevant to

answering RQ1 related to Grade 3 teacher challenges. Teaching socioemotional learning

within a separate block and with time restraints were the two categories that collapsed

from codes that were used to answer RQ1. All participants voiced that they taught

socioemotional learning throughout the day in "teachable moments" when relatable

situations arise. Participants explained that socioemotional learning is expected to be

taught in separate learning blocks for 15 minutes during the homeroom period and that

activity usage is frequently checked through the Rethink ED platform. All participants,

except for WC09, stated that there are challenges with teaching socioemotional learning

separately mainly because of time restraints. WC09, which is a participant at a

distinguished PBIS school informed that socioemotional learning is "combined with

health blocks". WC09 and WC10 mentioned they were one of the few distinguished PBIS

schools in the district. Time restraints was a code that collapsed into a category to support

Theme 1 and Theme 2 helping answer the research questions.

All participants excluding participants WC09 and WC10 shared that African

American students in Title I schools need more than Rethink ED for teaching

socioemotional learning. They believed that the program and curriculum is not culturally

relevant or meets specific cultural needs and does not fully meet the needs of their

student populations. Rethink ED is a "cookie cutter" platform as explained by WC01 and

WC03, that includes videos, lessons, and assessments for students to complete via

electronically. Themes related to answering RQ1 could benefit local stakeholders.

According to participant responses, there are no challenges with teaching socioemotional

learning to Tier 1 students. However, considering if the Rethink Ed curriculum PBIS

program is effective for meeting the needs Tier 2 and Tier 3 students, is "cookie cutter"

and not relevant to the culture within the district, and the time to implement and

successfully teach socioemotional learning was a challenge for teachers. Participants

shared their perceptions on challenges using adequate strategies and interventions, not

having enough to address severe needs, PBIS, using Rethink ED, and incorporating

socioemotional learning in a separate learning block to help identify findings for this

study.

Theme 2: Shared Experienced Setbacks with Teaching Socioemotional Learning

RQ1 explored the challenges and RQ2 explored the supports Grade 3 teachers

face with incorporating the PERMA domains to provide effective socioemotional and

mental health interventions for low-income African American students. Categories within

Theme 1 and Theme 2 were used to help answer RQ1. Additionally, categories within

Theme 2 were used to help answer RQ2. Teacher participants had several common

experiences they believed caused challenges in setbacks to teach socioemotional learning

including time restraints and parent and student buy-in. Additionally, they shared

common perceptions on the support they needed causes setbacks including professional

development and requiring experienced specialists. All participants shared perceptions of experienced challenges and needed supports causing setbacks concerning socioemotional learning for African American students in Title I schools. WC09 stated "They need it. I am so glad that socioemotional learning has come this way". WC06 and WC07 agreed and believed it is needed especially with children being poor and stigmatized. WC03 shared that African Americans are still catching up from "Civil Rights". Additionally, WC05 stated "it's a continuous cycle" with students facing adversities and not addressing problems.

As mentioned in Theme 1, a common experienced challenge that needs more support is with time restraints. Time restraints were codes and categories that emerged to Theme 1 and Theme 2 and were used to answer both research questions. All participants except participants WC09 and WC10 mentioned time restraints with the curriculum and teaching it in classrooms. Teachers further explain time restraints involving school counselors or other school appointed personnel to support students with severe needs. However, WC09 and WC10 both shared experiences of being fully supported through members of the PBIS team, their counselors, and others within the school willing to support teachers with time restraints. There were also mentions by WC01 and WC06 that there needs to be more urgency and support when reporting situations students experience at home causing socioemotional learning deficits. WC05 was the only participant that mentioned "attendance" as a factor when teaching socioemotional learning during the mandated block. She specifically pointed out "it is time consuming" and "students do not

complete assignments". All teachers except WC09 agreed that it is a struggle sometimes to teach socioemotional learning as a separate block because of time.

Other setbacks related to challenges and needed support mentioned by a few participants was parent and student buy-in to accepting socioemotional learning or strategies recommended to use. A response from WC02 was that students are not receiving consequences because the PBIS tiered system promotes positive behavior when they are not displaying positive character traits. She directly stated that "students are not taking it serious". WC07 mentioned that when her students need to "take 10" and go to the carpet, they do not use that time to self-reflect. She stated some see that time to "relax" or "sleep". WC03 response was similar as she explained:

Having parents as well as the students buying into the strategies and actually practicing them especially if they need a time out and need to meditate for a moment. Teaching them the strategy of how to sit still and calm themselves down and re-regulate their emotions is a pretty big challenge itself.

Teacher participant WC10 shared that she is also challenged when she provides students who have emotional behavior disorders with strategies to use and believe they "are not ready for those tools". WC07 shared that it is harder to connect socially and emotionally and provide strategies to students that need extra support with socioemotional learning deficits that have not been identified. Teacher participants believed if there was ample support at a higher level, that parents and students would take socioemotional development seriously. WC01 mentioned that district leaders should "hold parents accountable" for their actions that cause students' socioemotional strain.

It was also revealed that the lack of professional development dedicated to socioemotional learning for teachers was a setback pertaining to challenges and needed supports teachers need to effectively teach socioemotional learning. WC03 stated that there is a need for "teacher trainings" or "support groups" to help with practicing strategies and empathizing with students. She stated, "if educators do not practice, how can they teach it". WC01 did not mention professional developments or trainings but supported that "teachers' responsiveness" is essential and needed to understand the culture. WC04 stated "proper training from specialists would be helpful to learn "techniques" that can be used in the classroom as "preventative measures". Along with the lack of professional development or teacher trainings, WC01 and WC05 believe parents needed assistance and accountability when children are not socially or emotionally fit. WC01 explicitly stated that "parents also need to be accountable for what they do to". WC05 agreed but believed that there is "no correction" and parents needed assistance and to be taught themselves.

Finally, a shared experienced setback mentioned as a challenge for teachers is not having support from properly experienced professionals to assist with students showing deficits or needing support with socioemotional learning strategies. For example, teacher participant WC01, WC04, and WC06 all shared their perceptions on overloaded counselors and social workers. WC01 mentioned one counselor or social worker is not able to "patch it up" and it takes a "tribe". WC04 agreed and stated she "would like accessibility to different therapist or counselors" that specialize in socioemotional learning. WC06 made a similar statement to both WC01 and WC04 that it would be

"great" to have a counselor that is not "overloaded". WC06 even stated that when

children need further support in emergency situations responses to emails don't occur

until days or weeks later and there needs to be "more urgency". On the contrary, WC09

was the only participant that shared she felt "totally supported" with socioemotional

learning from school personnel overall because of recent improvements to their schools

with the PBIS program. WC09 additionally shared that her school has "PBIS team" and

"socioemotional professional developments" to make improvements when supporting

teachers and students. Teacher participants shared their perceptions of common

experiences they believed caused setbacks in teaching socioemotional learning including

time restraints, parent and student buy-in, needing professional development, and

requiring experienced specialists.

Table 4

Codes, Categories, and Emerged Themes Related to Research Question 1

Codes	Categories	Themes
1. Positive Behavior Intervention Supports; reward systems; Rethink Ed; district-mandated; not culturally relevant; taught separately (SEL block); time restraints; daily and weekly exposure; videos, lessons, and quizzes; active listening; behavior matrix; point system; tiered support; supporting outside of SEL block; more responsibility; student choice; promoting positive choices; positive class environment (family oriented); reminders to accept feelings; using SEL during the day as teachable moments; conversations	Adequate strategies and interventions for Tier 1 Not enough support in place to address severe needs Positive behavior promoted but no consequences Behavior intervention supports lack effective Tier 2 and Tier 3 support Rethink ED Curriculum is not relatable Time restraints with having to teach as a separate learning block	Theme 1: Challenges with Using More Than Curriculum and Programs to Support African American Students
2. Time constraints; implementing as a separate block; focused on academics; primary testing grade; focusing on positive; getting students to accept strategies; constant misbehavior (not having consequences because of trying to focus on positive); paperwork involved; can't get as personal with students as needed; more besides Rethink platform; more in place for Tiered students; subject sometimes fails to end of the list	Time restraints with teaching mandated curriculum Getting parents and students to buy-in Lack in professional development surrounding socioemotional learning and strategies Lack of experienced specialists	Theme 2; Shared Experienced Setbacks with Teaching Socioemotional Learning

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Theme 3: District Leaders' Consideration of Using Cultural Experiences to Support Teachers Culturally Relevant Approaches

RQ 2 explored the supports Grade 3 teachers need with incorporating the PERMA domains to provide effective socioemotional and mental health interventions for low-income African American students. Categories within Theme 3 were used to help answer RQ2. Additionally, two categories within Theme 2 were used to help answer RQ2.

Teachers expressed how they incorporate cultural experiences aside from the mandated curriculum including understanding and using personal experiences to further address socioemotional learning for African American students but need more support from leaders. The importance of teacher understanding of African American culture experiences and adversities was mentioned by all teacher participants. Several teachers shared that they consider culturally specific influences when teaching socioemotional learning to students disregarding the mandated curriculum. WC01 stated that there needs to be "genuine love and support" from teachers and there does not need to be a "cookie cutter curriculum". WC01 went on to state that the curriculum needs to be differentiated in ways expected when it comes to academics. WC04 stated that teachers must care and show that they care because schools are children "safe spaces" and one of the only outlets students have to share their cultural experiences. WC05 agreed that schools are "safe spaces". WC06 mentions that she considers how students are "stereotyped" and helps her students with expressing their emotions that are commonly perceived as anger.

Several teachers mentioned how they use personal or experiences from others to motivate and help students understand overcoming adversities. Although it is outside of the mandated curriculum, participants WC02, WC03, and WC10 shared how they incorporate their personal experiences when having teachable moments with students to make understandings relatable. WC10 stated that she shares with her students "I have walked it and lived it, and I am White" and "it does not matter, you can do this". WC08 shared how he uses his personal experiences, previous student's experiences, and family members experiences to promote socioemotional learning. WC02 and WC10 both shared

how they "integrate" socioemotional learning in other academic courses when teaching about "historical figures" that come from similar backgrounds. WC07 also mentioned that presenting similar situations provide students with opportunities to see other African American people like them. All participants shared that they use opportunities to incorporate socioemotional learning outside of the mandated block for teaching when needed. WC01, WC03, and WC10 mentioned it is time consuming and may take away from academics, but is essential in teachable moments. All teachers apart from WC09 and WC10 agreed that they did not need support with incorporating cultural responsiveness, but needed support from leaders to make the curriculum more relevant to the culture and the time to teach it effectively.

WC09 mentioned how personal experiences from training and professional developments surrounding socioemotional learning has helped her use those experiences to help her students. All participants apart from WC09 and WC10 express the support they need for professional development in teaching socioemotional learning strategies to unidentified at-risk students. They also shared concerns on needing more support from counselors or specialists for them and students. WC03 shared that she "sees more growth" because of the emphasis put on socioemotional learning in her classroom, but the practice needs more "community involvement" support. WC08 believed that the work is "undone" when students are away from school because of the communities in which they live, and more support is needed there. Overall, teachers' sustenance that cultural understanding of experiences is essential for educators and stakeholders to further address socioemotional needs of African American students. However, eight teachers

mentioned how more support in one form, or another is needed from leaders. Teachers

shared how cultural experiences including understanding and using personal experiences

and the various forms of needed support to further address socioemotional learning from

a cultural standpoint for African American students is needed.

Table 5

Codes, Categories, and Emerged Themes Related to Research Question 2

Codes	Categories	Themes
Need more consolers or specialists certified in needed areas; professional development; more besides Rethink platform; accountability @ district levels	Time restraints with teaching mandated curriculum Getting parents and students to buy-in Lack in professional development surrounding socioemotional learning and strategies Lack of experienced specialists	Theme 2: Shared Experienced Setbacks with Teaching Socioemotional Learning
Sharing personal experiences; having students share personal feelings; incorporating culture in academics; understanding students and trends; providing student choice; generational adversities make SEL harder; community efforts; need strategies specific to help overcome adversities and resiliency; cookie cutter program (Rethink) needs to be cultivated and natural	Use personal and cultural influences during teachable moments	Theme 3: District Leaders' Consideration of Using Cultural Experiences to Support Teachers Culturally Relevant Approaches

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in qualitative research is an essential component to confirm

confidence in reporting data (Burkholder et al., 2020). To legitimize this study through

saturation, I relied on the concepts and strategies presented by Burkholder et al. (2020)

for evidence of trustworthiness. Burkholder et al. noted trustworthiness is achieved

through credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability which are explained

below and how they were used throughout the research process.

Credibility

Credibility, explained by Merriam and Tisdell (2016) is when findings within the

research are credible from data collected. To establish credibility, I avoided any biases

because the interview protocol was exactly followed and interview questions were asked

in the same order using clear language (see Ravitch & Carl, 2021). The interview

responses were analyzed by reading and listening to the recordings several times to

ensure I understood the data. Analyzing data helped me gain clarity and disregard any

possible misconceptions. I also established credibility through the member checking

process by sending summaries to teachers through emails and asked them to respond to

the email if there were any discrepancies. Additionally, upon concluding my first draft of

the findings within the study, each participant was emailed a duplicate of the findings and

was asked to check for any inconsistencies. Teachers were asked to respond to the email

if there were any discrepancies in the summary and findings. Teacher participants WC01,

WC03, WC04, and WC06 responded that the results and summary looked good and were

accurate. WC09 clarified that changes needed to be made to the reporting of how she uses

the DOJO and PBIS system. The changes were made and are evident in the results

section of Chapter 4. Ravitch and Carl (2021) suggested approaches as such guaranteed

credibility in trustworthiness for qualitative studies.

Transferability

Transferability is when the researcher provides adequate explanations of data using thick descriptions and maximum variation (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Detailed descriptions of the data collection and analysis, emerging themes, and procedures were provided. Nonetheless, transferability is limited and based on the readers' judgment. These considerations may be generalized or possibly used for comparable positions in forthcoming studies on related topics. Details are important and provided to help readers understand the results of the study.

Dependability

Dependability in qualitative studies as explained by Ravitch and Carl (2021) solidifies that the research findings are consistent and valid. An audit trail including audio recordings of all interviews with transcripts; and comprehensive notes to ensure transparency from the data collection process was used and saved to a password protected computer. Audit trails provide comprehensive descriptions of the research process from beginning to end and includes data collection and analysis processes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Additionally, participants' data were identified and organized on my password protected computer using alphanumeric codes for confidentiality, maintaining documentation, and organizing information throughout the data analysis process.

In its entirety, steps were identified that relate to data collecting and analyzing including recruitment, interviews, and coding. To further saturate dependability, the code-recode strategy was used during two separate cycles. Saldaña (2016) noted the code-recode strategy aids the researcher with achieving a richer perception of data and

phenomena. A reflective journal as suggested by Ravitch and Carl (2021) was used to limit bias within the research. I jotted personal experiences during the study to prevent my personal philosophies and familiarities from affecting the research.

Confirmability

After credibility, transferability, and dependability was established and recognized, confirmability was achieved by retaining the succeeding credentials for reflection: interview transcripts, a reflective journal, and audit trails. Confirmability is when other researchers are able make similar conclusions when the same qualitative data is examined (Burkholder et al., 2020). Using reflective documentation is a vital element in confirmability for qualitative studies. Using detailed explanations within reflective documentation helps with sustaining awareness in the study and data results (Burkholder et al., 2020; Saldaña, 2016). The process involving interpreting data, coding, and rationales for creating themes and patterns in data were documented (see Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Additionally, the scripted interview protocol was respected and the follow up questions and prompts were regularly used. As suggested by Saldaña (2016), I also permitted participants to lead the direction of the interview by expounding responses and feeling comfortable enough to share more information.

<div align="center">

Summary

</div>

Participants in this study were 10 Grade 3 teachers located in the southern area of the United States within a Title I school district. Participants shared their perceptions on challenges and supports needed to adequately teach socioemotional learning to African American children in Title I schools. In depth interview questions were asked to each

participant concerning socioemotional learning and how it related to PERMA for African American students. The conceptual framework guiding this study was Seligman's (1998) PERMA theory. Chapter 4 provided outlined information associated to the setting, demographics, data collection, data analysis, and results from the study. Data collected was coded using three cycles. During the first cycle I found 51 open codes that were collapsed into 11 categories during the second cycle using descriptive coding. Three themes from this study revealed the perceptions of local district Title I Grade 3 teachers' challenges and support needed to answer two research questions. Teachers in this study collectively mentioned codes and categories emerging to the following themes: (a) challenges with using more than curriculum and programs to support African American students; (b) shared experienced setbacks with teaching socioemotional learning; and (c) district leaders' consideration of using cultural experiences to support teachers culturally relevant approaches. Evidence of trustworthiness to include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability was also outlined in Chapter 4. In Chapter 5, an overview of the implications and conclusions from the study is provided.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the perceptions of local district Title I Grade 3 teachers' regarding the challenges they face and support they need in providing adequate socioemotional and mental health interventions for low-income African American children. After gaining approval from Walden's IRB, I used a qualitative research design with interviews to explore two RQs related to the conceptual framework. The conceptual framework aligning with this research originated upon discoveries from Seligman's (1998) PERMA theory. Seligman's theory altered the theory of learned helplessness to positive psychology by concentrating on characteristics that make life worth living.

There was a need to address inequalities for African American students including socioemotional learning (see El Mallah, 2022; Jones et al., 2020; Rogers et al., 2022). Additionally, researchers recommended further exploration of program effectiveness, culturally relevancy, and effective socioemotional learning for African American students (Campbell et al., 2023; Cherfas et al., 2021; Gardner-Neblett et al., 2023; McCallops et al., 2019; Rogers et al., 2022). Stakeholders who could benefit from this study include district leaders, administrators, parents, teachers, and students.

The problem I addressed in this study was that local district Grade 3 teachers in Title I schools were not adequately equipped to address African American students' socioemotional and mental health needs (see Dyson et al., 2021; Lambert et al., 2022; Rogers et al., 2022). Three themes were identified while analyzing the data. The first theme, "challenges with using more than curriculum and programs to support African

American students," was related to RQ1 and had five categories emerging from 21 codes detailing programs and curriculum. The second theme, "shared experienced setbacks with teaching socioemotional learning," aligned to RQ2 and some interview questions initially meant to address RQ1. There were four categories with 11 associated codes describing setbacks for the second theme. The third theme, "district leaders' consideration of using cultural experiences to support teachers' culturally relevant approaches," was related to RQ2 and had only one category emerging from 10 codes explaining how teachers use influences.

Interpretation of the Findings

Peer-reviewed literature presented in Chapter 2 illustrated that socioemotional learning for low-income African American students has been ignored yet is considered crucial considering adversities African American in poverty face (see Boatwright & Midcalf, 2019; Gardner-Neblett et al., 2023; Legette et al., 2022; Rogers et al., 2022). Additionally, previous research suggested there is a relationship between academic achievement and socioemotional learning; however, few studies focused on African American students (Campbell et al., 2023; McCallops et al., 2019; Owens et al., 2019; Serpell et al., 2022). Ferreira et al. (2020) and Larson et al. (2020) also indicated there was a lack of studies focusing on teachers' perceptions of challenges and supports needed to address socioemotional needs of African American students. Researchers recommended further studies to support ethical cultures and practices to integrate professional development and measure socioemotional practices (Cherfas et al., 2021;

Gardner-Neblett et al., 2023; McCallops et al., 2019; Rogers et al., 2022; Thomas & Sebastian, 2023).

Results of the current study may contribute to early childhood education by clarifying challenges teachers face and the supports teachers need to teach socioemotional learning to African American students. Additionally, results may contribute to the lack of research on the importance of socioemotional learning for African American students (see Benoit & Gabola, 2021; El Mallah, 2022; Rogers et al., 2022). The findings represent 10 Grade 3 Title I teachers' perceptions. The teachers averaged 10 years of teaching in early childhood education. Themes were derived after I collapsed the patterns in codes and categories. Three themes related to local district Grade 3 teachers' perceptions of socioemotional learning for African American students were: challenges with using more than curriculum and programs to support African American students, shared experienced setbacks with teaching socioemotional learning, and district leaders' consideration of using cultural experiences to support teachers culturally relevant approaches.

Themes Related to Past Literature and RQ1

RQ1 addressed the challenges local district Grade 3 teachers face with incorporating the PERMA domains to provide adequate socioemotional and mental health interventions for low-income African American students. My results indicated that local district Grade 3 teachers face numerous challenges that limit their ability to provide adequate interventions for African American students. Although findings from RQ1 indicated that teacher participants understood the importance of socioemotional learning

and used district-adopted platforms including videos, lessons, and quizzes as a formal implementation, there were also related challenges or setbacks. Teacher participants shared that they are challenged to incorporate more than the required curriculum and experienced common setbacks when incorporating socioemotional learning interventions. They additionally shared that these interventions need to be meaningful and cultivated.

Theme 1reflected that teachers face challenges with using more than curriculum and programs to support African American students. As stated in the results section, categories in Theme 1 aligned with categories related to Theme 2 to answer RQ1. Teachers shared perceptions from interview questions relevant to answering both the challenges in RQ1 and the support needed in RQ2 deriving into Theme 1. Themes related to RQ1 may be beneficial to local educational stakeholders and the educational field by considering differentiating socioemotional learning programs and curriculums.

Theme 1 aligned with findings from Chu et al. (2021), who investigated how to approach socioemotional learning as a whole-school effort to consider race, identity, and equality. Chu et al. suggested that successful socioemotional learning implementation is dependent on school and system level conditions in which there is usually a gap. Teachers shared that there are challenges with expectations for implementing the mandated curriculum, including not enough in place for Tier 2 and Tier 3 students or time restraints. The challenges mentioned are outside of teachers' control and require attention from leadership. Local district teachers are challenged with incorporating socioemotional learning because of not having enough in place or time restraints. Ferreira et al. (2020)

found that teachers are challenged to incorporate socioemotional learning into regular

curricula.

Participants shared that programs and curriculums used are adequate, but are not

relatable and are "cookie cutter". Researchers recommended that stakeholders consider

socioemotional learning programs that are relatable and adequate to fit the needs of

student populations across society to decrease possible challenges (see Campbell et al.,

2023; Caparas, 2021; Ferreira et al., 2020). Additionally, Menzies et al. (2021) agreed

with teachers that restraints including behavior tolerance, time, lack of interventions,

stressful and challenging work conditions, and not allowed time to learn new pedagogies

is a challenge. There are also highlights on challenges in the literature explaining the lack

of professional developments and program evaluations dedicated to socioemotional

intervention delivery (see Baughman et al., 2020; Dyson et al., 2021; Khazanchi et al.,

2021; Williams & Jagers, 2022). It was concluded that teachers remain challenged and

concerned with student behavior despite implementing program interventions (see

Baughman et al., 2020; Borge & Xia, 2023; Menzies et al., 2021; Stephens, 2023).

Participants agreed with Yu (2022) and Hayashi et al. (2022) that curriculums

used to teach socioemotional learning need to be relatable, differentiated, and culturally

relevant to help build relationships and promote cultural responsiveness. Marsh and

Kennedy (2020) supported teachers' shared perceptions of considering how the

community define, understand, or support socioemotional learning. Many teachers shared

how stakeholders in the community including parents and students do not take

socioemotional learning or suggested strategies to use seriously. They also supported the

idea that opportunities from external partners such as experienced specialists would support socioemotional learning (Marsh & Kennedy, 2020). It will also be beneficial for educational leaders to consider the expectations teachers already have, and how time negatively or positively affects effective teaching of socioemotional learning. Not only are students being shortchanged because of the limits on time because of academic expectations in relation to testing, teachers' time is neglected as well. These considerations could ensure that students are receiving adequate socioemotional learning attention through mandated programs and curriculums with resources tailored to the community. Considerations also could ensure that students are not neglected because of time restraints.

Themes Related to Past Literature and RQ2

RQ2 explored the supports local district Grade 3 teachers needed in incorporating the PERMA domains to provide adequate socioemotional and mental interventions for low-income African American students. My results indicated that local district Grade 3 teachers needed support to provide effective interventions for African American students. Findings indicated that teachers' challenges and needed support were relatable to one another. Teacher participants shared their needed support with various setbacks associated with teaching socioemotional learning. They also shared that they needed support from district leaders to ensure that the curriculum is differentiated or relevant to the culture.

Results from my findings confirm that local district Grade 3 teachers needed additional support to effectively teach socioemotional learning to African American

students. RQ2 examined the supports local district Grade 3 teachers needed to implement PERMA domains to provide adequate socioemotional and mental health interventions for low-income African American students. As stated in the results section, categories in Theme 2 aligned with categories related to Theme 1 to answer RQ2. Teachers shared perceptions from interview questions relevant to answering both the challenges in RQ1 and the support needed in RQ2 deriving into Theme 2.

The second theme that emerged was shared experienced setbacks with teaching socioemotional learning. Setbacks was the term considered to include within the theme to emphasize the correlation between the challenges and supports teachers experienced to answer both research questions. Both the challenges that teachers faced and the need supports are considered continued setbacks that African American students continue to face in education (Noguera & Alicea, 2020; Rogers et al., 2022). There were 12 codes and one category within Theme 2 that are relevant to RQ1 and RQ2. Theme 2 aligns with the findings from Beard et al. (2021), Rogers et al. (2022), and Stephens (2023), which supported a need for teacher support in urban schools to help teachers address their well-being so that they can provide strategies and thriving environments for students.

Teachers expressed the need to learn and provide additional strategies for students needing further tiered support. It was also founded in the literature that teachers need more support, were stressed and burnt-out, and are enduring unrealistic expectations (see Dyson et al., 2021; Georgia Department of Education & University of Georgia, 2022). Having more paperwork to help students receive Tier 2 or Tier 3 support and the additional stress trying to implement strategies and tools for students is a challenge

teachers have. Teachers shared that they need more support from leaders to handle situations that are outside of their specialization. Shared experienced setbacks related to challenges such as the lack of resources, experienced specialists, parental or administrative support, and time restraints were significant barriers identified within the literature and participant responses of challenges faced (see Dyson et al., 2021; Humphries et al., 2018; Katz, 2019) and support needed (see Gardner et al., 2021; Gardner-Neblett et al., 2023). Some of the shared experienced supports local district Grade 3 teachers need include proper resources, consideration of time, and the need for professional developments (see El Mallah, 2022; Heimer, 2020; Katz, 2019).

Theme 3 that emerged in response to RQ2 was district leaders' consideration of using cultural experiences to support teachers' culturally relevant approaches for teaching socioemotional to African American students. Specifically, Fallon et al. (2023) and WC03 indicated teachers and she experienced better classroom behavior because of culturally responsive practices. Fallon et al. and the participant credited effective culturally relevant practices to lowering students at risk for socioemotional deficits. Researchers have indicated that to understand the effects of programs, program examiners need to examine how those programs affect students from various racial, ethnic, and economic backgrounds (Campbell et al., 2023; Gomez, et al., 2021; Hayashi et al., 2022; Thomas & Sebastian, 2023). Local Grade 3 teachers agreed that they consider adversities and culturally specific influences when incorporating nonmandated socioemotional learning in their classrooms, yet there is not reflection in the curriculum.

Cherfas et al. (2021) suggested it is crucial that the educational community develop and distribute activities and resources that integrate culturally relevant practices into lessons.

All participants apart from WC09 and WC10 and Hayashi et al. (2022) agreed that traditional focused socioemotional program learning activities are not differentiated and inclusive to learners' historical and sociocultural context from learned experiences. Local district teachers shared that they use personal and cultural influences during teachable moments to assist with differentiating the socioemotional learning curriculum. McCallops et al. (2019) and Schlemper et al. (2023) found that supporting socioemotional learning should be culturally responsive and incorporated into instruction exhibiting lived experiences and promoting students to reference experiences for reinforcement. Providing students with mindful instruction tools and choices when practiced for long periods of time has positive results (see Baird, 2022; Bazzano et al., 2023). Participants agreed with researchers that providing tools has positive results, but experience challenges with getting students to accept and use the tools. Additionally, teachers expressed their need for further support from leaders or experienced specialists to assist with providing effective Tier 2 and Tier 3 strategies for student use.

Themes related to RQ2 could be important to the field of education because local stakeholders may consider implementing additional resources to support socioemotional learning. Added counselors or specialists related to the socioemotional field were identified as the most supports teachers needed. Additional time that teachers dedicate to dealing with socioemotional issues beyond their control needs attention and assistance from other support specialists. It would also benefit the educational field by providing

teachers with needed professional development aligning to teaching socioemotional learning in a cultivating way that would help sympathizing with the African American culture. Professional developments tailored to socioemotional practices are also beneficial supports teachers noted they could use. Considering additional resources, teachers time to fulfil responsibilities, and relevant professional developments could ensure that students are receiving effective socioemotional learning from professionals.

Limitations of the Study

Limitations are identified weakness within research which may cause limits during the data collection process (Burkholder et al., 2020). This study was conducted by interviewing 10 Grade 3 teacher participants who had a minimum of 3 years teaching experience within a local district. A limitation aligned to the study was that some teachers on the spreadsheet had moved to other positions, were not found in the email database, or there were teachers missing from the list. Two participants I interviewed by recruiting through snowballing were not on the spreadsheet list of teachers.

Another limitation was personal bias. As a passionate and dedicated educator with 11 years of experience, my personal opinions could have presented bias. To avoid any opinionated biases, an interview protocol was strictly followed, and interview audio recordings and transcripts were reviewed multiple times. It was my role as the researcher to also remain mindful of my personality and reflexivity. The member checking process was also used to confirm accuracy and participants were emailed summaries of their interviews and findings from the study. WC01, WC03, WC04, WC06, and WC09 were

the only participants to confirm their summaries and results. Lastly, a reflective journal was used to monitor personal bias (see Burkholder et al., 2020; Ravitch & Carl, 2021).

Recommendations

This study was conducted to explore Grade 3 teachers' perceptions of challenges they face and support the need in addressing socioemotional needs for low-income African American students. The topic of this study was majorly based, to a large degree, on the lack of existing research relating to socioemotional learning for African American students living in poverty. It was also based on the need to identify realities of specific challenges teachers face, and specific supports needed to adequately teach socioemotional learning to African American students. Results from this study are based on information collected from 10 Grade 3 teachers in a local Title I school district. Several recommendations for further research are supported by this study.

Based on findings within this study, the first recommendation for future research is for policymakers to consider re-evaluating socioemotional learning curricula by surveying stakeholders within districts to determine if lessons, quizzes, and assessments are appropriate and are culturally relevant to meet the needs for students. Policymakers may also consider implementing mindfulness or yoga as an effective research-based strategy into health circular to support African American student behavior and stress related factors. I also recommend surveying teachers across Georgia when evaluating effectiveness of programs and curriculum related to culturally relevant socioemotional learning. Another recommendation is to measure fairness and alignment within schools throughout the districts so that all teachers receive equal opportunities, support, and

resources for teaching socioemotional learning. A final recommendation is that future research is needed to investigate practices and professional developments involving socioemotional learning that will be relevant, relatable, and, beneficial for teacher understanding of strategies to effectively teach, especially when there is a lack in available specialists.

Implications

Socioemotional learning has positive influences on student learning including, academic achievement, goal setting and management, positive behavior choices, developing resilience, managing emotions, and building relationships (Amundsen et al., 2020; Devlin et al., 2023; Stephens, 2023; Trask-Kerr et al., 2019; van Poortvliet et al., 2019). Potential implications for positive social change could include promoting equity across the low-income school district because of increased awareness to stakeholders about socioemotional learning for African American students within the local community. Additional potential implications for positive social change may include a deeper understanding of realities of local district teachers' challenges that align to additional supports they need to effectively teach socioemotional learning outside of a virtual nonculturally responsive mandated curriculum. Finally, an implication for social change could be for the local district to consider teacher input concerning programs that are culturally relevant and fit the needs of the students served in the local district.

Conclusion

The problem addressed through this basic qualitative study was that Grade 3 teachers in Title I schools are not adequately equipped to address African American

students' socioemotional and mental health needs. This study addressed gaps for further qualitative study explorations on understanding the realities teachers face daily surrounding socioemotional learning (Dyson et al., 2021) This study was needed because of the lack of support and research both locally and nationally identified by local teachers and researchers as a social epidemic and needs attention (Ferreira et al., 2020; Humphries et al., 2018; Larson et al., 2020; McCallops et al., 2019; Serpell et al., 2022).

The 10 participants were interviewed to explore the perceptions of Grade 3 challenges faced and supports needed to adequately teach socioemotional learning to low-income African American students. The reported findings of this study illustrate a wide range of challenges and supports teachers are experiencing and need. Combinations and interchangeable relationships in the data showed that teachers had challenges and needed support with the current curriculum, yet needed more provisions from local district leaders. The challenges and supports shared will support gaps in practice if stakeholders used the findings and recommendations to address teacher realities. Addressing African American students' socioemotional needs through effective teaching will contribute to closing historical educational gaps.

Several teachers reported there are specific challenges when teaching socioemotional learning including time restraints, parent/student buy-in, lack of professional developments, and teaching a "cookie cutter" program not culturally relevant to their students. Teachers also explained some of the support they needed including more relatable professional development on socioemotional learning, more counselors to decrease work overloads and increase the ability to counsel, and

experienced specialists to handle situations with students. Additionally, all teachers

shared how they try their best to incorporate socioemotional learning throughout the day

in teachable moments, but there are restraints because of other academic expectations and

overloaded work assignments. Some even shared that they cannot do it all alone and

more help is needed from the community. Other common responses were that positive

behaviors supports are used through promoting school stores and behavior matrices for

students not needed additional support. The results of my study may contribute to filling

an identified gap in practice regarding the realities of local Grade 3 teachers' perceptions

of the challenges they face and supports needed to adequately address socioemotional

learning for low-income African American students. Through this research, I aimed to

provide insights and understanding to early childhood education teachers in hopes of

affecting positive social change.

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Appendix A: Research, Interview Questions, & Conceptual Framework Alignment

Research Questions 1 & 2:
RQ1: What are the perceptions of local district Title I Grade 3 teachers regarding the challenges they face in incorporating Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationship, Meaning, and Accomplishment to provide adequate socioemotional and mental health interventions for low-income African American children?
RQ2: What are the perceptions of local district Title I Grade 3 teachers regarding the support they need to better incorporate Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationship, Meaning, and Accomplishment in providing adequate socioemotional and mental health interventions for low-income African American children?

Conceptual Framework Indicates:	Interview Questions:
Seligman's PERMA theory: Introduced using the **five elements of PERMA** (positive emotion, engagement, relationship, meaning, and accomplishment) to enhance **positive psychology** and provide a **framework** to reduce mental illness and increase perseverance or interpersonal skills for **socioemotional learning**.	IQ1: What does socioemotional learning look like in your school and classroom? Prompts: Can you elaborate more on… IQ2: What current behavior intervention supports are used within your school, and is it effective for African American students? Prompts: I recall you saying… Can you please elaborate?

	IQ3: Please explain your challenges with incorporating socioemotional learning interventions in your classroom. Prompts: I understood you said… Please elaborate on the most difficult challenges.
	IQ4: How do you promote positive emotion in your school or classroom? Prompts: I perceived you mentioned... Can you further explain?
	IQ5: What are some approaches to promoting engagement in your school or classroom? Prompts: Can you share some successors from this approach?
	IQ6: How does your current socioemotional learning curriculum or program model relationship building?
	IQ7: How are students in your school or classroom encouraged that their lives are meaningful future of society? Prompts: Can you provide some examples… or how would you promote this to students?

	IQ8: What are some examples of ways students are awarded for academic, behavioral, and social accomplishments?
	IQ9: What is your perspective on the importance of socioemotional learning for students of color living in poverty?
	IQ10: Please specify any additional supports you could use to ensure that you provide students with socioemotional learning strategies that are effectively proven beneficial for success.

Appendix B: Interview Protocol and Questions

Local District Title I Grade 3 Teachers

Before starting the interview, the researcher will state:

Script

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview. My name is Lavina Covin, and I am a doctoral student at Walden University. I am conducting a research study to explore local Grade 3 teachers' perceptions of socioemotional learning for African American students in Title I schools. A basic qualitative study using interviews must be conducted as a degree completion obligation. The interview will last roughly 45 minutes to one hour, and several questions will be asked concerning your experiences and knowledge surrounding socioemotional learning. With your authorization, I would like to audio record this interview for accurate documentation of shared information. Please promptly notify me if you wish to end the recording or the interview. Your withdrawal from the study has no impact on your association with Walden University.

Please answer the following questions to confirm that you meet the criteria to contribute to this study.

- Are you currently teaching in a local Title I school?

- Are you currently teaching Grade 3?

- How many years of teaching experience do you have in Title I schools?

- Do you currently teach any African American students?

Data collected from interviews will be used to possibly gain better understand of strategies that can be used to promote socioemotional learning for African American

students. I am portraying as the sole researcher and interviewer for this qualitative study. Initially stated in the signed consent form by both of us, the responses you provide are confidential. As the participant, you are encouraged to preserve a copy of the consent form for your records. Field notes, supporting documents, and collected data will be saved on a password-protected computer. Please remember that your participation is voluntary. If you need a break or to reexamine responses to a question at any time during the interview, please notify me. Again, you may renounce your participation without any penalties. Are there any questions before starting? With your permission, the interview will begin and I will start the recording. Thank you!

Date of Interview_____

Start time: _____

End time: _____

Alphanumeric code: _____

Interview Questions for Local District Title I Grade 3 Teachers:

IQ1: What does social-emotional learning look like in your school and classroom?

Prompts: Can you elaborate more on…

IQ2: What current behavior intervention supports are used within your school? Prompts: I recall you saying… Can you please elaborate?

IQ3: Please explain your challenges with incorporating socioemotional learning interventions in your classroom. Prompts: I understood you said… Please elaborate on the most difficult challenges.

IQ4: How do you promote positive emotion in your school or classroom? Prompts: I perceived you mentioned... Can you further explain?

IQ5: What are some approaches to promoting engagement in your school or classroom? Prompts: Can you share some successors from this approach?

IQ6: How does your current socioemotional learning curriculum or program model relationship building?

IQ7: How are students in your school or classroom encouraged that their lives are meaningful to the future of society? Prompts: Can you provide some examples… or how would you promote this to students?

IQ8: What are some examples of ways students are awarded for academic, behavioral, and social accomplishments?

IQ9: What is your perspective on the importance of socioemotional learning for students of color living in poverty?

IQ10: Please specify any additional supports you could use to ensure that you provide students with socioemotional learning strategies that are effectively proven beneficial to success.

Probable Follow-up Questions:

 1. Can you elaborate more about…?

2. What do you recall about…?

3. Help me grasp the concept that…?

4. How do you handle when…?

5. Are there any additional pieces of information or suggestions you would like to add?

Appendix C: First Cycle Codes

The 51 second cycle of codes that emerged were as follows:

- Positive Behavior Intervention Supports
- Tiered support
- Use reward systems
- Point system
- Behavior matrix
- Rethink ED
- District mandated
- Taught separately (socioemotional block)
- More responsibility
- Time restraints
- Daily and weekly exposure
- Use videos, lessons, and quizzes
- Not culturally relevant
- Supporting outside of socioemotional learning block
- Using socioemotional learning during the day as teachable moments
- Reminders to accept feelings
- Having conversations
- Active listening
- Student choice
- Promoting positive choices
- Positive class environment (family oriented)
- Time restraints
- Subject often falls to waist side
- Can't get as personal with students as needed
- Implementing as a separate block
- More besides rethink platform
- Student absences
- Focused on academics
- Primary testing grade
- Parent/student buy-in
- Getting students to accept strategies
- Teacher's approach
- Focusing on positives
- Constant misbehavior (not having consequences because if trying to focus on the positive)
- Accountability at district levels
- Parent accountability
- More responsibility

- Need more in place for tiered students
- Paperwork involved
- Need more counselors or specialists certified in needed areas
- Professional development
- Community effort
- Need strategies specific to overcome adversities and for resiliency
- Incorporating culture in academics
- "Cookie cutter" program (Rethink)
- needs to be cultivated and natural
- Understanding students and trends
- Providing student choice
- Generational adversities make socioemotional learning harder
- Sharing personal experiences
- Having students share personal feelings

Appendix D: Coding Table

Themes	Categories	Codes Based on Common phrases and words
1. Challenges with using more than the curriculum and programs to support African American students	Adequate strategies and interventions for Tier 1	Positive Behavior Intervention Supports Tiered support Use reward systems
	Not enough support in place to address severe needs	Point system Behavior matrix Rethink ED District mandated Taught separately (socioemotional learning block)
	Positive behavior promoted but no consequences	More responsibility Time restraints Daily and weekly exposure
	Behavior intervention supports lack effective Tier 2 and Tier 3 support	Use videos, lessons, and quizzes Not culturally relevant Supporting outside of socioemotional learning block
	Rethink ED curriculum is not relatable	Using socioemotional learning during the day as teachable moments Reminders to accept feelings
	Time restraints with having to teach as a separate learning block	Having conversations Active listening Student choice Promoting positive choices Positive class environment (family oriented)
2. Shared experienced setbacks with teaching socioemotional learning	Time restraints with teaching mandated curriculum	Time restraints Subject often falls to waist side Can't get as personal with students as needed Implementing as a separate block More besides rethink platform Student absences Focused on academics Primary testing grade
	Getting parents and students to buy-in	Parent/student buy-in Getting students to accept strategies Teacher's approach

		Focusing on positives Constant misbehavior (not having consequences because if trying to focus on the positive)
	Lack in professional development surrounding socioemotional learning and strategies	Accountability at district levels Parent accountability More responsibility Need more in place for tiered students Paperwork involved
	Lack of experienced specialists	Need more counselors or specialists certified in needed areas Professional development
3. District leaders' consideration of using cultural experiences to support teachers culturally relevant approaches	Use personal and cultural influences during teachable moments	Community effort Need strategies specific to overcome adversities and for resiliency Incorporating culture in academics "Cookie cutter" program (Rethink) needs to be cultivated and natural Understanding students and trends Providing student choice Generational adversities make socioemotional learning harder Sharing personal experiences Having students share personal feelings