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After-School Activities Policy and the Atlanta Fulton Public Library System

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MSLS, Clark Atlanta University, 2002

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

Public libraries are evolving from their traditional role as promoters of literacy to a new role as providers of community resources, including after-school activities for teenagers. A policy mandate for such activities appears to be lacking though, which might impact negatively their effectiveness. The purpose of this study was to get a better understanding of the existing policy and implementation mechanisms of after-school activities offered by the Atlanta Fulton Library System in Georgia to at-risk teenaged patrons. Moore's theory of innovation and public value provided the theoretical framework for the study. An embedded case study research design was used to explore the perceived role of the public library, guiding policy framework, and factors constraining the implementation of after-school activities in 3 of the system 20 branches serving at-risk youth; semi-structured interviews with 21 participants comprising teenagers engaged in after-school activities, parents, librarians, library managers, and members of the Friends of the library; observations of teenagers' behaviors in the library setting; and publicly available document on the subject. The data were inductively coded and then subjected to a content analytical procedure, which revealed 5 after-school themes: bridging a digital divide, teen and community needs, public policy, and public service. The key finding of this study indicates an absence of a system-wide formal policy in how after-school services are provided across library branches for at-risk teenagers. The study concludes with recommendations to reexamine the existing after-school programs in a way that better incorporates the unique needs of library patrons and to align policies with these needs in order to better serve at-risk youth within the context of their communities.

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to Almighty God for his grace in making my dream come true. I would also like to dedicate this research work to my wife, Fidelia Oluwafunke Chukumah; my children, William Olisa Chukumah, Wendy Oluchi Chukumah, and Wesley Oputa Chukumah, whose family time was greatly impacted by my doctoral studies. I would also like to dedicate this research work to the memory of my late father, Joseph Olisa Chukumah, who was looking forward to the completion of my dissertation but suddenly passed away May 1, 2015.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

After-school programs provide enrichment activities to children and youths while their parents work or are away from home (Pierce, Bolt, & Vandell, 2010). They also provide shelter, especially for children who live in low-income or unsafe neighborhoods in urban areas (Cross, Gottfredson, Wilson, Rorie, & Connell, 2010). With parents gone, young people, especially teenagers, find the public library frequently to be the only place where they can feel safe and may, at the same time, get some assistance with their homework from a library employee (Derr & Rhodes, 2010; Hannan, 2011; Williams & Edwards, 2011). Public libraries seem to be facing a fast-changing environment (Scheppke, 2014). While they are afflicted by poor funding, they also have to deal with this influx of teens seeking shelter and help with their studies. Many public library systems recognize the need to engage the new generation of teens, but library managers and their employees will need to consider a wide variety of options to deal with teens in the library.

This study covers research on policies and aspects of implementation of a sustainable after-school library program for teens—areas that have not received much attention in scholarly research. In exploring this problem, I brought to light some of the challenges library managers must face in dealing with the influx of youths into the library space. Many managers engage in short-term strategies, which are mostly ineffective because they do not address the fundamental problem. The findings of this study should help library systems, especially those in low-income neighborhoods across America, improve their youth services and develop sound policies for offering relevant and highly

engaging after-school activities to teens. In this chapter, I present the background of the problem and a problem statement. I explain the nature and purpose of the study and the research questions posed for the study. I provide the definition of terms and describe the scope, delimitations, limitations, and assumptions. I also point out the significance of the study and its potential to bring about positive social change.

Background of the Problem

Twenty years ago, Moore (1995) wrote about the "latchkey children" of his day, who became a big problem for a town librarian "when eddies of school children washed into a town's public library reading room and libraries" (p. 13) as their school day came to a close. The town librarian had to make a decision about what to do with so many children, who came directly from school, at 3:00 p.m., and needed a place to let off steam. So, she created an after-school program with the help of some volunteers. This program became a lifeline for latchkey children, despite the fact that caring for them was not the librarian's responsibility. That task fell to the parents or, perhaps, a day-care provider, but surely not to the librarian, wrote Moore (1995). Today, a new generation of latchkey children is coming to the library, and it is critical to examine how the library is engaging them.

Public libraries are evolving from their traditional role as promoters of reading and literacy (Young, 2013) to a new role as a resourceful community (Scheppke, 2014). One of the changes relates to after-school activities in the public library. Teens need the public library, especially teens in low-income communities who rely on the library for help with their homework and other after-school activities. However, many of the young

people are not taking advantage of the services offered by the public institution. Too many of them congregate in the library space merely to meet with friends or wait for their parents to pick them up after work. With nothing to do, they are tempted to engage in behaviors that breach the library's policy of orderly conduct.

The public library has been praised as the last great place in many American communities for preserving the Jeffersonian belief that democratic communities are built by an informed citizenry (Reid, 2013). The library is more than a public space and its collections; it is also a place where the social and recreational needs of young adult patrons are met (Reid, 2013). The challenge for the library manager is to find ways of keeping those who come to the library engaged most especially teens who need the public library for their social and recreational needs. Joseph (2010) stated that public library employees are sometimes afraid to confront teenagers who come to the public library. Moore (2014) examined ways to handle problems posed by youths in the library space. He argued that public managers must show imagination and skill in using public assets to produce public value for citizens.

The creation of a policy for after-school activities in the public library should not only deal with the influx of teenagers, but also do these young people some good. In other words, creation of public value should be driven by sound public policy. Sheinkopf (2014) noted that public officers who are value driven will perform at the highest level for the public good, rather than for the good of special interests. This statement holds true for library managers who, in the past, have made a difference in the lives of latchkey children. Bryson, Crosby, and Bloomberg (2014) also noted that, when managers manage

efficiently and effectively, they create public value. Managers must be entrepreneurial and manage for results. When a manager wishes to create public value through the workplace, Budd (2014) argued, one must be cognizant of the fact that the development of public policy is also shaped by the economic activities of the markets, government policies, the type of organizations involved (public or private), the workers in the organization, and the community at large.

I designed this study to bring about positive social change by exploring the possibility of redesigning and implementing a policy for after-school activities, and by identifying factors that tend to stand in the way of implementing such a policy. As Hannan (2011) noted, teens need greater engagement through public libraries today more than ever before. Studies like this, Reid (2013) noted, will potentially bring about changes in the way the public library functions as a trusted and valued institution in society. It was my hope to fulfill Reid's optimistic prediction with this study by promoting policies and encouraging the implementation of after-school activities for the libraries' young adult patrons.

Problem Statement

The growing numbers of unsupervised youths in public libraries has brought attention to the need to engage them in structured activities during critical after-school hours to prevent them from taking part in risky behaviors in the absence of their parents or guardians. Many public library systems recognize the need to engage the new generation of teenagers, but library managers and their employees will need to consider a wide variety of forms of communication, programs, and services (Hannan, 2011). In

order for the library institution to survive and thrive in the future, professional librarians must adopt, innovate, and lead their organizations beyond traditional models into a new world of civic service delivery (Reid, 2013).

Generally, young-adult library patrons are youths in the 13-17-year age range; they make up almost 25% of all public library users (Bourke, 2010). About 20% of young people voluntarily use the public library without being pressured. They come to the library because they need to (Burnett, 2011). Services to this critical segment of library patrons are generally on the decline because of the library management's inability to understand the social and recreational needs of a new generation of teenagers (Cohen, Dunlap, Ludington, & Reich, 2014; Hirsch, Mekinda, & Stawicki, 2010; Roth, Malone, & Brooks-Gunn, 2010; Sanderson & Richards, 2010).

Much has been written about the new role of the public library in building community and promoting civic engagement (Young, 2013). Studies show that library managers, regardless of their personal enthusiasm for service improvements, are less likely to implement changes successfully if they are not supported at directorial, mayoral, or councilor levels (Griggs, 2010). While the underlying premise may be valid, achieving success with after-school activities for teens in the public library is unlikely without a sustainable policy regarding this issue. The assumption among library managers is that teenagers are the hardest segment among their patronage to appeal to, and meeting their needs will require drastic changes in teen services (Hannan, 2011). Surprisingly, none of the existing studies have explored the need for policy changes regarding teen after-school activities. With this study, I sought to narrow the gap in the professional literature.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the after-school activities offered by public libraries to teens in low-income communities to get a better understanding of the policies promoting such activities. I chose a qualitative approach to explore why teens congregate in the library space, how the public library engages them, and whether there is a policy in place regarding after-school activities. With this study, I hoped to gain a deeper understanding of the research problem in the context of the Atlanta Fulton Public Library System, where 20 of its 34 branch libraries are located in low-income neighborhoods across Atlanta and are serving large segments of at-risk youth. I purposively selected three branches among those 20 branches as research sites.

In carrying out the study, I explored a number of issues such as the purpose, mission, mandate, and budget of the public library. One of the questions I addressed was whether the library can accommodate the great number of latchkey children flocking through its doors and meet their after-school needs. The study is needed at this critical point in time when many libraries are closing their doors because of budget cuts by state and local governments (Cottrell, 2012). Public libraries, just like other public organizations, are competing for tax dollars with several local public service departments (Kelly, 2010). It should be pointed out that public libraries are uniquely placed, by virtue of their opportunity to help at-risk children and support them in their educational endeavors, which should put them high on the list of recipients of sorely needed tax dollars.

I investigated whether a policy regarding after-school activities would be beneficial to public libraries in coping with the influx of youths into the library space, while simultaneously benefitting at-risk children and youths. I expected this study to foster positive social change by exploring the possibility for redesigning and implementing an after-school policy and by identifying factors that may prevent public library managers from implementing such a policy. The study was qualitative in nature and involved an assessment of the policy that guides the implementation of after-school activities in the Atlanta Fulton Public Library System. Because this is a library system, it was important to explore whether each branch operates on its own, or whether branches follow a general guideline on how to engage teenagers who flock through their doors. This embedded qualitative case study involved the examination of three embedded cases (three branch libraries) within one case study of the Atlanta Fulton Public Library System.

Research Questions

I posed the following central research questions for the study:

RQ 1: What is the perceived role of the public library in the implementation of after-school activities for teens in the library space?

RQ 2: What policy and regulatory frameworks guide the implementation of after-school programs and activities in the public library?

RQ 3: What factors constrain the implementation of after-school activities, and does the theory of innovation and public value provide explanatory or predictive value to the implementation of the after-school activities in the public library?

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework guiding this study was Moore's (1995) theory of innovation and public value. This theory was developed to explain why public organizations pursue innovative ideas about how to improve their workings to increase the efficiency of their service delivery. According to Moore, whatever managers do, they should consider the public good in their decision-making process. The theory provided a reliable framework for understanding how the public library deals with the influx of youths into the public library space. The tenets of Moore's theory helped me to gain a deeper understanding of how libraries create sustainable after-school programs and activities. The managers are, after all, on the front line of the problem (Moore, 1995).

The theoretical framework is particularly appropriate for this study for several reasons. It provided a focus on how organizations pursue innovative ideas as they strive to improve the efficiency of services. From this position, one of the critical questions to ask was: Are public libraries creating public value by engaging young people through after-school programs? In connection to the constructs of public value, Berman (2011) stated that "public managers are key to developing policies and programs that bring about change" (p. 2). I explored this issue by looking at public library managers' efforts at engaging teens in the library.

Moore's theory provided a reliable framework for understanding how public library managers are dealing with the influx of youths in the public library. By developing programs that benefit the teens, the library managers could be creating public value. Therefore, public value is an ideal framework to use to measure what public

managers do. There is a new generation of teens coming to the public library with the sole objective of hanging out or using the public facility for recreational purposes other than reading. They can be a distraction to other library users. I explored whether public libraries in low-income neighborhoods are engaging these teens in after-school activities that benefit them.

The theory enabled me to explain the role of library managers when faced with disruptive teens in the library. Sheinkopf (2014) noted that public officers who are value driven will perform at the highest level for the good of the public, rather than for the good of special interests. This statement holds true for library managers, who, in the past, have made a difference in the lives of latchkey children. The actions of public library managers are subject to the policies of the county or municipal government under which they serve; their decisions are, thus, governed by the policies of these governmental bodies. While the underlying premise may be valid, achieving success in after-school activities for teens in the public library is unlikely to happen without a sustainable policy on the issue. One possible explanation for this reasoning is that library managers are extremely hesitant to engage teens flocking into the library space in some of these neighborhoods because they may think that after-school activities will require government spending.

The managers and their staffs who are faced with this problem may choose to design after-school activities that do not require any spending. The youths who were hitherto hanging out in and around the library are, therefore, not compelled to participate in such activities. In justifying funding from the County Board of Commissioners, library

managers must communicate the public value of the after-school activities. Kalambokidis (2011), in his study about creating public value with tax money and spending policies in cooperative extension services, stated that the cooperative extension services, a network of state outreach educational organizations, created public value with the funding the organization received from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Tax money and spending policies present a prime opportunity for creating public value. Creating public value means pursuing collective equity goals under the constraint of efficiently employing scarce resources. Government should be a catalyst for creating public value, rather than an inhibitor.

Public managers act as effective bridge builders between citizens and government by linking people and tasks in their own agencies (Graffy, 2013). Many teens come to the public library to hang out with their friends or to use the public computers to network with friends and peers. With teens in the library space, library managers can actually create programs by engaging the teens in civic activities. I assume that the Board of Commissioners and the Library Board are supportive of after-school activities that promote the development of teens from struggling communities. Managers can be effective bridge builders if they understand their role in the agencies they manage. In order to be effective, they must engage the employees who work under them, as well as the patrons who use the library. Public managers must embrace their role not only as innovators for their agencies, but also as implementers who bring government services to the people.

Finally, Moore's theory further helped me understand why public libraries offer after-school activities for teens who gather in the library space after school, and it provided a framework to explain why library managers pursue innovative ideas to create sustainable after-school activities in the public library. For the Atlanta Fulton Public Library, I explored if and the extent to which these activities existed in the three branch libraries I studied, and if there was a systemwide policy in place that was driving the after-school activities. The theory of innovation and public value is an ideal framework to use for measuring what public managers do when the teens come to the public library.

Nature of the Study

This study was qualitative in nature. It involved an assessment of the policy guiding the implementation of after-school activities in the Atlanta Fulton Public Library System. Because I was researching a library system, it was important to explore whether the branches operated on their own, or whether there was a general guideline in place under which the library branches could engage the teens coming to the library. The research design I chose for this study was an embedded case study. This embedded case study involved three embedded cases (three branch libraries) within one case study of the Atlanta Fulton Public Library System.

The strategy in an embedded case study is to identify issues within each case, and then look for common themes that transcend the individual cases (Yin, 2009). The researcher determines whether a problem has identified cases within specified boundaries, and seeks to provide an in-depth understanding of the cases or a comparison of several cases (Creswell, 2013). I chose the case study method over other qualitative

approaches because it allowed me to focus on similarities and differences among the cases while seeking answers to the research problem.

The data collection technique for this study involved face-to-face interviews with the managers of the three selected library branches, librarians, members of the Friends of the Library, volunteers, parents, and teenagers. I interviewed 21 participants and also collected some ethnographic observations regarding parents and teens in the public library. I reviewed supporting library documents related to the participation of teens in after-school activities including mission statements, mandates, budgets, and external and internal policy directives.

To analyze the data obtained from documents, observations, and interviews, I used content analysis with the NVivo software program. This program allowed me to code the data and organize them by themes and categories. The themes emerging through the coding process could, then, be interpreted to provide insight into the research problem and for answering the research questions posed for the study.

Definition of Terms

After-school programs (ASPs): ASPs provide teens with an opportunity to enhance learning, introduce positive role models, and provide shelter for children in unsafe neighborhoods, especially in low-income neighborhoods in urban areas. ASPs are also venues where teens can acquire personal and social skills, which may not be possible during the school day (Cross et al., 2010). The types of activities provided in most ASPs include academic enrichment, sports and nutrition, tutoring, mentoring, arts, technology, science, and civic engagement (Kuperminc, Smith, & Henrich, 2013).

After-school hours: The hours between 3:00 and 6:00 p.m. are considered "peak hours for teens to engage in risky behaviors, including experimenting with cigarettes, alcohol, sex, and drugs" (Frazier, Mehta, Atkins, Hur & Rusch, 2013, p. 407). After-school hours are, therefore, ideal for providing students with alternatives to risky behavior and support for youth development (Fredricks & Simpkins, 2012).

Innovation in public management: Society places a high value on the public library and the professional librarians who work there. People expect that, in a changing world, the role of the library and its librarians needs to adjust to changes in the community in which they are located and be responsive to the public's expectations.

Libraries have to be innovative in their efforts to create public value through their services. Public libraries receive their funding from the government, and librarians must advocate for support to provide and sustain services to their changing communities (Paberza, 2010).

Latchkey children: The teens who congregate to the community public library are often referred to as "latchkey children" because they are school-age children who, in the absence of parents or guardians during critical after-school hours, carry their house keys around their necks to let themselves into their lonely dwellings (Dowd, 1991).

Low-income community: Communities facing decay, economic deprivation, health care deficiencies, racism, police harassment, violence, and educational demise that severely limit the full civic participation of teens (Ginwright, Cammarota, & Noguera, 2005).

Public library: The public library is an urban space with inherent challenges because it is a service facility with users of the services (Derr & Rhodes, 2010). The library can meet the recreational needs of its young-adult users by being proactive to their needs.

Public value: Public value is a theoretical construct that helps to explain why public organizations pursue innovative ideas about how to improve the workings of the organization in terms of efficiency of services. Moore (1995) stated that, if private management is committed to using its imagination and skills to produce private value for shareholders by using private assets, then public managers should use their imagination and skills to produce public value for citizens by using the public assets held by them.

Young adults: The terms *young adults* and *teens* are used interchangeably in describing the youths who come to the library (Bourke, 2010). Bourke (2010) reported that, generally speaking, young-adult library patrons are youths in the 13-17-year age range. These youths make up almost 25% of all public library users. It is important, argued the author, to create a youth space for young people who use the library facility.

Youth participation: Youth participation provides teens with an opportunity to enhance their learning; it introduces them to positive role models and provide shelter in unsafe neighborhoods, especially in low-income urban areas (Cross et al., 2010). Teens will participate in after-school activities with some of their own kind; unsupervised and nonconstructive activities during after-school hours typically are associated with risky choices and poor adjustment (Roth et al., 2010).

Youth services librarian: Librarians tasked with the responsibility of developing and implementing public programs for young adults, as teens are known in the library lexicon (Derr & Rhodes, 2010). Traditionally, youth services librarians have relied on the coercive model of social capital theory by which parents and teachers are relied upon to help youths through the door to attend programs designed for their enjoyment (Derr & Rhodes, 2010).

Assumptions

Assumptions are important as guides to understanding the context of a social problem and the meanings that individuals or groups ascribe to it. In this study, I assumed that individual branch libraries develop their own strategies for engaging teens who come to the public library during critical after-school hours; however, some researchers have raised questions about the accuracy of this viewpoint. Biggs and Calvert (2013) wrote that "public libraries have centralized management structure for managing teens in the public library" (p. 709). To avoid any bias about this assumption, I explored the perceived role of the public library in the implementation of after-school activities and the policy and regulatory framework that guide the implementation in order to draw a broader picture of the context of the study. My expectation was that face-to-face interviews, observation of the participants in three designated branch libraries, and a review of documents from the Atlanta Fulton Public Library System would reveal different points of view through a process of data triangulation. I assumed that the data from interviews, observation transcripts, and the document review would enhance the reliability of the collected data and the findings of the study. Further, I assumed that all

the participants would be willing to cooperate and provide truthful and honest information during the face-to-face interviews, and that the responses from the respondents would accurately reflect their perceptions about their experiences in the library. I assumed that gaining access to the three designated branch libraries and the participants would not result in any great problems, and that participating library employees would allow me to carry out multiple observations of their work environment and of other participants in the study. Last, I assumed that I would be pointed toward important documents promoting after-school activities in the three branches of the library.

Scope and Delimitations

In this study, I examined after-school activities that libraries provide to teens in low-income neighborhoods to get a better understanding of policies promoting such activities. I adopted a qualitative approach to explore why teens congregate in the library space, how the public library engages them, and whether there is a policy in place regarding after-school activities. The study enabled me to gain a deeper understanding of the problem in the context of the Atlanta Fulton Public Library System, where 20 of its 34 branch libraries are situated in low-income communities across Atlanta and are serving at-risk youths. I purposively selected three branches from among the 20 branches as research sites for this embedded case study.

Limitations

The study was subject to some limitations. It was limited to three branches of the Atlanta Fulton Public Library System as opposed to all 34 branches of the library system.

My focus on participants from the three branches may appear to limit the study; however, the focus was set deliberately because of the need to narrow the study to just three branches in low-income neighborhoods of a very large American city. These branches are all located in low income neighborhoods that the study was focused on.

Another limitation of the study was that approximately six teens were selected to participate in the study. The number of teens participating in the study may not be large, but their perspective contributed immensely to the findings. No doubt, teens in the library can be difficult to manage and can cause all kinds of grief to library employees and other library users when they are in the library space (Griggs, 2010). The teen participants provided an invaluable perspective that I sought to incorporate throughout the study.

Another possible limitation of the study was that the responses of the library managers might not have been completely candid because the actions of public library managers are subject to the policies of the county or municipal government under which they serve; their decisions are, thus, governed by the policies of these governmental bodies. Their perspective could threaten the trustworthiness of the research and the applicability of the research findings. While this underlying premise may be valid, getting the perspective of the managers was, nevertheless, important because library managers act as effective bridge builders between citizens and the government by linking people and tasks in their own agencies (Graffy, 2013). I assumed that the Board of Commissioners and the Library Board would be supportive of after-school activities that promote the development of teens in struggling communities. On the positive side, I explored issues confronting the modern-day public library manager.

Significance of the Study

Many teens come to the public library despite the numerous after-school programs organized by public schools and private organizations. The question is: Why are teens going to the public library during after-school hours? It seemed important to explore this question with a qualitative approach to gain a better understanding of the teens' motives and of the public library's response to the children who flock to it. I explored these questions in light of the library's purpose, mission, mandate, and budget, as well as the stakeholders' interests. The most fundamental question to be answered was: Are public libraries meeting the needs of teenagers when they are there?

The provision of after-school activities for at-risk children is critical for their development, and today it is perhaps more urgently needed than ever before (Hannan, 2011). This study can bring about positive institutional and social change because it shows that a sustainable policy will not only be advantageous to the institution, but also change the often harmful and disruptive behavior of latchkey children into opportunities for social growth and academic achievement. If there is no policy to deal with the influx of teenagers into the public library, chances are that the teenagers will be disruptive to other library users. Many children who have nowhere to go during after-school hours become restless and annoying to other patrons; they are often removed from the library for disorderly conduct. A policy for the provision of well-planned activities can become highly beneficial to both the institution and to young adults who are on the verge of becoming either social deviants or model citizens and productive members of the workforce. The public library, as a trusted and valuable institution in society (Reid 2013),

has a unique opportunity to make life better in the short term for many latchkey children and to contribute something of public value (Moore, 1995) to society at large by helping to positively shape its developing citizens.

Summary

Public libraries are facing a new and fast-changing environment (Scheppke, 2014). One of the new issues confronting public libraries is the large number of young people who seek shelter during their after-school hours, seemingly because they are latchkey children who have no place to go while their parents are working or otherwise away from home. How to turn these after-school hours into something positive for both the institution and its young patrons, in spite of the financial constraints that have led to many library closings, was the question I sought to explore in this study. In this chapter I presented the background of the problem and a problem statement. I formulated several research questions for which I hoped to find answers. I explained the purpose and the nature of this study and its theoretical foundation, which is based on Moore's (1995) theory of innovation and public value. I provided a definition of terms and described the scope and delimitations of the study, as well as its limitations and assumptions. I concluded by reflecting on the significance of the study both through its short-term support of the many latchkey children in low-income urban neighborhoods and the long-term contribution of public value (Moore, 1995) that public libraries can make by helping to shape the social and academic development of future members of the workforce of this nation.

Chapter 2 is a review of the literature in which I first explain the organization of the literature and my literature search strategies, and then offer a description of the theoretical foundation and other studies that provided the background for this research. I also review the research designs used in previous research. In Chapter 3, I present the research methods I used, including the research design and rationale for choosing a qualitative embedded case study. I explain my role as researcher, and provide descriptions of the population, sample, and sampling technique. I present details regarding data collection and data analysis and the measures I took to assure the ethical treatment of participants and safeguard their rights and anonymity. I discuss issues of trustworthiness in qualitative research as well as validity, reliability, and generalizability of the results. The results of the study are presented in Chapter 4, and in Chapter 5, I present conclusions drawn based on the findings, and offer recommendations for practical application and future research on this topic.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The purpose of this literature review is to present a focused review of scholarly literature and public policies related to current trends in public administration and management. The literature I reviewed provided background information needed for a comprehensive understanding of the issues involved in providing after-school activities for teens who use the public library. An understanding of these issues provided me a clearer picture of the research topic, and it helped me define the direction this study would take. In this literature review I sought to gather in-depth information that would me help address the main research question and subquestions, identify gaps in current literature, broaden the knowledge base regarding a new generation of teen library users, and prevent duplication of knowledge.

In the literature review, I analyzed articles dealing with the importance of the public space for teens who use the public library, the role of the public library as a social and recreational center in communities, and the value of public organizations such as the public library. Over the course of the review, I identified important themes and trends. All of the 350 articles that I reviewed in the course of writing this literature review were less than 5 years old, and each of them shed light on the research problem of this study. The first 50 articles dealt with the use of the library space and the role of the public library in engaging young patrons. The next set of articles dealt with the theoretical framework that informed the study. Fifty articles dealt with the theory of innovation and public value. All of these articles discussed the role of public managers in creating public

value given that they are entrusted with public property. The next set of 10 articles highlighted the role of public library managers and their staff in engaging teens in the library space.

The literature review provides a framework for establishing the importance of the study as well as a benchmark for comparing the results with other findings (Creswell, 2013). The strategy I used was to select peer-reviewed and full-text research articles. The databases I found most useful in gathering the literature were Political Science Complete, SAGE full-text collection, ERIC, Academic Search Complete, and ProQuest Central. The first two databases were recommended by Walden University librarians for research in the field of Public Policy and Administration. I also used the Public Administration Review (PAR). I used the following search terms and combinations thereof to find articles specifically related to my research topic: *latchkey children, school-aged children, after-school programs, after-school enrichment programs, after-school activities, after-school care, youths, teens, young-adult children, youth development, low-income children, children in the library, unattended children in the library, library and public value, libraries and latchkey children, libraries and community empowerment, public library value, public value theory, public library services,* and *public libraries and their mission.*

Other search terms I used for my library searches were traditional public administration and new public administration. I also used the names of major theorists as search terms such as Moore, Bozeman, Shearer and Williams, Van der Wal, Nabatachi and De Graaf, Denhardt and Denhardt, Fisher, and Kalambokidis. These authors

contributed immensely to the development of the public value theory, which informed this study.

I used the Boolean operators *AND, OR* and *NOT* to conduct my searches. The operator tells the database administrator that by using AND, the researcher is connecting two terms and want results for both terms. The OR operator searches for other terms available in the database, and the results are a combination of both terms. The NOT operator searches for one term and eliminates the other term, and the results will show only the term the searcher wants. For example, when searching for *libraries and public value* using the Boolean operator AND in a database such as ProQuest Central, I was able to pull some peer-reviewed articles dealing with public libraries and public value.

Armed with this collection of keywords and search terms, I applied the Boolean operators to conduct the searches for peer-reviewed literature. I learned early on that when one instructs the operator to exclude certain key words or search terms, but includes certain other key words or search terms, one will be limiting the searches. When key words and search terms are combined in a search, the outcome of such searches will result in few research studies, dissertations, or conference proceedings on the topic. This research strategy yielded in excess of 350 articles, of which about 110 articles were related to the research topic. Specifically, a majority of these articles helped to provide guidance and focus for the study. The literature helped me acquire a practical knowledge base regarding the research topic and, that the review processs helped me identify what has yet to be addressed because of what I could not find when searching for some terms and combinations.

The literature review begins with the historical background of the role of the public library in communities. In this chapter, there are significant references to how the public library is meeting the recreational needs of the teen patrons. My intent was to explore gaps in the literature and show why teens go to the public library, and if the public library is providing after-school activities. Next, I offer examinations of the works of various authors who have contributed to the literature on how public libraries engage teens during the critical after-school hours. I have attempted to provide a critical review of the issues raised in the literature with the hope of gaining a deeper understanding of the issues involved in the organizational capacity of public libraries in providing after-school activities. This chapter concludes with a critical review of the theory that informs the study and a chapter summary.

Background Studies

The public library is a place where everyone can go to connect, explore, discover, and grow, which is especially true for youths. For years, library programs have supported community building and shared values. Reid (2013) stated that the public library is the last great place in many American communities that preserves the Jeffersonian belief in democratic community building through an informed citizenry. In support of this viewpoint, Derr and Rhodes (2010) alleged that the public library is meeting the recreational needs of its young adult users. Children and teens feel safe in the building, and parents know that their teens are safe (Bourke, 2011; Burnett, 2011; Macchion & Savic, 2011; Reid, 2013).

Derr and Rhodes (2010) asserted that the public library is an urban space with inherent challenges because it is a facility that provides services to users. The library can meet the recreational needs of its young-adult users by being proactive to their needs. Gone are the days when youths needed to come to the library to check out library materials such as DVDs in the public space, which the public library provides. Today's youth has the Internet at their fingertips on charged phones, which are literally a prized possession. With the hand-held devices, today's teens have the world at their fingertips. With the push of a button, they create the world or the culture of which they want to be a part. The library can be a bridge in the digital divide for underserved teens. Libraries, over the years, have collaborated with organizations to provide logistic support to disadvantaged teens. They not only provide space for the teens to learn, but also engage them by strengthening what they learn through other library resources such as computers and other forms of entertainment in the public space. This is useful because it highlights why teens come to the library. Macchion and Savic (2011) noted that libraries also provide other resources such as software, books, and hardware to assist the teens using the library space for programs, homework help, and other library activities.

Most public-library teen-sites are designed specifically to meet the needs of teens who are frequent users of library resources. Public libraries such as those in Cincinnati and Hamilton County are good examples. The Cincinnati Library's teen space is a great example of how a library can work with its young-adult community to meet their needs (Peowski, 2010). The computers in the library are definitely an attraction for teens; they come in and use the computers to stay connected with their peers and friends. The

younger generation is connecting with one another online more than ever before through online gaming, social networking sites, blogs, YouTube, and a variety of other social media tools (Peowski, 2010). The public library of today recognizes the power of these tools, and as such, libraries are changing with the times. The public library recognizes that Generation Y teens have grown up with video games and the Internet not just as tools for entertainment, but also as platforms for learning, creating, collaborating, and effecting social change.

Teens in the Naomi-Dade Public Library mix music, design video games, create films, read books, explore technology, or just hang out with the support of mentors, young-adult librarians, and their peers (Santiago, 2013). Santiago (2013) studied the progress made by the library to create entertainment value with a YOUmedia project with grant funding from the James S. and John L. Knight Foundation. The program is modeled after the very successful YOUmedia Chicago. The teens involved in the program were mostly teenagers from foster homes or latchkey teens. The creator of the YOUmedia found out that young people participate with digital media in three ways: hanging out, messing around, and geeking out. From Santiago's study of teens, the acronym HOMAGO was created. HO means "Hang out" with friends in social spaces such as Facebook. MA means "Mess around" by tinkering with digital media, making simple videos, playing online games, and posting pictures on Flickr. GO means "Geek out" by actually creating projects using the technology skills learned (Santiago, 2013).

The study by the Chicago Public Library and YOUmedia Staff (2013) showed how the public library was engaging the teens coming to the library for after-school

activities. The teens who converged at the 5,500- square-foot teen space, located on the first floor of the Harold Washington Library Center at the Chicago Public Library, had three goals in mind: staying safe from the Chicago streets that are often unkind to young people, using the public space provided by the public library to learn, and enjoying what they do. The teens were learning how to create beats on digital music equipment, editing a teen-made magazine, debating politics, checking out books, doing homework, and hanging out with friends. The teens were also enjoying themselves digitally by playing video games and using the digital media to connect with friends and peers online. In the Chicago Public Library, the teen space is used to create entertainment for the teens (Joseph, 2010).

Apart from bridging the digital divide, public libraries help teens in other ways as well. Cohen, Dunlap, Ludington, and Reich (2014) stated that, at the Lake Oswego Public Library, teens who serve on the teen advisory committees function as liaisons to other Lake Oswego teens. Cohen et al. (2014) emphasized that at the Newport Public Library, teens served the library in three important volunteer functions: shelving in the children's and young-adult departments year round; helping with summer programs for grade-school children; and serving as members of both long- and short-term advisory boards and committees. The teens in the Lake Oswego Public Library let the library management know what their peers in the Lake Oswego community would like in their library, such as the collections they would like to see on the teen shelves. During the Teen Summer Reading Program (TSRP), the input from the teens in the Deschutes public library helped the young-adult librarian get the word out to the community about the summer reading

program (Cohen et al, 2014, p.13). The teens help in the selection of the theme of the summer reading program, the distribution of flyers for the program, and in publicizing the event through the local schools' public address system.

As part of the public libraries' process of reinventing themselves in the 1990s, Jochumsen, Rasmussen, and Stot-Hansen (2012) proposed that the public library should develop a value-driven approach with policies that would make the institution indispensable in various communities. Librarians found out that each user of the public library has a personal story to tell, and each of these personal stories may be inspirational or instructive. As the public library tried to reinvent itself in the late 1990s when its future was in doubt, librarians used the value-driven model to attract stakeholders to buy in and support the library.

The value-driven model can be applied to kids' contemporary behavior. Frazier, Mehta, Atkins, Hur, and Rusch (2013) noted that "the hours between 3:00 and 6:00 p.m. were considered peak hours for juveniles to experiment with a variety of risky behaviors, including cigarettes, alcohol, sex, and drugs" (p. 407). This is the most critical time in the lives of the teens without parents or guardians at home. That is when after-school activities in the public library become extremely important to keep the children safe. Public libraries should be focusing on new strategies during the critical after-school hours. Biggs and Calvert (2013) pointed out that public libraries have a centralized management structure, but individual libraries are still developing their own marketing strategies to attract teens into the library. Some public libraries have more teens coming into the library than others, but each library has a different marketing strategy to engage

the teens. In the public libraries studied, it was observed that teens from lower socioeconomic areas used more computer times and less material check-outs. Teens from more affluent socioeconomic backgrounds used less computer time, but checked out more library materials.

Public libraries have good youth initiatives (Young, 2013). To support this assertion, the Alexander Public Library provided job training to thousands of youths who visited the library (Young, 2013). Another example is the Columbus, Ohio, Metropolitan Library whose strategic-planning review process prompted members of the board of trustees to look into the mission-and-purpose statement of the library system. To help the review committee to put into perspective the public perception of the library system's purpose, the committee asked its 25,000 Facebook followers to complete two simple tasks: Describe a public library of your youth, and describe a public library 20 years into the future (Losinski, 2013). The result of this exercise showed that the library users' perception of the public library of the future was of a place that saw the library as a community resource where people could connect with the world around them. In essence, the public library was seen more in terms of a global resource center than anything else. The result was a departure from the past where the library was viewed as a quiet place where users could read or check out books.

The enrichment activities in the public library range from filling out college applications and job searches to developing financial literacy and creative media skills. Apart from these enrichment activities, libraries create literacy activities to connect with the non-English-speaking residents who constitute a growing segment of library users.

The Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolis has a large immigrant population where several native languages are spoken. The library offered basic computer training in Spanish, Somali, Hmong, Amharic, Oromo, and Karen languages to these non-English-speakers who use the public library (Coleman & Hadley, 2013). The City of Minneapolis-St. Paul has been described as a civically engaged area with the public library playing a major part in the engagement of the citizen. Since 2005, the twin cities made progress strengthening Saint Paul's out-of-school network. The directors of the city's department of parks and recreation and the library are two key members in the collaboration network made up of the city, the school districts foundations, and community organizations (Coleman & Hadley, 2013). The library created several enrichment activities offered weekly to engage teens enrolled in the enrichment programs.

After-School Activities in the Public Library

The terms *young adults* and *teens* are used interchangeably in describing the youths who come to the library. They come to the library because they need to, noted Burnett (2011). Young people desire the presence of parents at home to help with homework or assist in other activities that involves parental presence. When that support is lacking, they turn to the local neighborhood library for homework help. Many teens come to the public library, despite the presence of after-school programs organized by public schools and private organizations. For years, public libraries have been providing after-school activities for latchkey children who congregate there. *Latchkey children* is a term coined to describe children who wore or carried house keys to school, and when school let out, they let themselves in with the house key (Ekot, 2012; Shumow, 2011).

Many of the latchkey kids ended up in the public library, rather than at their lonely homes. When the teens came to the public library, there was a need for library employees to engage them in educational activities and also to keep them safe from the dangers of the street.

Holleman, Sundius, and Bruns (2010) examined how the city of Baltimore, with private grant money in the mid 1990s, was able to increase the number and quality of after-school and summer programs. The motivation for the Baltimore initiative was based on four factors: Streets and playgrounds in Baltimore were no longer safe; children should not be left alone after-school; school-age children will need quality time and support for school work, and supporting children from low-income families with enrichment programs such as arts, sports, and other after-school activities compared favorably with children from well-to-do families who had the means to support their children.

The framework is broken down into three phases. Phase 1: For an after-school program to be successful, there have to be leaders who will make things happen. The leaders determine the community needs, determine the best approach or strategy to address the needs, and they identify stakeholders and strategic partners who will support the initiative. Also, resources and awareness among the public is mobilized toward implementation of the program. Phase 2 involves developing governance and decision-making mechanisms, creating a workable service design and delivery mechanism that can support the initiative after it has been implemented. Phase 3 involves creating data to answer critical questions and evaluate the program for needed improvements.

Some children without parental guidance tend to fall through the cracks, while others are told by their parents to go to the public library and to stay there until they can be picked up. Having these juveniles in the library space could lead to all kinds of problems for other library users and for management. It is incumbent upon the library manager and staff to either stop the flow of these children to the public library or to find ways to engage them during those critical after-school hours. Library managers will have to rely on their professional intuition and expertise to engage teens in the library space.

After-School Programs Versus After-School Activities

After-school programs are planned activities that teach children social and personal skills that cannot be taught during the school day (Cross et al., 2010). The past decade saw an explosion of after-school programs with funding from the billion-dollar federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers to California's Proposition 49 mega increase in after-school funding (Hirsch et al., 2010). The same period also saw an increase in research. The more successful after-school programs were more likely to emphasize social-skills instructions and incorporate published curricula.

After-school programs are considered community-based programs. The participants live in the community, and the linkage with the community is important for participation. Pierce, Bolt, and Vandell (2010) pointed out that after-school programs provided children with the opportunity to sample different activities that would enhance their development. If children were exposed to an array of interactive enrichment activities such as academic enrichment, sports and nutrition, tutoring, mentoring, technology, science projects, civic engagement, art, drama, music, and computer

learning, rather than single focus such as karate lessons or league soccer, these activities would transcend to positive outcomes (Kuperminc et al., 2013).

After-school programs provide structured environment for teens to learn. Gardner et al. (2012) described organized teen activities as those that provide structured activities for teens to operate on a regular basis during nonschool hours, supervised by adults. These activities are geared toward promoting the social development of the adolescent. These activities offer enrichment that enhances personal and social skills through academic, social, cultural, and recreational pursuits. The personal and social skills that the teens learn are not limited to self-management but also include social awareness, social relationships, problem solving, conflict resolution, leadership, and decision making.

After-school activities also provide teens with an opportunity to enhance learning, and to provide shelter from unsafe neighborhoods, especially for teens in low-income urban areas. The difference between after-school programs and after-school activities is the organizational structure and program delivery (Durlak, Weissberg & Pachan, 2010). Public libraries are more inclined to provide after-school activities rather than after-school programs.

The literature review leaves no doubt that libraries have been engaging teens who come through the library doors, but, in spite of the information highlighted in the literature, the public library is facing some serious challenges. Public libraries face a new and fast-changing environment with many slow to embrace new management innovations (Scheppke, 2014). Today, teens need more engagement from public libraries; otherwise,

they become restless and disturb other users of the public space (Hannan, 2011). Libraries are evolving from their traditional role as promoters of reading and literacy to institutions that are actively involved in meeting the needs of their communities (Young, 2013). Service to youths, however, appears to be on the decline due to the inability of library management to understand the social and recreational needs of young adults. Currently, approximately only 10% of America's school-age youth attends any form of after-school program (Roth, Malone & Brooks-Gunn, 2010; Sanderson & Richards, 2010).

The ability of the public library to survive and thrive depend on "the ability of professional librarians to adopt, innovate, and lead their noble institutions beyond traditional models into a new world of civic service delivery" (Reid, 2013, p. 40). Librarians recognize that teenagers are the hardest segment of the public library's patrons to appeal to, and meeting their needs will require drastic changes in teen services (Griggs, 2010). Williams and Edwards (2011) argued that teens are not hard to appeal to, but the needs of young people are not well-served by public libraries in low-income communities where teens are restless.

It is important to create a youth space for young people in low-income communities who use the library facility. However, it is necessary to have dedicated employees who understand what the teens want when they come to the public library. Because of budgetary constraints, a public library may struggle to create a youth space in a public library that does not have one (Bourke, 2010). Managers tap deep into their wealth of experience as well as the experience of their staff responsible for young adults

in order to engage the teens in the library space. Whenever public managers go beyond their core functions to provide value to certain users of the public space, they are creating public value (Burnett, 2011).

Library managers and their employees will need "to consider a wide variety of forms of communication, as well as a variety of events, programs, and services" (Hannan, 2011, p. 32). The majority of teens are working on smart phones with Internet capability. These teens connect with the world via social networking sites. Librarians can connect with the teens through this medium by engaging the teens in library-run blogs. Through this medium, they can keep in touch with teens by posting information that benefits them. The teens can also visit the library website through their smart phones to find out what is cooking in the public library.

Young-adult librarians will be tasked with the responsibility of developing and implementing public programs for young adults, as they are known in the library lexicon. Traditionally, youth-services librarians have relied upon the coercive model of the social capital theory where parents and teachers are relied upon to help youths through the door to attend programs designed for their enjoyment. With the advent of social media, librarians will have to do better. The librarians will need to be innovative and use social-networking tools to reach its young-adult patrons. In the past, the approach was to engage the teens via book clubs and reading programs. Today, the teens have moved away from book clubs and reading programs. Teens need more engagement from public libraries, otherwise, they will become restless and disturb other users. According to Hannan (2011), managers need to promote the public library as a place of leisure, entertainment,

and a provider of fun and high-quality events for teens. Finding that balance can be challenging for library managers, who must not only be welcoming to teens but also provide teens with something to keep them busy.

Studies have shown that library managers, regardless of their enthusiasm for service improvements, are less likely to be successful at implementing change if it is not supported at the directorial, mayoral, or councilor level (Griggs, 2010). This gap highlights the need for a policy that spells out how public libraries are to provide after-school programs. The lack of such a policy is hampering the library manager's ability to engage young adults in the library. Right now, there is an influx of youths into the library space, and what many managers are doing to engage them differs considerably from one branch library to another within a library system. There is no coordinated approach from top management to solve the problem. The lack of a sustainable policy of engaging youths in the library is a huge problem for public libraries in general, and for the Atlanta Fulton Public Library System in particular.

Theoretical Foundation

The theoretical framework that informs this study is the theory of innovation and public value. This theory is useful because it can clearly explains why public librarians should pursue innovative ideas to improve the services they provide to teen patrons. The tenets of this theory can help public organizations to provide services that will create public value. Moore's (1995) theory of innovation and public value provided an ample theoretical framework supporting the understanding to how the public library deals with the influx of teens. Moore contended that, in creating public value, it is the responsibility

of an individual manager to rise above contending challenges and be innovative in the effort of creating public value. Afterall, the managers are at the front line of the problem.

There are two distinct views regarding the application of public value. According to Jacobs (2014), there is the normative perspective that specifies that *public value* ought to define government responsibility and the rights and obligations of citizens. This is the perspective also held by Bozeman (2007), a proponent of public value. The other perspective is the view advanced by Moore (1995), who argued that public value is created when public managers create the conditions for economic prosperity, civility in social relationships, and the advancement of justice.

These two perspectives inform the theory of public value. The normative perspective views public value from the angle of societal agreement, or consensus, to create public value, while Moore (1995) shifted from the collective approach to an individual approach for creating public value. Moore stated that public value can be used as a measure of the success or failure of government as a conscious, if unspoken, effort to shift from objective to subjective metrics.

In supporting this view, Brodsky (2014) made the case that public value should be the measurement of all government performance. Bryson et al. (2014) emphasized that managers must be entrepreneurial and manage for results. When managers manage efficiently and effectively, they create public value. Government has a special role to play as the guarantor of public value, but citizens as well as businesses and nonprofit organizations are important as active solvers of public problem. Managers must be problem solvers by creating public value through setting clear objectives and determining

the best approaches to solve the problems that they must confront every day in the workplace (Bryson et al., 2014).

Many managers face difficult task of finding the right balance to manage people and workplace conflict. Oldenhof, Postma, and Putters (2014) maintained that managers face the difficult task of balancing conflict in the workplace and finding ways to manage the tensions resulting from these conflicts. The way forward and out of these ever-pressing conflicts is to make compromises in dealing with the issues. Managers must put value into their decision-making process, so that the overall well-being of the organization, be it public or private, is maintained.

Managers create public value when they take decisions that benefit the interest of the public, and by so doing, resolve pressing issues facing the organization. Sheinkopf (2014) argued that public officers, who are value driven, will perform at the highest level for the good of the public, rather than protect special interests. This statement holds true for library managers who, in the past, have made a difference in the lives of latchkey children. Bryson et al. (2014) explained that, when managers manage efficiently and effectively, they create public value. Managers must be "entrepreneurial" and manage for results. In order to create public value, and Boyd (2014) agreed with this view on workplace conditions, the creation of public policy is shaped by the economic activities of the markets, government policies, the type of organizations involved (public or private), the workers in the organization, and the general community.

Creating public value means pursuing collective equity goals under the constraint of efficiently employing scarce resources. The tax-and-spending policy presents a prime

opportunity for creating public value, so some might argue and describe the policy makers' actions. To create public value, a manager must show public courage in carrying out policies that will benefit society (Budd, 2014; Moore, 2014).

Creating public value is not as simplistic as individuals' valuing their own welfare; it rather describes individuals' valuing the welfare of society in general (Moore, 2014). A correlation exists between consumers' and citizens' exercising their preferences. Moore viewed citizens as consumers in their relationship with public goods. Fisher and Grant (2012) contended that Moore's (1995) theory is a very good example of how managers in the private sector can create private value. There is a "shift from a conventional, oppositional way of thinking about the creation of public value to a more creative and integrative way of thinking" (Fisher, 2014, p. 457). The conventional and oppositional way of thinking hinges on the fact that decisions are made from narrow thinking, whereby the public manager, creating public value at the top of the organization, is right all the time in the decision-making process, whereas the integrative way of thinking is a holistic decision-making process that embraces diverse opinions. Opposite views are welcomed, no matter how distracting they sound.

In recent years, public sector managers, in taking decisions that affect the consumers of public goods, are integrating diverse opinions in creating public value. A good example is the former 1-35W bridge in Minneapolis that killed 13 people, and injured 145 when it collapsed in 2007. A new bridge has since been built, replacing the collapsed one, with expert opinions from both public and private sectors. The new bridge created a public value as it incorporated modern thinking of benefiting the tax payers.

The rise of public value models is a departure of the public-good doctrine of evaluating public sector management (Dahl & Soss, 2014). The "language of public value blends old commitments to the common good with newer aspirations for performance-centered management" (p. 496). There is a general principle that guides public sector managers, which is: "They should pursue their own visions of positive change, guided by their own professional expertise and moral values" (p. 497).

The public value of work involves the things that we do every day such as resting, playing, or recreating in the public park. People take action about what they consider to be in their best interest and the interest of society at large. In the same faction, they will fight for what they consider is public trust. The role of labor unions is not to lead from behind, but "to create publicly valuable outcomes, not just in the workplace and not just at the ballot box, but also in churches, in community centers, on street corners, and in small businesses" (Lewis, 2014, p. 518). The era of traditional labor unions is gone as "the leadership of the AFL-CIO has been slow to respond to a changing workplace and a changing labor force" (Goodman, 2014, p. 516). The changes taking place in the trade union organization are a result of advances in technology and the evolution taking place in the workplace.

When public-sector managers cultivate the entrepreneurial and managerial imagination of the public sector, they build public trust. Private-sector thinking is eroding the real value of the common good. The study by Fieldman (2014) is closely related to the work of Dahl and Soss (2014) in that he cautioned public value theorists to be "mindful of an erosion of truly democratic self-government by an unhealthy partnership

between public and corporate managers" (Fieldman, 2014, p. 504). When public managers think in the entrepreneurial spirit of private-sector management, their real intention is misplaced.

In their comparative study of public- and nonprofit-sector managers, Lee and Wilkins (2011) proposed that there are fewer similarities and more differences between public and nonprofit organizations. Both organizations are not profit driven, but rather public-service driven. The managers of both types of organizations are "motivated to serve the public good or the public interest and are less likely to be motivated by monetary benefits" (Lee & Wilkins, 2011, p. 47). Managers can be effective bridge builders if they understand their roles in the agencies they manage. In order to be effective, they must engage the employees who work under them, and the patrons who use the library space. Managers must see their role not only as innovators for their agencies, but also as implementers who bring government to the people. People who are attracted to public-service employment are people who are inclined to help others or are drawn to serve the public interest in contrast to private-sector employees who are motivated by profit, and as such have little interest in helping people. Therefore, public-sector workers see their role as working for a good cause. They are motivated by the work they do to help others (Dur & Zoutenbier, 2014).

For Moore (1995), the public manager who is saddled with the responsibility for defining a path through the strategic triangle toward public value wins public and government approval. Sheinkopf (2014) noted that public officers, who are value driven, will perform at the highest level for the good of the public, rather than protect special

interests. Bryson et al. (2014) emphasized that, when managers manage efficiently and effectively, they create public value. Boyd (2014) agreed with this view; he pointed out that in the workplace, the creation of public policy is shaped by the economic activities in the markets, government policies, the type organizations involved (public or private), the workers in the organization, and the general community.

In a similar study, Kalambokidis (2011) posited that the Cooperative Extension Service was under pressure from various states and the federal government to defend the continued receipt of public funding. In defending the grant funding for its programs, the Cooperative Extension Services provided evidence of how the funds have benefitted participants in their programs; they also highlighted how the extension service workers were able to justify public funding by communicating the program's public value that addressed one or more market failures such as encouraging public benefits. Ravitch (2010) commented that educators could do better than their present performance, which is linked to wages and scores. If educators see their job as creating public value, then they can do better than they have done so far. They have to be innovative and creative in channeling students to make improvement in their test-taking ability. Government should be the catalyst for creating public value and not inhibiting it (Kalambokidis, 2014).

The theory of innovation and public value, therefore, provides a reliable framework for understanding how the public library deals with the influx of youths into the public library. These insights have helped me to gain a deeper understanding of how libraries create sustainable after-school programs and activities. After all, the managers are at the front line of the problem, noted Moore (1995). This study may bring about

positive social change by exploring the possibility of redesigning and implementing after-school policy by identifying factors that prevent public library managers from implementing such a policy.

This research could potentially bring about changes in the way the public library, as a trusted and valuable institution in society (Reid 2013), provides after-school activities for its teen patrons. Bryson et al. (2014) noted that, when managers manage efficiently and effectively, they create public value. Managers must be entrepreneurial and manage for results. The theory of public value helped me to understand how library managers and their staff provide after-school activities to teens in low-income communities and how the requisite policies can promote such activities. The theory also explained the problem in the context of the Atlanta Fulton Public Library System, where 20 of its 34 branch libraries are situated in low-income communities across Atlanta and are serving at-risk youths.

The Atlanta Fulton Public Library System is the largest public library system in the state of Georgia. The library system has 34 branches situated in communities across Fulton County and the city of Atlanta, including the portion of the city that is in DeKalb County (Atlanta Fulton Public Library System [AFPLS], 2014). It offers programs, services, and virtual resources tailored to the needs of the community surrounding each of the branches. It has a collection of more than 2.5 million items (AFPLS, 2014). The management of the Library system includes a director, two branch group managers, a central librarian, various departmental managers, and library branch managers. There is also a library board, made up of appointed members whose function is advisory and

ceremonial. The board members are appointed by the Fulton County Board of Commissioners. By its statute, the library system is a department under the Fulton County government. The county government is led by the Board of Commissioners. The library director is the head of the library, but the policies of the library are approved by the Board of Commissioners. The library has approximately 450 well-trained and skilled employees working in the 34 branches (AFPL, 2014).

This study sought answers to the question whether the Atlanta Fulton Public Library can accommodate the great number of latchkey children streaming through its doors and meet their needs for after-school activities. To undertake this study was both urgent and timely in the face of so many library closings due to budget cuts by state and local governments (Cottrell, 2012). The Atlanta Fulton Public Library, just as many other public organizations, must compete with several local public service departments for the available tax dollars (Kelly, 2010). Suffice it to say that it is difficult for professional librarians to engage the teens when they come to the library without policies that outline how the library should engage them. The absence of a written policy jeopardizes staff activities and the library manager's ability to engage the teens. Policy tends to promote consistency in the way the staff engages teens, which may, in turn, reduce the disruptive or behavioral problems so often caused by teens in the public library space.

Public Value and the Public Library

In the past 150 years, the Atlanta Fulton Public Library System, as well as other library systems, have been providing services that the public values and trusts, but these libraries face a new environment that is rapidly changing with competition from the

public and private sectors that see opportunities in the library's way of doing business. The public library's role as a public institution in society is to provide informational services that will benefit all users of that public space. When teens congregate in the library, they expect nothing less. Moore's (1995) theory of innovation and public value charged managers to be innovative in providing programs that are tangible and measurable for the benefit of the teens and their parents. By providing public good, the government and its agencies are producing something of value to the citizens of that country. The public good is such that it is recognizable and measurable as a public value. This thinking informed the present study because the after-school activities provided by the public library to teens in the library space are, indeed, of a tangible and measurable value.

A new generation of tech-savvy latchkey children is coming to the library space (Grant & Fisher, 2011). The question for the modern-day public library manager is: Should the manager and staff engage them in after-school activities? Does the manager have the taxing authority to create value for teens? Public sector manager, unlike private sector managers, have the taxing authority to impose taxes on the citizens who use government services to achieve collective ends. By the end of the day, the objective of the taxing responsibility should be such that the benefits outweigh the cost. Grant and Fisher (2011) contended that "politics remains the final arbiter of public value just as private consumption decisions remain the final arbiter of private value" (p. 6). The actions of public library managers are subject to the policies of the county or municipal

government under which they serve, and as such, the decisions they make are governed by municipal or county policies.

In developing after-school activities to engage teens in the library, the public library manager must see to it that the library's role will help the teens to become better citizens, rather than to use the presence of teens for self-gratifying reasons. Talve (2011) argued that "strategic work undertaken by librarians from the 1990s onwards combined with a reappraisal of the role of the public library as a place in the civic life of its various constituencies" (p. 502). Public managers act as effective bridge builders between citizens and government by linking people and tasks in their own agencies (Graffy, 2013).

Public libraries have always been valued by society as a place for enhancing literacy, providing access to information and engaging users who come to the library space, and providing access to people who are marginalized by society such as people in low-income areas. They have been experimenting with user-generated or community-centered Internet content tools to serve public library users. "Public library experiments with user-generated content can be analyzed in the context of wider institutional mandates around literacy, civic engagement and access" (McShane, 2011, p. 383).

A public mandate enables libraries to provide services, but such mandates can be carried out only through the expert oversight of librarians who are trained to solve critical societal problems in that great space called the public library. The teens in the public library space are there either because they love books or need a place to stay when there is no adult at home or just to hang out with their friends and peers. The question,

therefore, is: How can young-adult librarians tap into the available resources to engage teens who just hanging out? Smith, Peck, Denault, Blazevski, and Akiva (2010) asked: What are the benefits of after-school activities to these teens?

Society places a high value on the public library and the professional librarians who work there. Citizens expect that, in a changing world, the role of the library and the librarians in their communities should change to reflect the expectations of the public. Libraries have to be innovative as they create public value through their services. Public libraries receive their funding from the government, and librarians must advocate for support to provide and sustain services to their changing communities (Paberza, 2010). They have to be innovative in articulating programs in a changing environment to sustain the interest of users in the library space. The activities should be such that they attract new teens because of the social and economic benefits they bring to the them (Paberza, 2010).

For public libraries engaged in youth programming, the creation of public value should be driven by sound public policy. In spite of the changes that are taking place and putting enormous pressure on the public library, the libraries have been able to adapt to technological changes, budgetary pressures, and competition from booksellers and Internet cafes. They have a special utility beyond book circulation. When elected officials vote to close public libraries in communities where circulation is poor due to budgetary decline, there is a sense of loss in the community. If public libraries are shut down due to budgetary decline, where will the teens go after school? (Ly, 2010). Local residents rely on their public library to provide informational resources that they need or use. The

library is not just a quiet place for learning, but a safe, accessible, and very useful community institution where everyone is welcome, and all are troubled urban spaces (Ly, 2010). It has "traditionally been one of the few institutions that provided resources for local residents in poor, urban neighborhoods" (Ly, 2010, p. 22).

Summary and Conclusion

I reviewed several studies in this chapter to fully understand the role of the public library in engaging the influx of teens into the public library space. Hannan (2011) stated that public libraries have moved away from book clubs and reading programs to offer technological engagement. Burnett (2011) observed that teens come to the library because they need to. Griggs (2010) noted that the public library is investing resources in youth spaces, electronic gadgets, and other tempters. Kelly (2010) called for a youth-services strategy framework for public libraries, which was also echoed by Scheppke (2014), who called for an after-school program for teens in the library space. Paberza (2010) stated that librarians must advocate for support to provide and sustain services to their changing communities.

In the new and changing environment, the public library must first articulate the most immediate and significant threats it is facing. The libraries have invested scarce resources in new facilities and technology for the satisfaction of library users. In spite of these new investments, there is a lack of enthusiasm on the part of librarians to engage teens who come to the library. For years, they have been successful with circulation of books and reference materials, but there is a new generation who has smart phones with Internet capabilities. The library must find new ways of motivating these teens. Managers

and library employees must be innovative to create public value by providing activities that are attractive to teens and keep them coming to the library space.

As noted in the literature review, the theory of public value and innovation provided a reliable framework for understanding how the public library deals with the influx of youths into the public space. By developing programs that benefit the teens, the library managers could create public value. Several of the reviewed articles stated that public value is an ideal framework to use for measuring what public managers do. Griggs (2010) noted that library managers recognize that teenagers are the most difficult segment of the public library's patrons to appeal to, and meeting their needs will require drastic changes in teen services. The theory of public value and innovation helped to explain why library managers should pursue innovative ideas to create sustainable after-school program. According to Moore (1995), whatever managers do, they should consider the public good in their decision-making process. His theory of innovation and public value provided a reliable framework for understanding how the public library deals with the influx of youths during after-school hours. Therefore, what remains to be studied is the organizational capacity of public libraries to organize after-school activities.

It is against this background that I carried out this embedded case study. With this information in mind, I expanded on the existing body of knowledge about how to engage teens in the public library. The findings of this study narrowed a gap in the professional literature by providing the thoughts and perceptions of library managers and youth-services librarians, teens and their parents, and other stakeholders why teens flock to the

public library and if the public library should be providing after-school programs and activities for them.

In Chapter 3, I provided a description of the research methods used, including research design and rationale for choosing an embedded case study. I reflected on the role of the researcher and present the research questions guiding the study. I described the population, sample, and sampling procedure, as well as data collection and data analysis procedures. I discussed issues of trustworthiness and ethical concerns and the measures taken to safeguard the rights and anonymity of the research participants.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this embedded case study was to examine after-school activities offered by the public library for teens in low-income communities to achieve a better understanding of the need for policies that promote such activities. A gap exists in the professional literature with respect to a clear policy mandating after-school activities in the public library designed to contribute positively to the successful engagement of teens who frequently use the public library space.

I developed the research questions in response to a need to explore whether there is, indeed, a policy in place regarding after-school activities. In carrying out this study, I had to explore and clarify a number of issues such as the purpose, mission, mandate, and budget of the public library, and the demographic composition of the libraries' patrons. I sought answers that address whether and the extent to which the library could accommodate the great number of latchkey children flocking to its halls and meet their needs through after-school programs. This study was both necessary and timely given that budget cuts by state and local governments are forcing many libraries to close their doors (Cottrell, 2012).

I open this chapter with a discussion of the research design and the rational for choosing this approach. Next, I describe the research methods used as well as the population, sample, and sampling procedure. I go on to explain the data collection methods and provide details regarding how I analyzed the data collected through interviews, ethnographic observations, and a documents review. The gap in the literature

between a rapidly growing need for--and currently insufficient offerings of--after-school activities in public libraries appears to be justification enough for undertaking this study to explore whether the lack of a policy for sustainable after-school activities is hampering the library managers' efforts to engage children and young adults successfully, furthering their social and academic development. My primary focus was on whether a policy for after-school activities would help public libraries and their personnel to cope more successfully with the influx of youths into the library space, while providing much needed support to at-risk children in their academic and social development.

Research Design and Rationale

Given the nature of the research topic, I chose a qualitative approach to answer the research questions. According to Creswell (2013), qualitative research begins with assumptions and the use of an interpretive theoretical framework that informs the pursuit of answers to the research questions posed in order to (a) find solutions to a social or human problem, and (b) find the meaning that individuals or groups ascribe to this problem. The qualitative researcher uses an emerging approach to explore the social or human problem through the lens of the individual, people, groups, or culture under study. Researchers identify emerging themes and make generalizations about the social or human problem. In my study, librarians noted the influx of teens to the library and expressed concerns about the problem of engaging them in the absence of a public policy that directs such an undertaking. Such directives would need to be supported at top organizational levels or the librarian would be incapable of dealing with the problem at hand.

To verify the existence or nonexistence of an after-school activities policy, I determined that a qualitative approach would be most suitable for gathering data from teens, parents, library managers, librarians, and other stakeholders in the public library.

Barker (2011) used the qualitative case study approach to explore why teens with disabilities come to the public library. Baker interviewed five teens with different disabilities about the reasons for their use of the library, given that the public library may not provide the kind of public space suitable for library users like them. The responses of those participants showed that they trusted the public library and its employees. One of the teens reported that, when she first came to the library, she received the kind of help no other public institution could replicate (Barker, 2011). The study by Barker is particularly relevant to my study because the researcher used the case study design to gain insight into why these teens used the public library. The teens spoke about the value of the services the public library provided to multilevel library users. They were teens who did not want to frequent many places because of their disability, but they chose to come to the public library where they found that their needs could be met. Barker's study showed the value and usefulness of a qualitative case study method in the research of youth development issues.

The qualitative approach places the research into the natural setting of the participants. By observing and interviewing the participants, the researcher is able to tell the story of the participants using the participants' language, as seen through their eyes. The qualitative approach was best suited to this study of teens flocking to public library branches during after-school hours; their needs and perceptions could best be explored

with the use of an embedded case study. This approach, in the words of Yin (2009), ensured the "analysis of a specific aspect of the case or identifying issues within each case and [a] look for common themes that transcend the cases" (p. 101).

Research Questions

I posed the following research questions for the study:

RQ1: What is the perceived role of public libraries in the implementation of after-school activities for teens who come in large numbers to the library space?

RQ2: What policy and regulatory frameworks are currently guiding the implementation of after-school programs in the public library?

RQ3: What factors constrain the implementation of after-school activities, and does the theory of innovation and public value provide explanatory or predictive value for the implementation of after-school activities in the public library?

Role of the Researcher

One of the data collection techniques used in this study was observation of the participants. When observing the teens in the library, I was neither a participant-observer nor an observer-participant, but rather a neutral observer. I sought permission from the library managers before conducting any observations in their respective branch libraries. The observations were scheduled during the critical after-school hours, between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. I observed the library managers and other library employees to see if and how they engaged the teens during this critical time period.

I visited branch libraries of the Atlanta Fulton Public Library System where the teen problem existed before choosing three libraries as research sites. At the time of my

visits, I also determined if having a gatekeeper was required for patrons to gain entry into the sites. If a gatekeeper was needed, I presumed that this position would be filled by the respective branch manager. I planned to collect data by taking field notes and making audiorecordings of the participants. I conducted observations of potential participants over some time before making contact and, eventually, deciding which participants to recruit as interviewees. Both the observations and interviews were guided by observational and interview protocols (see Appendices A to F). I informed the participants about the purpose of the research, and required them to sign an informed consent form before I began data collection (see Appendix G).

Establishing Working Relationships with Participants

As a librarian and employee of the Atlanta Fulton Public Library System myself (but not in a supervisory position), I was collecting data from librarians and branch managers. I did not think that the fact of my employment would have any bearing on the study; however, I nonetheless chose library sites for observation that were among those where I had not previously worked, and where I had no connection to the managers or librarians. The plan was that I would interview the branch manager and the teen librarian at three of those libraries about their perspectives regarding the research problem. The code of ethics governing the professional practice of librarians also governed my conduct for this research study: I made every effort to ensure that this code of ethics was observed in every respect throughout the study. It is pertinent to note that I, as the researcher, am not a supervisor in the organization.

I obtained permission from the managers to post flyers on the library's public information board inviting teens interested in participating in the library's after-school activities to give me a call or send me an e-mail. The flyers included my contact information. Whenever one of the teens made contact with me, I entered the name and the parents' contact information on a volunteer form that was used to keep track of the teen callers. I made contact with the parents to obtain their consent by phone or in person. I made sure that the discussions with parents took place during school hours when the teens were at school. I introduced myself as a librarian-researcher and explained the benefits of the study to the teens, the parents, and the public library employees.

When parents gave approval to recruit the teen participant, I explained to them the purpose of the study and the procedures for conducting the interview, and then with them the interview questions. The parental consent form clearly stated that parents could make an informed decision as to whether they wanted their teen to participate in the study or decline participation. If the parents agreed to the teen's participation in the study, I requested that they sign the consent form.

After getting the signed consent form from the parents, I approached the teens separately to recruit them for the interviews. The teens had to be recruited individually in order to ensure confidentiality. Interviews were conducted only if the teens themselves signed an assent form in addition to the parents' consent. Before they signed the assent form, I explained the purpose of the study to them, the procedure for conducting the interview, and the benefits of the study. I made sure that the teens did not feel pressured to participate in the study. I held the interviews in the privacy of one of the meeting

rooms at the respective branch library. The interviews were conducted in face-to-face meetings and I audiorecorded them with the expressed permission of the teen participant. Were I not to have been given permission to record the interview, I planned to take notes of the participant's responses in my interview notebook. I also pointed out to the teens that there would be no financial compensation for participating in the study.

The third component of the sample comprised the librarians who provided after-school activities for teens in each of the three branches. Library staff wear employee badges, so identifying the librarians among the staff was not difficult. When I introduced myself as a professional colleague, I emphasized that I was not there in any kind of supervisory capacity and that I held no such position at the central library where I worked. One librarian per branch was to be recruited for the study. If consent was given, I explained the purpose of the study and my professional role in the study. I explained the benefits of the study to the branch and the library system as a whole. I also explained that their participation in the study was voluntary. The interviews would be face-to-face and audiotaped with the interviewee's permission. If permission was not granted, I planned to take notes of the responses in my interview notebook. I made it clear to potential to participants that there would be no financial compensation for participating in the study. I requested that they sign the consent form before beginning the interview.

The library managers were the last group of the sample to be interviewed. I requested that the managers sign the consent form before conducting the interviews. I reiterated the purpose of the study and my professional role as the researcher. I explained the benefits of the study for the library system. The interviews would be face-to-face and

audiotaped with the manager's permission. If permission was not granted, I planned to take notes of the responses on my interview notebook. I made it clear to the managers that no financial compensation was provided for participation in the study. I requested that the managers signed the consent form before conducting the interview.

Researcher Bias and Power Relationships

I made every effort to avoid researcher bias by adhering strictly to the guidelines issued by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Walden University and the requirements for qualitative research, as befits a sound research design. The research was conducted in public places, where I had no personal relationships with the participants. The use of purposive sampling ensured that the participants were selected equitably and honestly. I endeavored to ensure the privacy of the participants and did not knowingly expose the participants to any risk. I informed the participants about the purpose of the study and sought their written informed consent prior to conducting the interviews. I informed the participants that the findings would be published in aggregate form and that confidential information shared by the participants would not be published or shared with the organization. No identifying information would be published in order to safeguard the participants' anonymity.

Ethical Issues and the Plans to Address Them

Ethical issues in qualitative research are said to occur prior to conducting the study, at the beginning of the study, during data collection and in-depth analysis, in reporting the data, and when publishing the study (Creswell, 2013). All universities have ethical standards for conducting research with human subjects; at Walden University,

these standards are upheld through the guidelines of the IRB. The two main ethical issues pertaining to human participants in social science research are, first, the need fully to inform the participants about the purpose of the study and the voluntary nature of their participation, as well the protection of their rights and anonymity, and, second, the need to make sure that participants emerge unharmed from the experience (Rudestam & Newton, 2007).

The participants in this study are not related to the researcher, but to ensure trustworthiness of the sampling technique, I implemented verification strategies and self-correction strategies during the selection process. Verification was used during initial contact with the participants for selection, and self-correction was used to ensure that no mistakes were made on my part during the sampling process, which would undermine the trustworthiness of the sampling. The sample comprised a mix of young-adult and adult participants and a representation of both genders at each of the three branch libraries chosen as the research sites. As the study was conducted at my place of employment, I had to make sure that no identifiable data were collected from my professional colleagues and from others to whom I provided professional services.

Methodology

A qualitative research method was deemed most useful for seeking answers to the research problem at each of the sites and through the perspectives of the participants. Qualitative research begins with assumptions and the use of an interpretive theoretical framework that informs the study about the research problem and the meanings individuals or groups ascribe to this social or human problem (Creswell, 2013). The

setting of the study comprised three public branch libraries of the Atlanta Fulton Public Library System. These branches experienced an influx of youths to the libraries during after-school hours. Participants in the study were recruited at these three sites.

Twenty-one participants comprising library managers, librarians, library employees, parents, and youths, and other stakeholders were recruited through purposive sampling. In-depth interviews were conducted to learn about the young patrons' personal stories, feelings, and general impressions regarding the phenomenon under study. Interview questions allowed for open-ended answers with the goal of finding answers to the research questions. The interviews were conducted by following the interview protocol (see Appendices A to E). The interviews were audiotaped with the participants' written permission. I also kept field notes during the interviews to capture and describe nonverbal cues.

An embedded case study approach was chosen over other qualitative approaches because of the nature of this study, in which interviews were conducted at multiple locations. Twenty-one participants comprising library managers, librarians, library employees, parents and youths, and members of the Friends of the Library Association were queried. The case study approach enabled me to focus on the lived experiences of the participants who were affected by the problem under study and allow me to broaden my understanding of the problem as seen from their perspectives. Additionally, the community perspective was important to the understanding of the research problem, as advocated by Durlak et al. (2010), who suggested that a qualitative study was needed to explain the current state of after-school programs, because no such study existed in the

contemporary literature. Gaining insight into shared patterns in the teens' lives, better understanding the phenomenon, and narrating these lived experiences for the benefit of a larger audience made case study the method of choice.

Population

The population studied were teens, parents, library employees, and library volunteers. The youths were teenage patrons who used the library space as a place for "hanging out" with their peers. The teen participants were middle school and high school students between the ages of 13 and 17 years, whom the public library designates as *young-adult patrons*. The majority of these patrons have nowhere to go after school when there is no supervising adult at home. They see the public library as a safe haven in their communities for hanging out with peers. They do not necessarily want to use the space for reading or academic enrichment activities but merely to have a safe place where to satisfy their social and recreational needs.

Parents are adults who consider the library a safe haven, or a place where their children can go after school, while they themselves are still at work or otherwise prevented from being at home to supervise them. These parents are using the library space as a day care facility for their children during those critical after-school hours. The parents may not know that public libraries have no after-school policy for children and young adults. The perspective of these parents was sought to gain more insight into what they expected from the public library, what they wanted the library to provide in terms of after-school activities for their children when they flock there in large numbers.

Sampling Strategy

The goal was to recruit a total of $N = 21$ participants from the three branch libraries serving as research sites. The sample at each branch ($n = 7$) was composed of the library manager, one library employee in charge of youth services, two parents, two teens, and one member of the Friends of the Library. Maximum variation sampling was applied in the selection of the three branches from among 20 branches located in a low-income neighborhood of Atlanta. All three sites were situated in close proximity to a high school. One library was situated next to a high school serving both boys and girls. Another library was adjacent to an all-boys combined middle and high school. The third library was situated near an all-girls combined middle and high school. Students of both genders were represented in the sample.

Participants

Only the perspectives of parents and teenagers who participate in after-school activities offered by the public libraries were included in this study. Parents who used the public library, but whose children did not participate in any after-school activities at the library, as well as teenagers who used the public library but who did not participate in any form of after-school activities, were not included in the study. Participation in an after-school activity offered by the library was, thus, a required participation criterion for the teens and their parents.

Library employees and members of the Friends of the Library were the other group of participants, or the adults, in the study. This population included library managers and librarians involved in youth services who provided after-school activities

for youths in the absence of busy parents. Public libraries provide services, even with their limited budgets, to senior, adult, young-adult, and juvenile patrons. It is important to assess the insights of managers and librarians in charge of youth services on how they tackle the problem of teenagers in the library space. Members of the Friends of the Library provide volunteer support in public libraries; it was important to gain insight into their support activities and contributions to youth services.

For library employees, the eligibility criterion was straightforward. The library manager and employees responsible for youth services at the library sites were included in the study as a result of their roles at the public library. All library sites have a library manager, or an individual who makes decisions for the library branch. The inclusion criterion for this person was simply that he or she had to have administrative decision-making power for the library. The library employee who provided programs or activities for teens (i.e., the youth services librarian) was selected to provide information about his or her hands-on experiences.

The inclusion criterion for parents was that parents had to either drop off or pick up a child during the critical after-school hours when the library was open to the public. Parents who used the public library solely for their own social or recreational needs did not meet the inclusion criterion for parent participation.

Sample Size

Seven participants from each of the three selected sites provided the three subsamples of the study ($n = 7$). The ($N = 21$) participants recruited for the study were already in situ, either because they worked there or because the participation criterion for

young adults specified participation in the library's after-school activities. This made recruitment of participants easy. All three sites experienced similar problems with the influx of youths, but each library manager appeared to take a different approach to engaging the youths. The parents and teens may have looked upon the problem from a wholly different perspective; hence, the need to gather data from a variety of participants to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the problem. Such a comprehensive understanding regarding after-school needs was expected to lead toward the development of a library policy that could potentially be implemented in many of the state's public libraries for the benefit of young adults and the personnel who are charged with serving them.

Characteristics of the sample. The sample was composed of teenagers and adults. The teenagers were boys and girls between the ages 13 and 17 years; public libraries termed this age group *young-adult patrons*. These young-adults are generally middle or high school students and, according to Bourke (2010), comprise 25% of all public library patrons. The adult participants also comprised of both men and women, and represented library personnel, library volunteers, and parents of teenagers who availed themselves of the libraries' after-school programs.

Data collection techniques. Data collection instruments included an observation sheet for field notes, taken during the observation period, an interview protocol, audiotaping equipment, and various documents from the library system for the document review.

Observation

Observation sessions at the branch libraries were planned to last up to 60 minutes. I observed the participants and recorded the events as they occurred by making descriptive notes of the events. I was observing the participants and other people in the library. The risk was minimal because, during the observation period, I was not involved in any of the activities taking place at the library. My nonparticipation precluded any risk to my persons due to conducting observations in the public space.

It could be presumed that both parents and siblings would turn up at the library during after-school hours when the teens were frequenting the library space. Therefore, one could expect some unwanted invasion of privacy on the part of parents and siblings. The risks, however, were thought to be minimal as far as risk of observation in the public space was concerned. Although, I was planning to be a nonparticipant-observer, I would be wearing my work-identification badge throughout the entire recruitment process. This was intended to preclude any misunderstanding, or deception, in the minds of the participants. If confronted during my nonparticipant time, I planned to disclose my dual role as a professional librarian and as a researcher. Therefore, the risk was minimal.

Audio recordings. I audiotaped the interview sessions with the participants' permission. The recordings were equal in length of time to the interview. The participants were informed of the use of the tales before the recording began.

Document review. I also planned to review any documents thought to exist at the branches and related to after-school activities. Such documents were thought to relate to or derive from the library system's mission statement, mandates, and budget or from

other public documents that could provide insight into the research problem and offer potential solutions.

Adequacy of the Data Collection Instruments

I believed the data collection instruments to be sufficient for gathering the needed information to answer the research questions. The instruments included face-to-face interviews with library managers, librarians, members of the Friends of the Library (i.e., volunteers), parents, and teens; ethnographic observations of parents and teens in the public library; documents from the library relating to the participation of teens in after-school activities or statement from the library system's mission statement, mandates, and budget, and other relevant public documents.

The face-to-face interviews with 21 participants were adequate because the research problem occurred in the public library, and all the participants were in situ in the library space. The teenagers and their parents were there between the critical hours of 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. Library employees and volunteers were there as well. If teens made up 25% of all library users, as Bourke (2010) had reported, the six teenagers selected from the three branch libraries would be a good representation of the young-adult library patrons. I planned to post flyers at the branch libraries' public bulletin boards to recruit the teens. The ethnographic observation technique was sufficient because it provided me with enough time for a thorough observation of the participants. The document review was thought to shed additional light on the research problem, and this aspect of the data collection also seemed adequate.

In order to gain insight into how public libraries engage youths with after-school activities, it was critical to observe the teenagers, their parents, the librarians, and volunteers who are supporting the library. It was equally important to talk to the participants as well as to gather documents that supported the programs in the three branch libraries. Therefore, these data collection instruments were considered adequate to carry out the study. Observing the participants, having a face-to-face or direct contact with the participants, and collecting rich data at the research sites was considered to be sufficient for carrying out the study.

A skilled researcher usually ensures that the instruments selected are adequate for the study. After determining that the instruments were adequate and sufficient for the current study, I proceeded to create protocols for both the observation and the interview sessions (see Appendices F and A to E). The information gathered with these instruments was thought be sufficient to answer the three research questions posed for the study.

How participants would exit the study. The participants would exit the study after the interview process had been completed.

Follow-up procedures. Follow-up interviews could be scheduled if deemed necessary or useful. A good reason to conduct a follow-up interview could emerge during member checking when a participant may become aware that he or she has other important thoughts to add to the transcript.

Data analysis plan. Data collected in qualitative studies may be quite extensive, and the researcher needs a strategy for organizing the data so they can be analyzed (Creswell, 2013). Organizing data involves transcribing the interviews, optically scanning

the material, typing up field notes, and sorting and arranging the data into various categories depending on the sources of information.

Sorting and Coding

The data analysis technique for this study was content analysis. This strategy enables the researcher to create codes that describe real-life contexts in an interpretive research. Data analysis in qualitative research consists of preparing and organizing the data for analysis (Creswell, 2013). The data analysis strategies for this study involved manual coding of the observation notes and documents and using an appropriate software tool for coding and storing the information. Manual coding of the data is a traditional means of analyzing data. To hand-code the data, I planned to categorize and subcategorize the observation notes and documents.

Several tools are available for data analysis. I chose the NVivo software because of my familiarity with this tool and, more importantly, because of its proven usefulness to "manage, shape, and analyze qualitative data" (Creswell, 2013, p. 204). The NVivo tool was thought to enable the researcher to organize the data into codes and categories. Themes emerging during the coding process can, then, be interpreted to provide insights about the research problem. There was no doubt that a computer-assisted analyzing tool would be needed in this study because of the sheer volume of data generated.

NVivo enables the researcher to store research data and other information as a single file, making every aspect of the research completely portable (Creswell, 2013). I planned to use the NVivo software to code the interview transcripts. Considering that I would be collecting a large volume of data from the sample of $N = 21$ participants, the

NVivo software was thought be the proper tool to code, transcribe, and categorize the data into themes. The themes emerging from the coding process were, then, ready to be analyzed.

Treatment of Discrepant Cases

Discrepant cases may become evident during data analysis, and issues can occur at the beginning, during, and after data collection (Creswell, 2011). To deal with such issues, the researcher can use a number of strategies to identify and deal ethically with the problem involved. For observation notes, the researcher will review the notes after each observation, and in the event that there is a lack of clarity in the notes, the researcher can go back to the site and carry out another observation. In the event that the researcher cannot carry out another observation, such data can be discarded. For interview transcripts, one of the ways to identify discrepant cases is to use member checking, self-correction, or an external auditor (Creswell, 2011). Once an issue arises in a transcript, the researcher will go back to the interview notes he or she has collected during the interview process or to the voice-recording of the interview. Where a doubt exists as to the authenticity of the transcript, the researcher will attempt to repeat the interview with the participant. I planned to follow these guidelines presented by Creswell. Should a discrepancy be identified during the document review at one of the research sites, I planned to go back to the site to clarify the authenticity of the document. Clarifying the authenticity of reviewed documents at research sites is something a conscientious researcher must do in any event.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in research ensures that the findings of the study represent the data that have been collected. Trustworthiness ensures that the findings of the study are interpreted credibly. Trustworthiness in qualitative research cannot be addressed in the same way as in quantitative research; many qualitative researchers use different constructs as substitutes for validity and reliability of qualitative research. The four constructs I planned to employ were intended to ensure the trustworthiness of the study, as proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985); they are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. By employing credibility, otherwise known as internal validity of the study, I endeavored to ensure that the data collected, analyzed, and presented represents the true picture of the phenomenon under scrutiny. In addition, I planned to ensure that I would provide full details of the research findings (transferability or internal validity), so that the reader could decide whether the prevailing environment is similar to another situation, as noted by Shenton (2004), and whether the findings are such that they can be justifiably applied to other settings. Dependability is another construct that ensures the reliability of the research result. At the end of this study, future researchers should be able to repeat the study in similar situations or at different settings. Finally, during the reporting process, I planned to take steps to demonstrate that the findings emerged from the data collection and analysis (confirmability or objectivity) and were not based on my own predispositions, as recommended by Shenton (2004).

Credibility (Internal Validity)

Lincoln and Guba (1985) posited that ensuring credibility is one of the most important factors in establishing trustworthiness. It ensures that the researcher has taken steps to apply rigor in the research. One of the criticisms leveled by positivists against qualitative research is the lack of validity and reliability in the research in the same way as naturalistic work provides (Shenton, 2004). The concept of credibility, as advocated by Lincoln and Guba (1985), is one solution to the problem of trustworthiness in qualitative research. The research method I have employed in this study is a well-established method in the qualitative tradition. I have taken the time to explain the process of data collection in this study and the techniques by which the data were collected; from whom the data were collected; and how the data were organized, treated, and analyzed. Triangulation of data was used to ensure that data from more than one source would reflect information regarding the problem under study. The participants were observed and interviewed, and supporting documents were obtained to provide background information for the study. The various steps were described with sufficient detail to ensure that the findings can be replicated by other researchers or applied to other settings.

Another way in which I planned to ensure credibility during the data collection process was to describe, in great detail, my role as the researcher. Shenton (2004) argued that, where appropriate, the independent status of the researcher should be emphasized. I further made sure that the interview transcripts were truthfully reported and, whenever there were any doubts, the discrepancies would be reported in the final report with potential explanations why they occurred. Member checking was employed to ensure

accuracy of the data at the point of collection. Audiorecordings were used at great length during this process. Another strategy to ensure credibility was the use of reflective commentary. Shenton (2004) argued that "the reflective commentary can play a key role in what Lincoln and Guba called progressive subjectivity or the monitoring of the researcher's own developing constructions which is considered critical in establishing credibility" (p. 68). I took this strategy very seriously, especially during the initial data collection process, so as to gain more understanding of the patterns that would emerge as the research proceeded.

Additionally, I used thick description to report the situations I investigated and described the context surrounding them, as recommended by Shenton (2004). I took steps to provide sufficient detail of the context so that readers will be able to decide if the prevailing situation was similar to other situations, making the findings transferrable. Lastly, I examined the results of previous research to assess the degree to which the findings were congruent with those of the present study, as advocated by Shenton. Several studies have been done in the area of teens in the public library. Comparing the findings with those of earlier research strengthens the outcome of the present study.

Transferability (External Validity)

Transferability is the degree to which the findings of an inquiry can be generalized or transferred to other settings or contexts beyond the current study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I followed qualitative research guidelines in the organization of the study: alignment of the research problem, theoretical framework, methodology, selection of research design, selection of a sample, data collection, data analysis, and interpretation

of results. Other researchers can gain from this study by analyzing the same data and coming to practically the same conclusions. Lincoln and Guba posited that it is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that sufficient contextual information about the study is provided to enable the reader to make such a transfer.

In order to ensure the transferability of the research findings, I provided a description of the methodology and how the data were collected and analyzed. By doing so, the research findings can be generalized beyond the current study. The scope of the study is also stated in the introductory chapter so that the study can be repeated in other settings as well as a wider environment. I noted earlier that I would use thick description to report the situations I have investigated to ensure credibility of the study. The findings can easily be applied to other settings because I have taken the necessary steps to furnish a good descriptive account of the results.

Dependability (Reliability)

Shenton (2004) stated that, in order to address the dependability issue more directly, the processes within the study should be reported in detail, enabling a future research to repeat the work, but not necessarily to gain the same results (p. 71). This construct is related to the credibility construct because it is important for the reader to understand in detail the process of a research. Lincoln and Guba (1985) noted that dependability is an assessment of the quality of the integrated process of data collection, data analysis, and theory generation. To address dependability of the study, I described the data collection in detail, including what was done in the field such as ethnographic

observation and face-to-face interviews. In addition, I used an external auditor to ensure the trustworthiness of the processes of data collection, data analysis, and data reporting.

Confirmability (Objectivity)

Confirmability is a measure of how well the research findings are supported by the collected data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I took steps to ensure that the findings are the result of the experiences of the participants, rather than the characteristics and preferences of myself as the researcher. The strategy to ensure confirmability is the use of appropriate tools to gather and analyze the data and interpret the results so that they reflect the story or voice of the participants. I ensured the use of proper qualitative tools in the data analysis, that is, during the coding process, so that the emerging themes and their interpretation were free of researcher bias. Biases were reported if and when they occurred before, during, or after the data collection to ensure trustworthiness.

I implemented multiple strategies such as ensuring the use of a systematic, self-conscious research design for data collection, communication, and interpretation of the findings. In order to establish trustworthiness of the study, I made sure that no mistakes were made on my part during the data collection process, which would undermine the trustworthiness of the study. Common mistakes are not checking and clarifying transcripts with participants or cross-checking data transcriptions. Lincoln and Guba (1985) considered triangulation as the single most important provision that can be made to bolster credibility. I used an audit trail to ensure the accuracy of the transcripts. Other strategies I planned to use to ensure trustworthiness were flexibility and confirmability.

Intracoder reliability. Intracoder reliability ensures having another layer of trust in the data analysis. I planned to code the data at a specific time of day such as bedtime when my family would have gone to bed and presented no distraction. I also made sure that, during the coding process, all electronic devices were turned off.

Protection of the participants' rights and ethical procedures. I will follow the steps outlined in the IRB guidelines, which include obtaining the signed consent form from teen participants' parents or guardian and an assent form from the teen him- or herself. It is the researcher's responsibility to ensure that the university's guidelines are followed to get an IRB approval for conducting the study under the university's auspices (Rudestam & Newton, 2007). I endeavored to follow the guidelines conscientiously in every respect to safeguard confidentiality and the participants' rights and anonymity.

Institutional permissions. The study was conducted at three public libraries in the Atlanta area. Six of the participants in the study were, actually, working for the library system. I understood that there are policy guidelines in place that must be followed before library managers and librarians can be interviewed. I, therefore, sought institutional permission to conduct the study at the three selected branch libraries from the management of the Atlanta Fulton Public Library System.

Ethical Concerns

Universities have ethical standards for conducting research with human subjects; the IRB guidelines of Walden University spell out these standards and how to adhere to them in dissertation research. Participants must consent voluntarily to participate in the study, after they have been fully informed about the study and its purpose. They must

also be assured that their privacy and confidentiality will be protected and that the study will benefit them as individuals. To achieve an ethical approach to the study, it is important that sample selection, research design, data collection, and data analysis methods are in alignment with these requirements so that IRB approval can be obtained without difficulty. I made sure that the names of the participants were not divulged but masked by code names. Whenever participants complained of any adverse effects or felt discomfort about the questions, I advised them of their right to take a break or to withdraw from the study all together without giving any reasons for their action and without any adverse consequences. The informed consent form conveyed to participants that they had the right to decline or discontinue participation in the study at any time (see Appendix G).

Ethical Concerns Regarding Data Collection and Intervention Activities

I used multiple sources for data collection, and each of these sources required scrutiny by the IRB. The data collection methods were observations, interviews, and a document review. Flyers were posted at the branches to recruit interested teens. I did consider the use of focus groups, but, upon further consideration, I rejected this idea because of the ethical challenges involved. I chose face-to-face interviews instead in order to protect the participants' anonymity.

The interviews were scheduled in such a way that the participants in the study did not know each other. The participants were first observed. Then, I sought voluntary consent to participate in the study from potential participants. The interview questions were structured in a way that did not cause discomfort to the participants; the questions

were not identical but tailored to the different groups of participants. Any questions that appeared to cause discomfort or seemed to have an adverse effect on a participants were not pursued further. I also made it clear that I would discontinue the interview process at the participant's request if the line of questioning met with his or her disapproval. Confidentiality and anonymity of the participants was carefully protected during the data collection process and thereafter. Consent and confidentiality agreement forms had to be signed by each participant. After that, all identifiers were removed from data collection materials for their protection.

Obtaining Agreements and Gaining Access to Participants and Data

I required a signed confidentiality agreement form from each participant to gain access to the data and its use in this study. Walden University provides a confidentiality agreement template that could be shared with the library system. This template contains generic features that I used in the study. The agreement states that the researcher will not disclose or discuss any confidential information with others. It is important to obtain confidentiality agreements because of the legal implications involved in research studies. While the purpose of research is to inform, it is also important that the researcher not disclose any confidential information that could incriminate any individual or organization. I sought this agreement as part of the documentation that had to be submitted before data collection could begin. The agreements were pursued vigorously.

Archival, Anonymous, and Confidential Data

Data collected in this study were treated as confidential data. Therefore, the data were handled only by me as the researcher; they were not disclosed or discussed with

anyone else, including friends or family members. Members of the dissertation committee, however, did have access to the data, but not to the participants' identities. The data were saved on an external hard drive and a flash drive. Because these data are confidential, I will continue to treat them with utmost care and regard for security. I will continue to be the only person with access to the computer hardware where the data are stored and to the external location used to prevent loss in case of fire or theft.

Storage and Dissemination of Confidential Data

Data were collected from multiple sites. The collected data will continue to be stored on my computer's hard drive, and no one will have access to the data except me as the researcher. In the course of developing the proposal and carrying out the research, I have been storing all information pertaining to this study on my computer's hard drive and a flash drive. In addition to the hard drive, information is also being stored on an external hard drive as well as a removal storage device. Storing all information in three different locations will prevent loss of information. Similarly, data collected from participants will continue to be stored in these three locations. The paper data were stored in folders with coded identifiers and kept in my bedroom closet for safe keeping. The electronic data were stored on a flash drive that was duplicated on another flash drive in case of theft, loss of data, or fire. Both flash drives will continue to be securely protected in my bedroom closet. The data must be kept for a period of 5 years after completion of the study. The paper data will be shredded between 2 to 5 years, but the electronic data will be stored on a flash drive and destroyed within the same period of 2 - 5 years.

Ethical Issues Within the Work Environment

I respected the right of the participants who work for this organization not to share any sensitive information that could incriminate them or me as the researcher. I will not use the organization's computers to upload or store data. The library system's policy for computer and Internet use prohibits employees of the organization from storing private information on the organization's computers. I respected this policy and did not store any data pertaining to this study on the organization's hard drives. In the same spirit, I did not ask the participants who work for this organization to divulge information, including archival data, emanating from the employee's assigned office computer. All information provided by the participants was stored on my personal computer and away from the organization's hard ware.

Incentives. I will not use any form of material or financial incentive to gather data from the participants.

Presentation of the results. The results of the study are presented in the next chapter descriptive and narrative form. The presentation-contains some reports. I started the data analysis with my observational field notes, followed by the interview transcripts, and rounded up with data from the document review.

Summary

The research problem in this qualitative embedded case study was the lack of a sustainable after-school policy in public libraries to deal with the influx of youths to the library space during the critical after-school hours, between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. Public libraries without the necessary financial means and staff are struggling to deal with the

many young people who are coming to the public library. In this chapter, I described the research methods used to explore the problem from many different perspectives. A sample of 21 adult and young-adult library patrons, library employees, and volunteers at three branch libraries in low-income neighborhoods of Atlanta were interviewed, and the data were triangulated with information gathered through ethnographic observation, face-to-face interviews, and a library-documents review. I discussed the research design and rationale, the research questions posed for the study, and the role of the researcher. I described the population and sample, the sampling technique, and the data collection and data analysis procedures. I explained trustworthiness and ethical concerns pertaining to the research and the measures taken to ensure confidentiality of the data and the safety and anonymity of the participants. I present the results of study in the next chapter.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this embedded case study was to (a) examine the perceived role of the public library in the implementation of after-school activities for young adults, (b) explore the policy and regulatory framework that guided the implementation, and (c) determine which factors tended to constrain the implementation of such activities. The embedded technique I used in this study involved semistructured interviews and ethnographic observations of 21 participants to get a better understanding of policies promoting after-school activities in the Atlanta Fulton Public Library System, where 20 of its 34 branch libraries are located in low-income communities across Atlanta and are serving at-risk youth. I also conducted a review of documents relating to after-school activities.

I used the following research questions to guide the study:

RQ1: What is the perceived role of the public library in the implementation of after-school activities for teens in the library space?

RQ2: What policy and regulatory framework guide the implementation of after-school programs and activities in the public library?

RQ3: What factors constrain the implementation of after-school activities, and does the theory of innovation and public value provide explanatory or predictive value for the implementation of after-school activities in the public library?

In this chapter, I report the findings in a descriptive and interpretative manner. First, I describe the setting of the study, including any personal or organizational

conditions that exerted influence on the participants or their experiences at the time of the study, which may have influenced my interpretation of the results. Next, I describe the demographics of the participants and explain the process of data collection and analysis. I then offer evidence of the trustworthiness of the study, and conclude with the results of the study.

Setting

I performed data collection for this study in the second half of the second semester (March to April) of the school calendar, or less than 2 months before the end of the school year. There were many teens in the three library branches during my visits. The employees were very busy helping teens with homework and other after-school activities. I did not expect that many teens would be interested in volunteering to participate in the data collection process in all three library branches designated for the study. However, I was surprised by the response. In one branch, for example, there were five teens who volunteered to participate in the study. In another branch, there were four teen volunteers, and at the third branch, there were three teen volunteers who indicated interest in participating in the study. The study was limited to six teen participants, so I was able to easily meet my sampling criteria. I believe that, had I collected data from all 12 teen volunteers who expressed interest in participating in the study, the results would not have been considerably different. The timing of the study was good, but library employees were overwhelmed with the number of teens at their branches. In one branch, there were four library employees, the branch manager, a librarian, one full-time and one part-time staff member. In another branch, it was the branch manager, a librarian, and

two full-time staff. The third branch had more staff because it is a regional branch library. There were four librarians at this branch, including the branch manager and five full time staff. All the branches had experienced significant cutbacks in staff as a result of the 2015 system wide budget cuts. Given the flow of teens to these branches, there can be no doubt that the employees were under considerable pressure in performing their duties.

Demographics of the Participants

The sample for this study consisted of 21 participants, comprising six teens; six parents whose teenage children participated in after-school activities; three library managers, who were branch managers of the three branches selected for the study; three youth services librarians responsible for providing services to teens in the branch libraries; and three members of the Friends of the Library volunteers. Throughout the study, I designated the library branches Library 1, Library 2, and Library 3. In order to insure confidentiality, I gave all participants identifiers that did not disclose their real identities such as *teen, parent, staff, manager,* and *Friend* (for participants known as Friends of the Library). For instance, the participants in Library 1 were designated Teen 1 and Teen 2, Parent 1 and Parent 2, Staff 1, Manager 1, and Friend 1. The participants in Library 2 were identified as Teen 3 and Teen 4, Parent 3 and Parent 4, Staff 2, Manager 2, and Friend 2. The participants in Library 3 were identified as Teen 5 and Teen 6, Parent 5 and Parent 6, Staff 3, Manager 3, and Friend 3.

There were six teen participants, aged 13 to 17 years. All were high school students attending public schools in the community where the branches were situated. Three out of the six teen participants were male, and the other three were female. The

equal distribution of gender among the teen participants was the result of location. Two of the branches were I collected data were located near a mixed high school. The third branch was located near an all-girls high school.

There were six parent participants: five women and one man. The parent participants were aged between 31 and 60 years. Altogether, there were six library employees, two from each branch. The library managers were female, aged between 31 and 60 years. Two of library staffers were female, one was male, and their ages were between 31 and 50 years.

There were three Friends of the Library participants, all of whom were female, with an age range of 60 to 70 years. There was one member of the Friends of the Library per branch. I interviewed this category of participants for their perspective on funding for the branches' teen programs because library branches seek funding support from Friends of the Library for library programs.

The Data Collection Process

Nonparticipant Observation

After-school activities in the public library are typically offered between 4:00 and 5:30 p.m., after schools close for the day at 3:30 p.m. Most of the students who go to the public library walk there. I arrived at the library locations daily for 3 consecutive days, at about 3:30 p.m., to observe the teens as they made their way to the library. Between this time and 4:00 p.m., I observed the teens chatting with each other outside the library and in the lobby. I sat in my car to observe these chats and the external vicinity of the branches, before going inside. Library 1 was the first library I visited; this library is

situated right across the street from a high school. Many of the teens were converging at the front of the library and using the facility to "hang out." Library 2 was the next library I visited. This facility was close to a high school as well, but the students still had to walk about half a mile to the library. A few students were outside, in front of the branch, and a few had gone inside. The third library I visited was Library 3. This facility is not very close to the high school in the community. I observed school buses dropping off teens outside the branch parking lot. A few students went inside the library.

I used field notes to capture the activities and the participants' behavior while observing the participants in their natural settings. Observing the participants enabled me to gather information about the research problem and how the branches were dealing with the influx of teens during the critical after-school hours. My field notes have a general note section and a reflective note section. The general section includes notes on the layout of the public library, descriptions of the participants' activities and of the individuals who are engaged in these activities, the sequence of activities over time, and observations regarding interactions among library users. I also included notes about other events taking place at the branches, comments made by library users, and descriptions of their body language. In the reflection section of the field notes, I jotted down questions and comments that needed further exploration or clarification during the interviews, observations of nonverbal behavior among the observed, and my interpretations of these non-verbal behaviors.

I was physically inside the branches and observing activities going on inside without anyone noticing. It was amazing to observe the after-school activities at each of

the branches. In each instance of the observation period, I watched the participants' activities and recorded my observations using the observation protocol (see Appendix F). I wrote down my observations in a notebook. I observed the total environment of the library participants, and took note of the employees and the general work area. I also observed any after-school activities going on in the branches, and took note of the general rapport between teens and library employees. I observed the presence or absence of other people in the branches such as parents and other library users.

I observed the participants at the library locations; this included the physical setting of the public libraries. Each of the branches had book shelves filled with books and publicly accessible computers. The teens were mostly interested in the computers. In all of the branches, the children's area was located close to the circulation desk. Library 1 was smaller than Library 2 and Library 3. I carried out observation of each of the three branches over a 3-day period, and completed a total of 18 hours of observation during the six visits to all three branch locations. It is worth noting that the observation periods could have been extended over more than the 3 days I spent at each library site, but the activities were repetitive; hence, there was no need to prolong the process. On some week nights, the branches stayed open until 8 p.m. and I thought the activities should have been prolonged, but after 6:00 p.m., most of the teens had gone home. The schedules of the branches varied slightly in terms of late nights, but the schedules were the same for most days of the week. Following are my observations for the individual branch libraries.

Library 1. This branch location had many teens in the library. At 4:00 p.m., the teens were everywhere with no direction from library staff. The teens were outside and

inside the library. I observed that the majority of the teens had library cards, and they were logging on to the public computers by themselves. This location had six dedicated desktop computers, located in the juvenile section. I observed that on the three occasions I visited the branch, only two of the teens actually had homework to do, and these teens interacted with library staff. The other teens were either on the computers or talking among themselves. I observed some parents in the branch using the adult computers. During my visit, the staff librarian was at the circulation desk. I observed that there were computers designated for children's use, and the teens were engaged on these computers.

Library 2. This library was larger than Library 1, and it had a good mix of teens. The library was not as crowded as the first library I had visited, and it was very organized. The teen section was nicely decorated and had the feel of a very well-appointed physical space. There were five computers dedicated for teen use. The youth services librarian and the branch manager were visibly interacting with the teens. Throughout the period of my observation, the young-adult librarian and the branch manager took turns at the circulation desk during the critical after-school hours. All members of the library staff were engaged with the teens at this location. The teens were very orderly and busy. They were not out of control, compared to Library 1. I observed several of parents helping younger children with homework. This branch has a teen section and a children's section, as well as an adult section. It even had several study rooms and far more computers than the other branches had.

There was a good mix of children and young adults, as well as parents, in the building during my 2 days of observation. I thought it likely that parents and other

siblings were at the library because the teens were there. I observed one teen helping other teens on the computer. This teen sported a volunteer badge for easy identification.

Library 3. The physical space of Library 3 was larger than that of Library 1 and Library 2. This library had over 60 personal computers available for all users. The library has a children's, teen, and adult section. There are 12 computers in the children's section and another 8 computers in the teen area. I observed that there were two study tables with four chairs on each side of the tables. On the days I visited the branch, there were teens engaged in after-school activities. I observed that there were exchanges back and forth between the teens and the circulation desk. The librarians were very engaged with the teens doing their homework. There was an average of two teens using the computers during my visit to the library. I observed that there were no flyers or other information posted on the library information board regarding after-school activities at this branch. The teens were merely chatting among themselves. Throughout my visit, I observed that a couple of parents were coming in and leaving the library. I observed that some of the parents were browsing the book shelves, looking for material, while a couple of them were sitting down in the children's area with younger siblings.

Throughout the observational period, I noticed teens coming and leaving the branches. A majority of the teens were either doing their homework or using the public computers. I observed that many teens with nothing to do were simply hanging out, especially in Library 1 and Library 2. All the branch libraries had meeting rooms where activities could be held, and there were some visible activities going on at the time of my

visits. There were no teen activities posted on the information boards in any of the branches.

I observed that there were some meetings taking place in the meeting rooms in Library 1 and Library 2. I observed that the participants at the meeting were all adults. None of the parents I observed were participated in the meetings. Some of the teens in Library 2, who were hanging out at the library, would have been better served in the library meeting room, watching a movie or engaged in some kind of activity, rather than just hanging out and being noisy. While I visited Library 2, a patron came up to the circulation desk to complain to the library staff because there were too many teens in the library, and he wanted to know what the branch was doing about it. I observed some teens in the branches helping other library users on the computer or helping library staff to locate library resources for other teens. I also observed one teen volunteering.

Interviews

After observing the participants at each of the branch locations, I introduced myself to the branch manager and informed her about the purpose of my study and how participants would be recruited at the branches. I got permission to post flyers inviting teens to participate in the study. To my surprise, I received a good number of responses from the teens during the very first week the flyers were posted. I contacted the parents of the teens who had responded to the flyer request and explained the purpose, the procedures for the interviews, and the benefits of the study. I made sure that the teens were not pressured to participate in the study. The parents were made aware of the minimal risk involved if they gave permission for the teens to participate in the study.

After getting the consent of the parents, I requested that we meet in person so that they could sign the consent forms. I proceeded to interview the teens after they have signed the assent form. The interviews were conducted in the privacy of the branch's meeting room. All interviews were face-to-face interviews. I wrote down the interview responses on my interview notebook. No financial compensation was offered for participating in the study.

The parent participants were individually recruited from each of the branches. The purpose of the study was clearly explained to them before recruiting them for the study. The parents were made aware of the minimal risk involved in the study. They were informed about how the study will benefit the teens as well as the entire library. I assured them that that no identifiers would be used in the study. The codes that I assigned to the participants was done in such a way that it will be easy for me to accurately match what was written in my observation notes with the audio recordings of the interview. I explained to the participants their responsibilities and rights as outlined in the IRB guidelines and regulations.

The third population group I recruited for the study was one library staff from each of the branches. I explained the purpose of the study and my professional role in the study. I explained the benefits of the study to the branch and library system. I also explained to them that their participation in the study was voluntary. The interviews were face to face. I made it known to the staff that, there will be no financial compensation for participating in the study. I also requested that they sign the informed consent form before conducting the interviews.

The library managers and members of the Friends of the Library were the last participants I interviewed for the study. I requested that managers and member of the Friends of the Library sign the informed consent form before conducting the interviews. I reiterated the purpose of the study and my professional role in the study. I explained the benefits of the study to the library system. The interviews were face to face. I write down the interview responses on my interview notebook. They were also given the opportunity to ask questions relating to the study. They were also informed that the findings from the study would be shared with all the stakeholders including them.

It is pertinent to note that participation in the interviews was voluntary. The participants were told that, whenever they felt uncomfortable, they were free to take a break or to discontinue the interview. The face to face interview with participants was conducted at the public meeting rooms of the branches. The setting of the meeting rooms was such that the privacy of the participants was guaranteed. The rooms were free from noise, interruptions, obstructions and distractions. The interviews were conducted within the 30 minutes allocated for each session. The library meeting rooms at each of the branches were all located close to the entrance of the library building. The design for each of the branches was different but offered a serene atmosphere which is good for the study.

There were five set of questions for each of the participants. Six teens were asked 5 set of questions (see Appendix A); Six parents were asked 5 set of different questions (see Appendix B); Three library staff were asked 5 set of different questions (see Appendix C); Three library managers were asked 5 set of different questions (see

Appendix D); and three members of the Friends of the Library were ask a set of 5 different questions (see Appendix E). The face to face interviews were conducted in a 2-week period from March to April, 2016.

The interviews were also recorded on a Sony PCM-M10/B portable digital field audio recorder. The transcripts were transcribed into Microsoft word file and subsequently stored on a desktop computer. Permission to use the transcripts was sought prior to transcribing them for storage. The information was also stored on a flash drive in case of data loss. The interview process covered 7 hours of oral data primarily focusing on the research problem. The interview questions were arranged in a way that the interchange was casual, informal and conversational. The confidentiality of all information that the participants disclosed during the interviews are secured and kept in a safe place at the completion of the study. I am the only one that has access to the safe location and I will safeguard the documents for a period of 5 years.

Document Review

I reviewed documents on after-school activities for system wide policy or initiative. The document search was on the website of the Atlanta Fulton Public Library. The website is a public domain and as such no permission is needed to view the documents. I also reviewed documents I found at the three branches for insight into after-school activities at the branches. The documents search was very helpful in providing answers to the research questions.

Data Analysis

The data collected were content-analyzed and the process involved examining of all the data. It involves several steps such as organizing and arranging the data into categories for shared patterns and inductively examining them for themes. First, data was collected by way of field notes taken during the observation of the participants, and then a face to face interview was conducted for 21 participants at 3 branch libraries, and finally, documents relating to after-school activities were reviewed. The field note was very useful because it gave a general picture of activities in the three branch libraries. After the interview of the participants, the transcripts from the audio recorded conversations were then stored in a computer file with distinct file name given for each of the interviews. It is important to note that while the interviews were going on, I kept a diary of events as they unfold. As I analyzed the diary and the field note, I listened to the audio tapes. As I listened to the audio tapes, I read and reread the transcripts that I have written down during the interview process for accuracy.

After exhaustively going through the interview transcripts, I then proceeded to analyze the data for common themes that emerged from the study. The process involved placing the data into categories so that the research questions were adequately addressed. After the raw data were categorized into groups, they were then coded. Coding was used to retrieve and categorize similar data chunks. The coding enabled me to organize my data into codes, categories and what emerged from it were similar themes that started from my literature review. The themes from the coding were then analyzed for meanings. The themes that emerged during the coding process reveal a pattern in the research which

is similar to previous studies. It is worthy to note that the written narratives obtained from the interviews represented the actual words of the participants.

For better management and organization, the identified themes are ordered and represented in such a way that they became talking points in the presentation of the results. I made sure that the written narratives obtained from the interviews represented the voice of the participants and I tried as much as possible to use the participants' actual words. For better interpretation and valid conclusion, I took the findings and interview transcripts for all the participants for any refinement, alteration, clarification, and verification. It is important to mention also that my interaction with the data helped me to have an informed opinion and conclusions about the responses from the participants. The themes that emerged from the coding of the data are five broad themes: Bridging the digital divide theme; After-school activities theme, Community needs and teen needs theme, public policy theme and public service theme.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in qualitative research was addressed by the four constructs of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. In order to ensure evidence of trustworthiness, I ensured that the data collected were subjected to member checking during and after the interviews. I ensured that the data collected, analyzed and presented represents the true picture of the phenomenon under scrutiny. In addition, I ensured that I provide full details of the research findings (Transferability) for a reader to be able to decide whether the prevailing environment is similar to another situation as noted by Shenton (2004), and the findings is such that it can justifiably be applied to other setting.

Dependability was another construct that ensured the reliability of the research result. I have no doubt that future researchers would be able to repeat the study in similar situation or at different setting. Finally, during the reporting process, steps were taken to demonstrate that the findings that emerge from the data collection and analysis (Confirmability or Objectivity) were not my own predisposition as noted by Shenton (2004).

Credibility (Internal Validity)

Credibility in qualitative studies means that the researcher has taken steps to apply rigor in the research and the findings of the study are credible, believable, and true. One approach I used in the study to ensure the credibility of the finding is triangulation of data. Triangulation was used to ensure that data was collected from more than one source. According to Yen (2009), combining interview data with other sources helped remove bias from the study. I observed and interviewed 21 participants at three branch locations of the Atlanta Fulton Public Library System. Being that the research was carried out in my place of work; the independent status of the researcher was explained to the participants before data collection. In support of this view, Shenton (2004) emphasized that "It should be made clear to participants that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any point, and they should not even be required to disclose an explanation to the investigator" (Shenton, 2004, p.67). Before data collection, I provided consent forms and assent forms that the teen's parents and the teens signed with details about the independent role of the researcher.

Transferability (External Validity)

Transferability is the degree to which the findings of an inquiry can be generalized or transferred to other settings or contexts beyond the current study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In order to enhance transferability, I provided detailed description of the research context so that other researchers can gain from the study, and analyze the same data, and come to practically the same conclusions. I provided a description of the methodology, how data was collected and analyzed. By doing so, the research findings can be generalized beyond the current study. In reporting the findings, I made sure that the interview transcripts were exactly as recoded in the transcript. In addition, member checks was employed to check for the accuracy of the data at the point of data collection. Audio recordings was used at great length during this process. Another strategy that I used to ensure transferability of the study was the use of thick description to report the situations that have been investigated and the contexts that surrounds them. I took steps to provide sufficient detail of the context so that readers would be able to decide the prevailing situation is similar to another situation. Lastly, I employed the use of examination of previous research findings to assess the degree to which the findings are congruent with those of past studies as advocated by Shenton (2004). Several studies have been done in the area of teens in the public library. The findings can easily be applied to other settings because steps were taken to give good descriptive account of the findings.

Dependability (Reliability)

Dependability construct is based on the concept of repeatability or replicability. Shenton (2004) stated that in order to address the dependability issue more directly, the processes within the study should be reported in detail, enabling a future research to repeat the work, if not necessarily to gain the same result (p.71). This construct is related to the creditability construct because it is important for the reader to understand in detail the process of the research, while also providing in-depth descriptions of the data collection process. I described in detail the plans to collect data, including what was done in the field such as the field notes, observation procedure, and the use of audio-recordings for interviews.

Confirmability (Objectivity)

The Confirmability construct is a measure of how well the data collected and the interpretations of the inquiry have logical and clear linking associations. Steps was taken to ensure that the findings were the words or experiences of the participants, rather than the characteristics and preferences of the researcher. My personal feeling was set aside in the interpretation of the data. To ensure the objectivity of the findings, biases was reported when they occurred before, during, and after data collection to ensure trustworthiness. I made conscious effort to report what the participants said during the interviews. Where there was ambiguity in the transcripts, I conducted follow-up interviews with participants. I also used audit trail to ensure the accuracy of the transcripts. The coding process was done during periods where there was no distractions in order to ensure objectivity of the research.

Results of Nonparticipant Observations (Field Notes)

The result presented herewith is a holistic interpretation of the data derived from my field notes. The most common activity observed was the use of computers. The teens were observed using computers to do home work, listening to music, playing games, and connecting on social media. They were also helping others to use the computer.

Library 1

3:00 P.M. I went inside the library and sat in one of the study tables close to the entrance of the branch. From vantage position, I observed some parents in the branch using the adult computers. I observed one library staff was on the circulation desk. I observed that there were six computers designated for children's use.

3:30 PM. Three teens walked in and went straight to the computer terminals and signed in to use the computers.

4:00 P.M. More teens came in and the library is becoming busy. Another staff member is on the desk. The entire children's computer area is full with teenagers. I observed that many teens are converging on two reading tables talking among themselves. I can hear them loudly from where I was sitting.

4:30 P.M. The staff member who was on the circulation desk, when I came into the branch is chatting with the teens and asking them to speak quietly. There must be at least twelve teens in the library. There are six teens on the computer and another six sitting around. It does not appear that any form of home work is been done.

5:30 P.M. A female teen works into the library with her book bag and went to the children's computer area. She walks to the circulation desk to get assistance. Library staff

signed her into one of the guess computers and assisted her with little time left. The library closes at 6:00 P.M and I guess, she has only 15 minutes to complete her home work. The other teens have started leaving the branch.

5:45 P.M. The library is quiet with fewer patrons. A man works in and went straight to the guess computer where the female teen was sitting. I guess the man must be a parent or guardian of the teen. Computers are shutting down. The female teen walked to the circulation desk to get her prints and check out a book the library staff had helped her to get from the shelve. She checked the book out and left the building with her parent or guardian.

Library 2

3:00 P.M. When I arrived at this branch location, there were teens already inside the building. I observed that there were many computers dedicated for children's use and three teens were already using the computers. The teens were very orderly and busy. They were not out of control unlike Library 1. The teen section was well decorated and it has a feel of a very well organized physical space.

3:30 P.M. More teens came in and the computer area is now populated with many things using the dedicated computers. I observed a couple of parents helping younger children with homework. There were good mixes of children and young adults as well as parents in the building.

4:00 P.M. The library is now really busy with teens and other patrons. There were a couple of teens doing homework. There are about three library staff on the circulation desk or moving around helping people to locate library items. I observed one teen helping

another teen on the computer. The teen has a volunteer badge on for easy identification. She was also helping to keep other teens from being too loud.

5:00 P.M. The entire computer area is now busy with teens. I am shocked to see that the branch is very organized. Part of the reason may be because the branch has a children section different from the adult section with its own dedicated computers.

5:30 P.M. The children area is still quite busy. The teens are really engaged on the computers. Several of them are on Face book. The library has just announced that the library will be closing in 30 minutes time.

5:45 P.M. The teen section is becoming quiet with several of the teens converging in front of the building. A few teens are still in the building. There are two teens still waiting to print from the printer. One parent is observed waiting for her teenage daughter to pick up her prints.

5:55 P.M. The branch is now ready to close and there no more teens in the building but several teens are outside hanging out.

Library 3

3:00 P.M. The teens have started coming in and I observed that they were converging at the circulation desk from my observation position inside the library. They were asking for guest passes to use the computers. Library staff on the circulation desk gave out two guest passes. Two teens got on the computers and the rest of them were standing around the computers.

3:30 P.M. Library staff instructed the teens standing to sit somewhere. More teens came to the branch.

I observed that majority of the teens were either doing their homework or using the public computers. I observed that many teens with nothing to do were just hanging out

4:00 P.M. There was so much noise in the library. There are two library staff on the circulation desk and another staff member on the flow trying to engage the teens. I observed the staff member asking the teens that were hanging out about home work.

4:30 P.M. Two teens were put out because they refused to lower their voices. Two others joined the first two outside.

5:00 P.M. There were more teens outside of the building than inside the branch. The teens in the branch were all engaged on the computers. I observed that out of the six teens using the computers; two can be observed typing up a paper or project, two of the teens were using the Face book; one of the teens was listening to music and another teen was playing games on the computer.

5:45 P.M. The library announced that the library would be closing in 15 minutes time. The two teens with homework were the only teens still left in the building. The others left the building as soon as the announcement was completed. The two teens left the branch left at about 5:55 P.M when I left the building.

Interview Transcripts

The result presented herewith is an interpretation on the data derived from the entire set of 21 participants. The primary goal of the data collection process was to identify common themes and patterns, and interpret them for meanings. There are three data collection tools used in this study and the analysis is primarily focused on the

observation and interview transcripts as well as document reviewed. The results were designed to answer the three research questions from the participant's perspective.

The perceived role of the public library in the implementation of after-school is a key concept in this study from Research Question 1. It is therefore important to identify the key themes that would explain whether the Atlanta Fulton Public Library is meeting its mission of providing after-school activities to teens from underserved communities who come to the branches during the critical after-school hours. To help answer this question and the other research questions, 15 semi-structured interview questions (Appendix A, B, C, D, E) were utilized to help find answers to the research question. Three major themes were identified and the findings are presented according to the most recurring themes.

Bridging-the-Digital-Divide Theme

This was the most notable theme identified. When the participants were asked why they come to the public library during after-school hours? The teen participants said that the branches provide computer and internet access to do homework, play games and use the social media sites to connect with people when they get out of school.

Teen 1 explained: "I come to the library most days of the week during after-school hours. I am here at 3:30 p.m. and stay in the library till 6:00 p.m. or 8:00 p.m. depending on the branches late day. The branch provides computers for me to do my homework and I depend on the branch for this critical service because I do not have a computer at home. Apart from using the computers for my homework, I also rely on the

branch to print my assignment paper. I love books and the library has the kind of books that I like to read."

Teen 2 shared similar thoughts about why teens in the community come to the public library during the critical after-school hours. She explained:

"I come to the branch may be three to four times each week to use the computer and internet access to do my homework, research and check out books or DVD movies. I do not have a computer at home and cannot use my smart phone at home because I have limited data usage. Besides using the internet, I can also print."

Teen 3 shared very similar thoughts about why teens in the community come to the public library during the critical after-school hours. He explained:

"I come to the library to use the internet to do my homework and play some games on the computer. The library staff also helps me whenever I need assistance with my homework. I also love to read and the library has the kind of books that I love reading and so I check out a lot of books."

Teen 4 shared very similar thoughts about why teens in the community come to the public library during the critical after-school hours. He explained:

"I love coming to the library because the library is a very quiet place to be because it is always noisy at home with my younger siblings. I like coming to the library to pass the time by using the internet for homework and play games with my friends."

Teen 5 shared a different thought about why teens in the community come to the public library during the critical after-school hours. He explained:

"My parents encourage me to come straight to the library after school because there is no adult at home. When I get here, I get on the computer to play games." When pressed why he plays games and not doing his homework, he said: "I like to do my homework at home because I like doing it just before going to bed. I just got out of school, and so I like to do some recreational stuff on the computer. The library has Internet access, and so my friends and I love coming to the library to use the computers."

Teen 6 shared a similar thought with Teen 6 about why teens in the community come to the public library during the critical after-school hours. He explained:

"I come to the library to use the computer because I have no computer at home and my parents cannot afford one because they have no money to purchase on for the house and even if have one, we still have to pay for the internet. The library have many computers and so I come most days of the week to use the computer to play games with my friends or use the social media site such as face book to connect with my friends."

The common theme that emerged from the answers provided by the teens why they come to the library is that the library is bridging the digital divide as most teens do not have access to computers and internet at home and hence the public library is bridging this divide by providing technology to help with homework, play games on the computer and use the social media to connect with friends. Parents participants encourage their teens to use library resources during the critical after-school hours because it is the only place in the community where they love their teenage children to be.

Parent 1explained:

"I encourage my daughter to come to the library during after-school hours rather than be at home because they can get a lot done using the library computers. I cannot afford to buy a computer and printer at home; since I am a tax payer, I courage her to use the resources in the library."

Parent 2 shared similar thoughts about why teens in the community come to the public library during the critical after-school hours. She explained:

"My kid come to the library regularly to do homework, read books and use the social media sites to stay connected. Most of the staff in my neighborhood branch has worked at the branch since my teens where in Kindergarten. The staff even read to my son when the he was coming with his kindergarten class to the branch story time. When my teen comes to the library, the librarian feels obligated to continue to make an impact in his life. The librarian will always ask my child to do his home work whenever he is in the library."

Parent 3 explained:

"My teen come to the library at least 4 times in a week to use the computer, pick up books to read and other study materials. Where can you go in the neighborhood to find help other than the public library?"

Parent 4 explained:

"My daughter is here in the library most days of the week during after-school hours because it is a safe place to be away from the thugs on the street. She uses the library's computer for her school work. "

Parent 5 explained:

"The library is doing a great job providing after-school activities by providing computers for homework since we do not have one at home. My son have a smart phone but the phones have very limited use other than pick my calls or calling me to pick him and his sibling from the library whenever they are done."

Parent 6 explained:

"My daughter likes coming to the library because it has computes and she loves to use the computers for homework help."

For library staff, the teens comes because of the computers the library provides but it is difficult to get the teens into other after-school activities.

Staff 1 explained:

"Teens come to the library to do use the computers for home work help, visit the social networking sites, charge their smart phones and meet other peers. Teens seldom attend other activities such as book clubs that the branch has tried for years to keep going. It is difficult to understand their needs are."

Staff 2 explained:

"Teens come to use the computers for home work for those that have one but seldom participate in other after-school activities that the library provides."

Staff 3 shared similar thoughts about why teens in the community come to the public library during the critical after-school hours. He explained:

"The teens come to use the computers, play games on the computer but will not participate in other after-school that the branch provides."

Library managers who participated in the study were all in agreement that technology has helped to bridge the digital divide because things can get school work done in the library.

Manager 1 stated that:

"We do not have many teens coming to the branch during after-school hours but when they do come, they get on the computer and do homework. Library staffers are always there to help the teens whenever they need help. It would be nice if they come to other after-school enrichment activities that the branch provides to keep the teens engaged. The library administration is investing heavily in technology hence you see the teens are in the library to use the computer. We have to make sure these computers are constantly up. We create tickets and have the information technology repair fixed computers that are not working properly. The teens are agitated when the computers don't work."

Manager 2 emphasized:

"There are handfuls that come to the branch to the branch to use the computers for home work help, research, and play games. It would be more beneficial for the teens to participate in after-school activities besides coming to use the computers. How best to serve our teens is the single most discussed topic at staff meetings, and the branch constantly discuss how best to serve them. The library has invested in technology so that the teens can have access to technology. We have to ensure that the computers are working properly when the teens are here. You really do not want them to be out of sort because computers are down. Besides, they need it to complete home work."

Manager 3 shared similar thoughts by stating:

"The majority of the teens come here to use the computers because many families do not have computers at home and the library computers fill that gap unlike in most affluent homes where kids have access to personal computers and printing capability. Kids in this neighborhood come here to use the computer for home work help, play games and use the social networking sites to stay connected with friends. The library administration and the county government have really invested in technology. The teens have phones but most of the phones need Wi-Fi access and the branch has a free Wi-Fi access hence they are always coming to the branch. When the computers breakdown, I ensure that the information technology repair team are here to quickly fix the problem. We do not want the kids to come here and the computers are down because they need it for educational and recreational use."

When members of the Friends of the Library were asked the same question, Friend 1 stated:

"The library is the only place they can come to because it is safe and they have the computers to keep them busy. Majority do have access to computers and internet at home."

Friend 2 shared similar thought by emphasizing:

"The library is providing computers and printing access for home work and it is important for the kids to come here to complete home work, check out books and be engaged in other activities the branch is providing. Without this assistance, most of these kids will underperform in school."

Friend 3 shared similar thought by stating:

"The computers in the library are helping the kids to stay busy. I wish the library would create a space for the teens and have more computers in the area.

After-School-Activities-and-Teens'-Needs Theme

This was also a notable theme identified when the participants were asked what after-school activities the public library is providing to the teens besides technology; if the public library was meeting the educational and recreational needs of the teens in the library; and what activities would the participants like the library to provide during critical after-school hours. Teen 1stated:

"The library is not meeting my educational needs but is meeting my recreational needs. I would like the library to provide programs on etiquette or manners because teens in this community have not being taught how to behave towards older people. I would love to learn how to behave to people that are older than me or different from me or people that do not live in my community. Activities such as this would be an ideal after-school activity that would bring many teens to the library especially female teens. Teens do not like structured activities hence many teens just come to the library to use computers and the internet. Teens prefer enrichment activities that are provided in schools or at home. This is the first time someone that works in the library is asking my opinion about what teens like me will like to see in the library."

While answering the same set of questions, Teen 2 shared a similar thought:

"The library is not meeting my educational needs but it is meeting my recreational needs. Although, I love reading and I check out books from the library but, I would like

see enrichment activities besides just using the computers for my homework or checking out library materials. I would want the library to ask the teens what kind of activities or program would appeal to them. I would love my local library to provide activities such as etiquette or board games such as monopoly."

Teen 3 shared a somewhat different thought:

"The branch is meeting my recreational and educational needs but the library can have more games such as Xbox and Nintendo Wii so that teens like me can play. We do not have to be on the computer all the time because I do not have homework every day. I get bored sometimes whenever I am the library. I will like the library to get things that teens like me want. This is the first time someone from the library is asking what I would want in the library. "

Teen 4 shared a different thought:

"The library is not meeting my recreational needs but it is meeting my educational needs. I would like the library to provide some activities such as etiquette class and public speaking because as a teen, I like to learn how to conduct myself in the public. I spend up to two hours when I come to the library to do my homework but do not participate in the kind of activities that I would like. Most of the activities I see are most adult or children activities. The library staff helps me a lot in getting my homework done but other than that, the library is pretty much a boring place. This interview is the first time someone from the library is asking me the kind of activities I would live to see in the library that would benefit teens like me."

Teen 5 shared a similar thought:

"I fill that if my library has games such as Xbox Nintendo games and play station, then my recreational needs will be met because right now it is not met. My educational needs are being met with the computer time I get on the library computers but I will like more computer time for my home work. I spend only two hours on the children's computer which is not enough for me because I have to do my homework and also play some games. I would like the library to create a teen space because there is no teen area in this library and I am not a child. Using a computer dedicated for children makes me not want to come to the library but I have no choice because I need to use the computer to complete my homework."

Teen 6 shared a similar thought:

"I think the library is meeting my educational need because I can get on the computer to do my homework but it is not meeting my recreational need because I cannot hang out with my friends here because we will be put out for disturbing other people. I wish the branch will have a teen space where teens like me will play some games. The branch is not meeting my recreational need because teens like me would like to come here to cool off after a long day at school. I would like the library to have games such as Xbox, Nintendo Wii and Play station 3 or 4. My parents cannot afford such games at home and the schools can't have them. I think the public library should have space for games area that the teens can come and have fun."

The common theme that emerged from interviewing the teens is that the branches are not meeting the needs of the teens. An overwhelming majority of the teens' participants would want the library to offer more enrichment programs/activities during

the critical after-school ours. Programs and activities such as etiquette, public speaking and board/electronic games are the most items the teens want. Also, they would like the branches to have a teen space which is necessary if the teens were to play board and electronic games at the branches. The parents' participants shared similar opinion as the teens. They all agree that the branches should do more than providing computers in the library. They should offer activities that teens would like from the teens perspective.

Parent 1 stated:

"The library should provide arts classes, music activities or anomie workshop."

Parent 2 emphasized:

"Teens need more teen activities to occupy their time."

Parent 3 stated:

Activities such as monopoly and chess will help the teen's analytical and financial skills if the branch can provide it.

Parent emphasized 4 that:

"Teens do not like structure and would participate in after-school an activity that has less structure such a game room."

Parent 5 stated:

"The branch should have an after-school book club, drawing or art activities."

Parent 6 emphasized:

"The branch should provide enrichment activities for the teens."

The branch managers shared a perspective that differed somewhat from that of the teens and the parents interviewed. Library Manager 1 explained:

"Currently, the branch provides a vision board program as an after-school activity for the teens. The branch had offered Trivia Contest for interested teens but participation was very poor and the program had to be cancelled."

Manager 2 shared a similar:

"As a branch manager, I developed programs that are tailored to the needs of the teens. The branch recently had a driver's education workshop and the program was not so well attended but the teens that attended were mostly teens that don't live in the community. The teen driver education was a good after-school activity. Because majority of the teens were from poor homes with one car or no car at all, participation in the teen driver's education was not so high. Since all library programs are provided free to the public, the program was provided free to the teens but with parental consent. I agree that teens generally do not like structured activities hence; we plan programs that the teens can participate."

Manager 3 shared similar thoughts, but emphasized:

"I like to work with the schools in the community to see how the branch can support the curriculum because the teens that come to the branch just want to hang out and get on the computer. I have organized programs that teens did not show up, and the program had to be cancelled. It can be frustrating sometimes because you do not know what they want."

On some of the after-school activities that the branches provide, Staff 1stated:

"The branch provided volunteer opportunities to teens who need volunteer hours to complete high school graduation. They help to talk to other teens who are often out of line."

Staff 2 shared similar thoughts, emphasizing:

"During after-schools when library employees were stretched thin, teen volunteers helped in shelving books and assisting other library users. They assist us greatly and we are happy to see them volunteer and help the branch to shelve books and help other teens who need help locating resources in the library."

Staff 3 shared the same thought about having teens during the after-school hours doing volunteering:

"We encourage our teens to volunteer in the library when they have nothing else to do. The teens need the hours anyway because it is a graduation requirement and we are too eager to have them serve the community. By having the teens volunteer in the library, it helps to keep other teens in check. They help talk to other teens who are constantly violating library rules and policy. Some of them are just here to hang out and cause us grief."

The responses from library managers and staff corroborated the assertion that teens are difficult to deal with and that library personnel do not know what these young people want. Library managers and their employees will need to consider a wide variety of options to deal with teens in the library. Having the teens volunteer, could help the library a great deal. Teens' volunteering in the library is both beneficial for the teens who

need community-service hours to graduate and to a library that is understaffed and welcomes some extra helping hands.

Community-Needs Theme

This was another notable theme identified. Getting the perspective of the Friends of the Library participants was one of the options that the branch managers have to solicit for funds to finance programs at the branches. Friends of the Library participants were asked what are some activities that the Friends of the Library provide to support the branch and are these activities funded by the Friends or do they seek funding from other sources?

Friend 1 stated:

"Currently, we do not have an after-school teen program going on at the branch. One of the reasons, I think the branch has not being focusing on the teens as much because there are no resources to do so and the time needed to plan the kind of programs teens would like is not there. At the Friends' council meetings, the focus has been on children rather than both. I think the branch should start focusing on providing after-school programs for teens. If asked, I think the Friends can help create the programs or look within the community to find the people that can provide the programs. The purpose of the Friends of the Library is to advocate for the branches they serve by helping to support the branch through funding for programs. Funding for the Friends' activities comes mainly from book sales and sometimes, the Friends go to the community to solicit for funding."

Highlighting the importance of community support for the branches, Friend 2 explained:

"The Friends of the Library are a community group whose purpose is to support the efforts of the branch manager. In the past, the Friends have supported programs such as teen summer reading program and the GED program. In terms of participation, not many teens participate in these programs because the programs may not be the programs that the teens want. I think the branches should ask the teens the kind of programs that they want. The branches should plan teen programs but should include the teens in the planning; otherwise, the branch may not have a good turnout of teens. The teens in this community need the library for support because very many teens are illiterate. Many of them can't read and so are intimidated to come inside and participate in library activities; therefore, they hang around and cause all kinds of grief for the library staff. One issue that needs to be addressed in planning teen programs is that there should be incentives for the teens to come because teens need that kind of motivation to participate in after-school activities. Most branches may not have the resources to provide the incentives. When asked to provide incentives for the teens, the Friends of the Library can support such incentive for the teens. Funding for the library comes from book sales, salient auction, and external sources such as grants and monetary donations from members."

Community support was also highlighted by Friend 3 who stated:

"The Friends of the Library for Branch 3 has supported after-school activities for the branch such as the milestone state standardized testing workshops, back to school supply program, summer reading program. Although, participation in these programs was

not very encouraging, the Friends of the Library can help to provide more programs in order to meet the needs of the teens. The Friends are in touch with the branch manager to come up with a wish list on how the Friends can better serve the needs of the teens. I think the library needs to change with the changing times. There is so much going on outside the library that the library is one of the safest places for the teens to be in the community. Funding for programs that the Friends generate comes from auxiliary services. It is difficult for the Friends of the Library to raise enough money to support the kind of programs that will meet the needs of the teens. The branches in inner city communities do not have the type of businesses that can support the Friends of the Library. Therefore, we are limited in resources due to the demography and lack of businesses. Money brings in the teens. If the community is an affluent community, the branches would meet the needs of the teens."

When the branch managers and librarians were asked what are some of the activities that the branches provide to meet the needs of the teens? And, if the activities are funded by the library or money comes from private funding, Manager 1 explained:

"The needs of the teens are met through the provision of technology to complete homework but more can be done in terms of providing more enrichment programs and activities. Inner city kids need more than what the branches can provide. The branch does not have the resources to provide the kind of programs that teens want. I rely on my Friends of the Library to provide the resources but they are also limited in what they can do. We often look for free programs from community partners to offer to the teens. The issue for us is participation."

Manager 2 echoed this opinion by emphasizing:

"The branch is meeting the needs of the teens through technology that the teens use for home work, books that they check out. The teens love being on the computer and as such I think that is what they want. We cater more to the children and adults because that has been the focus of the library. Teen programming is relegated because not many teens participate in our teen summer reading program. We provide incentives through the resources that the Friends of the Library provide during the summer reading program. We also solicit the support of our community partners to provide free teen programs but as usual the participation is low."

Manager 3 highlighted the importance of community by stating:

"The branch is providing after-school activities to the many teens that come to the branch through the computers that the library is providing. The branch is also helping the teens to complete community hours which is a requirement for high school graduation. The branch also encourages the teens to jump start on their community hours very early. The branch gets support from the Friends of the Library to help in organizing programs for the teens. Participation has not been so great."

Staff 1 stated:

"The branch focuses more on children and adult programming and less on teen programs. The branch does not even have a teen area. The branch is planning on having teen programs in the summer. Teens in the community need incentive to participate more in library programs, but the branch may not have the resources to meet the needs of the teens."

Staff 2 highlighted the efforts of the branch to meet the needs of the teens by emphasizing:

"The branch has a few teen programs and the programs are provided by staff but teens hardly attend these programs."

Staff 3 shared similar thought but emphasized:

"The branch is currently providing a book trailer program, online job searching, and money smart and budgeting programs but like all teen programs participation is low, and yet we have a lot of teens hanging around the library. I really do not know what the teens want."

The policy and regulatory framework guiding the implementation of after-school program and activities in the public library are key concepts in this study and seek answers through Research Question 2. One major theme was identified and the findings are presented in the following sections. It is, therefore, important to identify themes that can provide explanations regarding the policies used by the Atlanta Fulton Public Library for regulating after-school activities for teens from underserved communities who come to the branches during the critical after-school hours.

Public-Policy Theme

The theme is identified when library managers' and library staff participants were asked what policies support the after-school activities offered at the branches and if the policy is written by individual branch managers or it is uniform for all 34 branches of the library system,

Manager 1 stated:

There is a system wide initiative focused on children's services and not on teen services. As a branch manager, I am developing programs to engage the teens coming to the branch, but I think there should be a system wide teen initiative. There used to be a teen initiative that was formulated in 1997, but there is no mention of it lately."

Manager 2 expressed similar thoughts by emphasizing:

"Once upon a time, there were policies promoting teen services but there seems to be a shift in focus away from teens. The library system used to have a teen initiative where each branch is expected to have a teen section, with teen collection and teen programs. There is need to bring back the initiative to help the many teens coming here."

Manager 3 shared similar thoughts by stating:

"There is no consistency or framework on how each branch should serve the teen patrons. Branches in affluent neighborhoods have more resources to meet the needs of teens in those communities but branches in inner city neighborhoods do not have the resources. There is an uneven playing field and teens that needs the library the most are the ones without the services that the teens desire because of the economic disadvantage the community they live in."

Staff 1 shared a somewhat different thought by emphasizing:

"There is no policy regulating after-school activities in the branches. There should be a teen initiative and a teen advisory board where teen programs and activities are discussed system wide and all branches have the same program or given the same resources to provide programs for the teens in the branches."

Staff 2 shared similar thought by stating:

"There is no system wide policy regulating teen programs at the branches. There should be a system wide initiative for all branches serving teens. I believe the teens would come if the right programs are offered."

Staff 3 shared similar thought by emphasizing:

"I am not sure there is a policy. Maybe the manager is aware of the existence of a policy but certainly, I am not aware. The library system should have a teen centered policy to regulate how teens are served at the branches."

The factors constraining the implementation of after-school activities is a key concept in this study to be answered by findings with relevance to Research Question 3. It is, therefore, important to identify key themes that provide answers to this research question. One major theme was identified, and the findings are presented in the following sections.

Public-Service Theme

This was a very important theme identified when the library managers and library staff participants were asked to name the challenges that the branch encounters when providing after-school activities for teens. Their responses indicated that the branches are facing some challenges when they try to engage teens to participate in after-school activities. The teens continue to come to the branches because the branches are the only place where they feel safe within the community. They value the branches' efforts in accommodating them. Despite the low teen participation, the branch managers and their staffs said that they are, indeed, providing a service.

Manager 1stated:

"The challenges that the branch faces is that the teens continue to come to the branch but getting them to participate in some of the activities that we provide is a big challenge for the branch. The library system has not been forthcoming in terms of addressing the issue of teens in the branches because generally, the focus is on the children."

Manager 2 shared similar thoughts but emphasized:

"The challenge facing the branch is lack of participation in after-school activities by teens. The focus by library administration has been children services. In the past, the branches have both children and teen areas at the branches but due to cut in library budget, services have been limited to children and less on teens. At staff meetings, the most discussed topic is teens in the branch and we constantly discuss how best to serve them."

Manager 3 highlighted the importance of the public service that the branches offer by emphasizing:

"The branch is facing difficult challenges because we do not have the resources to meet the needs of the teens. The branch managers are limited as to what they can do or not do due to the lack of a system wide initiative to help these kids when they come to the branches. Each branch manager does what he or she deems fit for the branch. The branch has many after-school activities because the branch understood the needs of the teens and the branch planned according to the needs of the teens."

The responses of the library staff are not different from those of the branch managers when asked about the challenges the staff face when serving at-risk teens coming to the branches.

Staff 1 stated:

"I think there is a gap between what the library is doing and what the teens want. The programs that we are providing do not appeal to the teens. I think we have to find out what they really want."

Staff 2 shared similar thoughts but emphasized:

"The challenge that my branch is facing is that the teens are not participating in the programs that we provide. The problem may be that the programs do not appeal to the teens."

While answering the same questions, Staff 3 shared similar thoughts about the challenges the branch faces:

"The challenge that we face dealing with the teens is that the teens are mostly interested in the things that they like such as getting on the computers. The majority of them are more technologically advanced than the library staff. There is really nothing we can teach them. We have to face it."

Analysis of the Themes Based on the Research Questions

The four themes that emerged from the study provided answers to the three research questions. The analysis of the themes is hereby presented.

The Perceived Role of the Public Library

From the results of the study, there is no doubt that the library system is engaging teens in the three branch sites. The after-school activities that the branches provide are mainly home work help and technology. The first theme identified is "bridging the digital divide". The teens' and parents' participants said that the library system provided technology for after-school needs of teens and other library users. This is true because the teens need the technology to complete home work, play games or connect with teachers, family and peers. Technology is the most important need by teens in underserved communities and the public library is meeting this need. Although, many teens would like the public library in many underserved communities to provide other enrichment activities as indicated by the teen participants but the problem for public libraries serving at risk teens is that it is constrained by the lack of resources to meet this needs.

Another role that the public library plays in poor urban neighborhoods as indicated by the participants is that it is regarded as a safe learning space for children and teens to come to. The parents' participants said that they do not have to worry about their children coming to the public library because the library is a safe institution in the community. Some of the themes that emerged from the study indicate that the branches are a very important community institution where all are welcomed especially teens who desperately need the resources provided by the branches. Providing after-school activities and teen needs; meeting community needs; and providing public service to underserved teens are very important roles that the branches are playing in the communities.

The Policy or Regulatory Framework Guiding the Implementation of After-School Activities

The findings from the study indicated that library managers and staff are implementing after-school activities without a clear policy or framework guiding the implementation of after-school activities. The library managers interviewed contend that there was a 1997 system wide teen initiative but that initiative may be obsolete or no longer implemented. None of the library staff in each of the branches studied has ever heard of the initiative. Therefore, in response to Research Question 2, there are no policies or regulatory framework guiding the implementation of after-school activities at the branches. Each of the branches decides what the needs of the teens are and provide activities according to branch resources. The Friends of the Library at the branches provide support to whatever the branch managers consider to be the needs of the teens.

Without support in terms of a system wide policy outlining how the branches implement the activities, the after-school needs of the teens may not be met. The branches in the underserved neighborhoods have a tough mountain to climb in terms of having the resources besides technology to meet the needs of the young library users. Libraries need resources in order to be fully functional being a service provider, policy can create legitimacy for library managers to go above and beyond to create the kind of after-school activities that the teens most desire.

Explanatory or Predictive Value of the Theory of Innovation and Public Value

Besides the lack of policy or framework guiding the implementation of after-school activities at the branches, there is yet one other constrain the branches face and

that is the lack of legitimacy and authorizing environment has advocated by Moore (1995) as the findings indicate in one of the emerged themes; the public service theme. As earlier pointed in the chapter, the public service theme is a very important theme identified because it helped provide answers to Research Question 3. The library managers' and library staff participants were asked the challenges the branches encounter when providing after-school activities to teens. The responses from the participants indicate that the branches can do more for the teens after all; they are in the front line of the problem. Library managers have the support of staff and the Friends of the Library as indicated in the findings to implement sustainable after –school activities at the branches serving at risk teens but lack of legitimacy and authorizing environment may be hampering this effort. The theory of innovation and public value therefore offers an explanatory or predictive value in explaining the problem library managers' face when dealing with teens in the public library.

Document Review

I reviewed all the documents relating to after-school activities at the branch locations. I also conducted a document search for the existence of a policy or initiative regulating teen services in the library system. At the branch level, the managers plan and implement teen programs that are branch specific. At the system level, there was no document relating to after-school activities in the system or at the branches. I could not find the 1997 teen initiative.

Summary

In this chapter, I presented an overview of the purpose of this embedded case study and research questions that this study seeks to address. I provided the demographics of the research participants, the detailed description of the research settings, data collection and data analysis processes. I also presented methods used to ensure the trustworthiness of the research study. The data collected were analyzed in a way that enabled me to make sense of the large body of data. Related data were placed in categories which were later grouped into themes. The results of the study was based on field observations which I conducted, the responses of the participants to the research questions and the review of documents relating to after-school activities both at the branch level and at the system level. Based on the responses of the study participants and data collected, it appears that there is need to design or redesign policies promoting after-school activities in the Atlanta Fulton Public Library System. The creation of such a policy should not only deal with the influx of teens, but should do these young people some good. In other words, creation of after-school activities for teens should be driven by sound public policy.

Chapter 5 provides an interpretations of the findings of this research and a discussion of the limitations of the study and implications for social change. It concludes with a recommendation for future research.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this embedded case study was to examine the perceived role of the public library in the implementation of after-school activities for teens, explore the policy and regulatory framework that guide this implementation, and determine what factors may be inhibiting the implementation of the policy. I also examined whether the theory of innovation and public value might provide explanatory or predictive value to the implementation of after-school activities in the public library. Prior to this study, little empirical research had been undertaken with respect to potential policies or regulatory frameworks intended to guide the implementation of after-school activities in public libraries. Conducting this study was, therefore, both necessary and timely. In an attempt to bridge a gap in the professional literature, I used an embedded case study design which included the taking of field notes during observations, in-depth interviews, and a review of available documents associated with after-school activities in the Atlanta Fulton Public Library System. I selected this design because it allowed me to explore pertinent themes within several branch locations and then extract common themes from the collected data that transcended individual branches. This approach enabled me to gain a deeper understanding of the problem from a system wide perspective.

My main goal in this discussion of the research findings is to offer an evaluative assessment and interpretation of the findings, based on participant responses to the interview questions, observations I made during library visits, and data gleaned from a document review. The findings of this study have also pointed to potential solutions to

the research problem and have led me make recommendations for practical application and further research. The conclusions I drew from this qualitative case study are presented at the end of this chapter. The overarching goal of this study was to answer the research questions. The findings are derived from an analysis of field notes taken during observations, interview transcripts, and documents related to after-school activities in the Atlanta Fulton Public Library System.

Interpretation of the Findings

Summary of the Results

I interpreted the results of this study to answer the research questions posed for the study intended to lead to some practical answers to the challenges faced by public libraries resulting from the influx of unsupervised teens during after-school hours. Moore's (1995) theory of innovation and public value provided the theoretical framework that guided the study. Most of the discussion will be focused on the meaning of themes that emerged from field notes, responses to the interview questions, and a review of documents pertaining to after-school activities in the Atlanta Fulton Public Library system. Participants who I recruited from several groups with a specific relationship to the library (i.e., teen patrons, their parents, library managers, library staff, and Friends of the Library volunteers), were asked five questions in each category. Five broad themes emerged during the analysis of the collected data. I will discuss these themes and their meanings in the following sections.

Bridging-the-Digital-Divide

The computers in the public library held great attraction for the teens because they could be used for homework, research, playing games, and connecting with friends through social media. Based on the responses from participants, I learned that most families in low-income neighborhoods have no personal computers at home, and that they rely on the public library to fill this void. The publicly accessible computers assist children in the community to do homework, complete school projects, and stay connected with teachers, family, peers, and friends. The power of technology was evident in the branch libraries where the teens were heavily engaged in using the technology. The responses from participating branch manager suggested, however, that technology is the biggest expense in the library budget. The library administration is investing in technology because technology is one of the reasons that teens come in droves to the public library.

The perceived role of the library as a public institution in society is, thus, to provide informational services that will bring benefit to all users of that public space. When teens congregate in the library, they expect to use the library's technology. Technology access in underserved communities has helped many teens to stay out of trouble. It is pertinent to add that, without technology, it would have been difficult for library staff to handle all the distractions caused by their teen patrons. This finding relates to Moore's (1995) theory of innovation and public value, in which he charged managers to be innovative in providing programs that are tangible and measurable. Library technology is both tangible and measurable; it obviously benefits the teens, and branches

can cite the numbers of teens who use technology to attract more funding from the Board of Commissioners.

According to the literature, there is a new generation of tech-savvy latchkey children coming to the library space (Grant & Fisher, 2011). it is evident that the technology is pulling them into the library because the branches have technology and the teens want to use it. Graffy (2013) posited that public managers should act as effective bridge builders between citizens and the government by linking people and tasks in their own agencies. By having public-access computers in library buildings, the library managers and staff are bridging the technological divide and using technology to help the teens who come into their branches complete homework and enjoy other forms of after-school school activities. Based on the responses from the participants, technological assistance is the major form of after-school activity that these branches provide to the teens who visit the library.

It is important to note that none of the computers at the three library locations were down during my observational visits. Credit must, therefore, be given to the managers for ensuring that library technology is functional when teens come in to use it, and that it is available for homework and other after-school activities. This finding supports the argument made by Macchion and Savic (2011) that libraries provide resources such as hardware to assist the teens in using the library space for programs, homework help, and other library activities. This point of view was also shared by Burnett (2011), who posited that the public library is helping kids with homework in the absence of parents, and is assisting with other activities as well. This is consistent with

Moore's (1995) suggestion that the responsibility of the manager is to rise above contending challenges and become innovative in creating public value; after all, the managers are on the front line of the problem. The managers and staff in this study did, indeed, rise above the contending issues facing the library institution by making sure that the computers were in working condition and that their young patrons had no problems with them.

There is no doubt that the branches have helped to bridge the digital divide by providing the technological assistance that the teens in underserved communities desperately needed. The findings of this study support one of the basic arguments put forth by Moore (2014), namely that public value is not as simple as individuals valuing their own welfare because individuals' valuing the welfare of society is a general and overarching quality. Some of the phrases frequently used by the participants were "the library provided homework assistance," "the library provided computers for Internet use," "the library provided helpful programs," "the library provided free printing," and "the library helped me in finding resources for school projects."

The parent participants expressed that they would like to see the library branches engaging the teens in enrichment activities besides technology. It is true that use of technology was the major form of after-school activities provided by the branches, but this was tailored to meet the needs of the teens who had to complete their homework. Without computers, it would certainly be quite challenging for the libraries to meet this need. Although, the responses from participating teens intimated that they would appreciate other activities provided by the branches, it just so happened that current

offerings did not meet their needs for after-school activities. This echoes what Santiago (2013) had written, namely that teens in the public library would love to mix music, design video games, create films, and read books in addition to exploring technology. The responses from the managers indicated, however, that the branches would love to have a variety of activities to offer, but that they are severely limited by the available resources. The absence of a taxing authority to provide the kind of activities teens desire at the library branches means that the branch managers have to reach out and seek funding from external sources.

Such funding opportunities would have to come from the Friends of the Library. The responses from participating Friends of the Library suggested that they had been helping the branches with funding mainly through book sales and donations. The funding opportunities provided by the Friends of the Library are not sufficient to create the desired changes at the individual branches. The funds raised or provided by the Friends of the Library were destined to support summer reading programs and several other programs already in place. The responding Friends of the Library participants and managers were in agreement that more needed to be done in terms of securing adequate funding and developing sources that could provide sustainable funding of programs. Such supports have also been discussed in the literature by authors who have pointed out that the public library is not an autonomous organization with taxing authority. Grant and Fisher (2011) contended that public sector managers have no taxing authority to impose on the citizens who use government services to achieve collective ends. Therefore,

service improvements are not very likely to succeed unless they are supported at the directorial, mayoral, or councilor level (Griggs, 2010).

The library system is competing for tax dollars along with other departments. It is, therefore, difficult for each branch to maintain a steady flow of revenue. The branches are limited by the resources allocated by the county government. The bulk of the library budget goes towards paying wages and purchasing library materials such as books and non-book supplies. As a result of financial challenges, it was difficult for the branches to provide the kind of services desired by teens who come to the library. In order for the branches to provide enrichment activities such as those mentioned by the teen participants, branch managers would have to think outside the library's traditional revenue base. Paberza (2010) posited that managers would have to be innovative in articulating programs in a changing environment to sustain the interest of users in the library space.

After-School-Activities-and-Teens'-Needs

One of the activities that branches provided during after-school hours was the opportunity for teens to volunteer within the public library. I observed some of the teens in the branches helping other library users on the computer or helping library staff to locate library resources for other teens. When library employees were stretched thin, teen volunteers helped shelve books and assisted other library users. Cohen et al. (2014) stated that public libraries were helping teens in many ways. Some of the other activities teens engaged in were to assist other teens and children in the library with home work problems. The library staff participants maintained that having teens volunteer in the

library during after-school hours was a good thing because it helped to keep other teens in check. Based on the responses from the staff participants, it is worthy of note that the public library provides activities to many teens that benefit these young people in a variety of ways.

Teen participation with new technology may be low in some of these branches, but one creative way revealed by this study was the provision of training opportunities the teens received when they came to the public library. Manager 1 said that the branch provided driver education training for interested teens. This finding was consistent with Young's (2013) statement that public libraries provided job training to thousands of youths who visit the library. Hannan (2011) also stated that managers needed to promote the public library as a place of leisure and entertainment, but also as a place that provides fun and high-quality events for teens. These findings highlight an important element, namely that teens helping other teens is precisely one of the innovative ways by which the public library creates public value.

Each of the observed library branches tried to tailor activities to the needs of the teens, just as Pierce et al. (2010) had suggested: After-school programs should provide children with opportunities to sample different programs that would enhance their development. When the question was put to the teen participants regarding their preference for library programs and library activities, the response was that they preferred library activities over library programs because library activities offered enrichment. The conclusion to be drawn is that teens are more accepting of library activities than library programs. Finding the right balance between activities that teens would like and being

able to develop such programs can be quite a challenge for library managers, who must be welcoming toward the teens and provide them with activities that keep them busy. This finding relates to one of the constraints that libraries are experiencing when they provide after-school activities, and it also provides explanatory or predictive value in light of Moore's (1995) theory of innovation and public value: Establishing the right balance between activities that the teens would like and programs that the library is able to offer is one of the innovative and creative ways in which libraries create public value. Gardner et al. (2012) emphasized that activities offer enrichment that enhances personal and social skills through academic, social, cultural, and recreational pursuits. Such activities, posited Kuperminc et al. (2013), transcend into positive outcomes.

Community-Needs

That the library must meet the needs of the community was one of the themes identified during the analysis of the collected data. Several participants credited the branches for providing a safe place in the community for the teens during after-school hours. The teen participants said that they felt safe at the branches and that this was the main reason why they went there straight from school when no adult was at home. Parent participants emphasized that their teenage children go to the public library regularly because they feel safe and they can get a great deal done while they are there. The responses from both teens and parents were consistent with what the literature had indicated. Past studies by Reid (2013), Macchion and Savic (2011), Bourke (2011), and Burnett (2011), for example, described the public library as a place where teens can feel safe and parents know that their teens are safe.

Parents loved the idea that their children did not have to walk home and stay at home in the absence of a parent or guardian. Some kids come straight from school, often without home work, and use the facility to wait for their parents to pick them up. Past researchers such as Holleman et al. (2010) asserted that some minors are told by their parents to go to the public library and to stay until they are being picked up from there. According to the authors, it is incumbent upon the library manager and staff either to stop the flow of these children to the public library or to find creative ways to engage them during after-school hours.

Managers can be effective bridge builders in the community as Lee and Wilkins (2011) argued; if they understand their role in the agencies they manage. In order to be effective, they must look to the community for help in meeting the needs of the library. The library is considered a place of quiet, where people can go to study or hide away from the hustle and bustle of the outside world. When the teens of the community who lack proper guidance are trying to destabilize the serenity of the tranquil environment that libraries are intended to provide, it is the duty of the library manager to show public courage in carrying out policies that will benefit society (Budd, 2014; Moore, 2014). The Friends of the Library who participated in the study believed that, by getting involved in their local branches, they were actually bringing the library closer to the community.

Community participation is very important in the local public library. Librarians value the communities they serve and take pride in the services they provide to teens and other library users. When citizens, as well as businesses and nonprofit organizations, become active participants through their involvement as members of the Friends of the

Library, librarians value their assistance with solving some of their most critical problems such as access to enough money to fund after-school activities. The Friends of the Library provided this support by sponsoring activities and providing avenues for the community to be involved in the public library. Referencing Moore (1995), one of the perceived roles that the branches played in the communities as guarantors of public value was bringing citizens, as well as businesses and nonprofit organizations, together as active problem solvers in a valued public institution.

Public-Policy

This was a very important theme identified during data analysis. The manager participants' said that the library system had a teen initiative, which was established in 1997, but they were not sure if the initiative was still being implemented. The 1997 initiative, according to Manager 2, stipulated that large branches should have a librarian responsible for the teen collection and provide programs for the teens coming to the branches. The library staff participants were not aware of the existence of such a policy, as the collected data indicated. When I performed the document review at the branch sites, I could not find a policy or initiative regulating teen activities at the larger branches. Although, the branches have been providing services for teens coming to the branches, the absence of a formal policy that outlines how such services are to be provided is curtailing the branches' efforts to meet the needs of the teens. There is no doubt that the branches are engaged in devising short-term strategies; these are, however, largely ineffective because they do not address the fundamental issue of critically needed teen

services. Teens turning a blind eye toward most of the programs being offered should be a clear signal that the strategies currently in use do not address the issues.

This finding is supported by the literature. Williams and Edwards (2011) argued that teens are hard to appeal to, and the needs of the young people are not well-served by public libraries in low-income communities where teens are restless. Griggs (2010) contended that libraries recognize that teenagers are the hardest segment of public-library patrons to appeal to; meeting their needs will require drastic changes in teen services. This finding is critically important because creating activities that teens like and use is already a challenge for library managers, who must provide the teens with something to keep them busy; otherwise, as Scheppke (2014) noted, they will become restless and disturb other users of the public space. This finding provides explanatory value in light of Moore's (1995) theory of innovation and public value. Moore argued that public managers must show imagination and skill in using public assets to produce public value for citizens. Enactment of a policy for after-school activities in the public library would not only deal with the influx of teens, but also do these young people some good. In other words, creation of public value should be driven by sound public policy.

Public-Service

Data gathered from the participants indicated that great expectations do indeed exist with respect to the role of the public library. The teens saw the library as a place where they could relax and meet with peers from the community. This view is consistent with the literature reviewed. Ly (2010) posited that the library has traditionally been one of the few institutions that provided resources for local residents in poor, urban

neighborhoods. The public libraries have always been valued by society as a place for enhancing literacy, providing access to information, and engaging users who come to the library space. It provides access to these treasured values for people in poor urban neighborhoods.

The findings clearly showed that people who lived in the communities where these branches were located valued their public library. The parent volunteers said that they trusted the public library to provide all the resources that the children needed. Parent 3 commented, "Where can you go in the neighborhood to find help other than the public library?" Parents trust the librarians to provide assistance; therefore, they want their teens always to go to the public library. This finding was consistent with what the literature reported. Paberza (2010) emphasized that society places high value on the public library and the professional librarians who work there. Patrons expect that, in a changing world, the role of the library and the librarians in their communities should change as well to reflect the public's expectations. Despite dwindling resources and fewer staff, the branches have remained relevant in their communities.

Parent 2 said that "most of the staff in her neighborhood branch have been working at the branch since her teens were in Kindergarten." The staff person "even read to her son when the teen was coming with his [then] kindergarten class to the branch's story time program." The teen has a special bond with the staff person. When the teen comes to the library, reported the parent, the librarian feels obligated to continue to make an impact on the teen's life. The librarian will always remind the teen to do his home work whenever he is in the library after school. According to the literature, the public

mandate enables libraries to provide services, but such mandates can only be realized through the expert oversight of librarians who are trained to resolve critical societal problems. Librarians see their job as a mandate and understand that the teens in the public library are there either because they love books or because they need a place to stay when no adult is at home or when they simply want to hang out with their friends.

The public value theory contends that people take action about what they consider to be in their best interest and in the best interest of society at large. Librarians value the trust that the public invests in them and treat it as a mandate. They seek resources for the benefit of the profession as providers of information to the public as well as for the benefits of the teens in the library. Moore's (1995) theory of innovation and public value is quite relevant to the understanding why teens flock to the public library and why librarians feel mandated to provide after-school activities to the many teens in underserved communities. Williams and Edwards (2011) argued that teens are not hard to appeal to, but the needs of young people are not well-served by public libraries in low-income communities where teens are restless. Manager 2 contended that, at staff meetings, the most discussed topic is teens in the public library, and the branch constantly labors over the question how best to serve them.

The findings of this study suggested that Moore's (1995) theory of innovation and public value can be used by library managers to plan, implement, and evaluate after-school activities in the public library as well as initiate social change efforts. The teens come to the public library not just because of the services that the public library provides, but also because it is an institution that they value. Library administrators must also think

along this line. In Chapter 2, I posited that there are two perspectives that inform the theory of public value: There is the normative perspective held by Bozeman (2007), and then, there is the perspective held by Moore (1995). The normative perspective views public value from the angle of societal agreement or the consensus to create public value, whereas Moore's perspective shifted from the collective approach to an individual approach to creating public value. Moore stated that public value can be used as a measure of the success or failure of government as a conscious, if unspoken, effort to shift from objective to subjective metrics.

The participants' responses are consistent with the perspective held by Moore (1995) that public managers should be innovative in their ideas. In the three library branches studied, the managers held similar perspectives on how best to serve their teen patrons. It is worthy of note that all three branches had similar demographics, and the services they provide were also similar. All three branches provided computer assistance and help with homework. Manager 3 said that the branch offered a great many after-school activities because the library personnel understood the needs of the teens and planned according to the needs of the teens. For example, one branch saw the need for a driver's education class for the teens and decided to go for it. The turnout may not have been great, but the branch had to engage the teens in some activity. This finding was consistent with the public value theory, as advocated by Moore, who said that public value can be used as a measure of the success or failure of government. Public libraries are government-run institutions, and as such the success or failure of the public library is dependent on how well it is able to apply innovative ideas to compete in the 21st century.

Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

The study was delimited to experiences and descriptions of participants who were connected to after-school activities in library branches serving teens in generally underserved areas of the city. The views of the participants from one segment of the public library's clientele may not necessarily reflect the views of the entire library clientele. However, narrowing the focus to participants who have connections to after-school activities in three selected branches of the Atlanta Fulton Public Library System was deliberate, and so was narrowing the scope of the study to a representative sample touched by a specific research problem (i.e., teens flocking to the library during after-school hours and how to serve their needs), which, nevertheless, affects the entire library system. The advantage of this delimitation of the study is that it may add to the existing body of knowledge and close a gap in the literature regarding after-school activities in the public library.

It could be considered a limitation of the study that it was conducted in only three branches of the Atlanta Fulton Public Library System. However, this focus was set deliberately because of the need to narrow the study for practical purposes and because these three branches were considered to be typical for public libraries in underserved neighborhoods of Atlanta. These three branches are covering a geographic area that this study was focused on because it is serving large numbers of at-risk youths in underserved communities.

Another limitation of the study is the small number of teen participants interviewed. Six teen participants may appear to be too limited a sample, but these six

representatives could provide the range of perspectives espoused by the youths who come to the libraries in droves. The implication is that teens from most affluent neighborhoods have access to the Internet and to tutors at home because parents can afford it. They seldom have a need to go to the public library and may not participate in after-school activities. The teens in underserved neighborhoods, on the other hand, need the public library to bridge the digital divide and to help them to complete their homework. Because they go to the library most days of the week, they tend to participate in after-school activities. These teens have different views, opinions, knowledge, and perspectives about how best the public library can serve their recreational and educational needs. The results of this study may, therefore, not be generalizable to all teenagers, but they appear to echo the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 that describes the perspectives of teens in poor urban neighborhoods, who depend on the public library on a daily basis. The results could be used for comparison purposes of patrons' experiences in other neighborhoods, communities, or the world at large; this would shed light on purposes and the creation of public value in areas other than after-school activities in underserved urban neighborhoods.

Another potential limitation of the study is that the responses provided by the library managers may not be entirely trustworthy because the actions of public library managers are subject to the policies of the county or municipal government under which they serve; their decisions are, thus, governed by the policies of these governmental bodies. Their perspective may, therefore, threaten the trustworthiness of the research and the applicability of the research findings. While the underlying premise may be valid,

getting the perspective of the managers was, nevertheless, important because library managers act as effective bridge builders between citizens and the government by linking people and tasks in their own agencies (Graffy, 2013). On the positive side, I was able to explore issues confronting the modern-day public library manager.

Recommendations

A review of the literature showed that, in the past, very little research had been devoted to the study of policies promoting sustainable after-school library programs and activities for teens in the public library. Additional research providing a better understanding of some of the challenges library managers and their staffs are facing with respect to the influx of teens into the public library was, therefore, both necessary and timely. The absence of a written policy jeopardizes staff and hampers the library managers' efforts to provide sustainable after-school activities for teens. Such a policy should be made explicit.

A study sample that includes only teens, parents, library managers, librarians, and members of the Friends of the Library may not reflect the views and opinions of the whole community regarding the topic under study. Further research is, therefore, recommended that will include the library administration and members of the Library Board of Trustees to gain more insights into policies promoting after-school activities in the public library.

The number of participants in this study was relatively small and may, therefore, be inadequate to address the research problem from every perspective. A study that includes the library administration, Library Board of Trustees, and even the County

Board of Commissioners may produce different results because these are the policy makers, and any study that does not involve at least one of these stakeholders may not bring about the desired changes in public policy.

Furthermore, I recommend that future researchers take into consideration issues such as time constraints before undertaking similar studies because of the potential impact such studies may have. A quantitative study may, therefore, be desirable in order to cut down on time and involve more participants. This recommendation is relevant for future research on policies promoting after-school programs and activities for teens in the public library. It is my hope that, by sharing the findings of this study through publication and presentations at conferences and professional development workshops, I can inspire further discussions among key stakeholders and trigger further discussions among librarians on this topic.

Implications

Several implications for positive social change derive from this study, which should focus on the implementation of a sustainable after-school library program for teens. Positive social change can be brought about by the actions of library managers and other stakeholders in the library community. Moore (2014) argued that, to create public value, the library branch manager as the individual at the top of the branch library must cease to look upon his or her position from the traditional perspective of doing business and start to manage change. Therefore, the manager should embody change in a changing library environment.

The purpose of using Moore's (1995) theory of innovation and public value as a theoretical framework was to assess the perceived role of the public library in the implementation of after-school activities, the policy and regulatory framework that guide the implementation, and the factors that constrain the implementation of after-school activities in public libraries. As public libraries evolved from their traditional role of lending books, media, and technology for recreational purposes to its teen patrons to a changing institution in a changing environment, they had to consider new ways of engaging teens in the public space. Teens like unstructured environments, as this study revealed, but engaging them requires new ways of dealing with them and new policies to engage them. Without policies outlining how the new roles should be conceived, professional librarians may not fulfill this purpose. The absence of a written policy jeopardizes staff and the library managers' ability to implement sustainable after-school programs and activities for teens. A written policy can promote consistency in after-school activities, which may, in turn, create positive social change.

By using the theory of innovation and public value as the theoretical framework, results of the study can offer insights into how pursuing innovative ideas by library managers and their staffs contributes positively toward the successful implementation of after-school activities for teens. Consistent with the work of Brodsky (2014), Bryson et al. (2014), Oldenhof et al. (2014), Fisher and Grant (2012), and Boyd (2014), I maintain that library managers must cultivate an integrative way of thinking in their decision-making processes that embraces diverse opinions. Opposing views must be welcomed and considered, especially from those for whose benefit the programs were designed.

Managers should consistently be on the look-out for new ways to engage teens. Also, consistent with what has been reported in the literature, I maintain that managers should talk to the teens in the library and ask them what appeals to them the most. Managers, further, must constantly engage parents to find out what kinds of activities the teens like most at home and see if such activities can be replicated as library services. Managers should engage Friends of the Library and explore which activities could be sponsored by the Friends and made most attractive to teen patrons. Managers must open communication channels with all sorts of stakeholders in the library community and explore what kinds of activities various stakeholders might be able to provide to attract the teens' interest and participation. Such engagement on the part of branch managers would not only result in the provision of sustainable after-school activities but also create public value for the branch library.

The findings of the study revealed that the branches had no guidelines from the library administration to use when they attempted to provide services to their teen patrons. Biggs and Calvert (2013) posited that public libraries have a centralized management structure, but individual libraries develop their own marketing strategy to attract teens into the library. The participating librarians stated that they were already planning and implementing programs at their respective branches, but that much more was needed to get the teens in underserved neighborhoods to participate in after-school activities. Some of the branches attracted more teens than others in the same geographical area, and the main reason for this phenomenon appeared to be that they provided better after-school activities that appealed to the teens.

Using the embedded case study to identify themes common among the branches, as well as pinpointing differences among them, helped me to make generalizations about how the branches were serving the teens. The findings indicated that strategies adopted by the three branches were different. There was little consistency in service delivery. At the branch level, the branches used different strategies to engage the teens at the library. The library system may need to examine the guidelines in which teen services are to be delivered at the branches. Consistent with the work of Reed (2013), Burnett (2011), and Hannan (2011), I found that each branch operated differently, depending on each branch manager's innovation skills with respect to attracting teens and involving them in the after-school activities offered. Branches that offered more teen activities were the branches in which the managers had better skills to engage the teens. Lively engagement led not only to the production of more teen activities but also to more visibility of the teens in the library.

The findings of study also indicate that some of the librarians were not aware of the teen initiative adopted by the library system in 1997, which is an important document that could aid the branches in carrying out sustainable after-school activities at the respective branches. Young (2013) asserted that, without teen initiatives, it might be difficult for professional librarians to fulfill their mandate. Jochumsen et al. (2012) lent support to this view by positing that the public library should reinvent itself by developing a value-driven approach with policies that will make the institution indispensable in certain communities. An after-school activities policy is one such policy

intended to contribute toward helping librarians fulfill their professional mandate of serving the teens at the branch level and at the system level.

The findings of this study may also contribute to positive social change by providing insight into how the branches develop support as they reach out and create close contacts within the communities they serve. The managers and their staff can engage key stakeholders in the surrounding community of the branches if there is a policy in place that states what the branches can and should do or, conversely, not do. Derr and Rhodes (2010) argued that libraries over the years have collaborated with organizations to provide logistic support to disadvantaged teens. Not only do they provide space for the teens to learn, but they also engage them by strengthening what they learn through other library resources such as computers and many forms of entertainment in the public space. Moore (1995) suggested that public managers such as library managers should be entrusted with an authorizing environment to pursue their purpose.

An after-school initiative would ensure that the library manager has such an authorizing environment that lets him or her pursue the purpose and mission of the library because it would give the manager and staff the mandate to encourage reading and love of books. Such a mandate would encourage the branch manager and staff to go above and beyond to find resources that would promote after-school activities in the branches. It would ensure that no group of the branch's clientele is left out. At present, the library system tends to promote children's and adult activities more than teen activities. By ensuring that all members of the community have access to programs and activities—not

only provided by the branches but mandated—the needs of the community could be met more fittingly at all levels.

The parent participants argued that the community is looking up to libraries and wants them to provide activities that can sustain the interest of teens and draw them away from nefarious environments and criminal activities. Such interesting activities would pull the teens to the neighborhood branches. With community support and the branch managers' innovation skills to provide activities that attract kids to the library, it would be difficult for county politicians to close library branches due to lack of performance. It has become a habit of politicians to cut back on library hours or close branches all together whenever they experienced a budget shortfall. The branches in underserved communities typically are the most affected by such closures. Library managers should, therefore, strive to provide public value through programs and activities in their branches. After-school activities are a means to show that public libraries provide value to the communities they serve. This is consistent with views expressed by Reid (2013), Macchion and Savic (2011), Bourke (2011), and Burnett (2011), who maintained that children and teens feel safe in the building and parents know that their teens are safe in the public library.

The branch manager participants emphasized that they thought a great deal about how they should respond to the demands presented by the new latchkey kids coming to the libraries in underserved communities. The kids come to the library but do not participate in teen activities. The teen participants explained that the branches did not provide the kinds of activities that appealed to teens. The manager participants agreed,

stating that the kinds of activities that teens in the studied communities desired were well beyond the scope of the managers' capabilities to provide owing to the absence of any policy that would legitimize such efforts. Moore (1995) asserted that the needs of the library seemed to expand in response to the needs of the citizens and that these needs often go well beyond the capacity of the library. It is difficult to meet all the needs of the teens because of inadequate resources available to the branch managers. The Friends of the Library participants argued that they did a great deal for the branches, but that they, too, are limited by the funds they manage to raise mainly through book sales. Getting partners from the business community involved would help tremendously, but such an approach would require an authorizing environment. This approach would involve the branches using the business model to improve services. According to Moore (1995), public administrators have long relied on the traditional doctrine describing how they ought to think about and do their jobs.

The findings of this study may contribute to positive social change by providing insights about the support role that library managers play in the library community. Being the community resource center, its managers create the support system teens need when they come to the public library. Derr and Rhodes (2010) argued that the public library is an urban space with inherent challenges because it is a service and a facility with active users. The managers understand the importance of funding the programs, but the lack of funding negates the important role libraries play in the community. Managers have very limited budgets, and it is often difficult to bring enrichment programs to the branches without financial support. A good after-school program is very expensive to put in place,

and the managers understand what they need to do to attract external support for branch programs. They know which businesses in the community they need to turn to in order to raise the needed financial support. The manager participants told me that, during summer reading programs, the Friends of the Library, through their partnerships with businesses in the community, supported activities that benefitted the children and teens coming to the library. As Macchion and Savic (2011) noted, libraries do not just provide books and computers to teens using the library space, they also provide resources for programming, which ultimately benefits the teens. The amount of funding that the Friends of the Library provide depends on the economic activity in the community. Despite the differences in economic activity, the branches were still able to provide for their teen patrons.

It is worth noting that it is not just the amount of resources available to the branches that allows them to carry out programs and activities, but also the entrepreneurial skill of the branch manager and his or her efforts in knocking on doors to solicit the needed support for implementing after-school programs and activities. When describing the town librarian confronted with many latchkey kids, Moore (1995, p. 18) posited that the librarian he described strayed well beyond her traditional mandate as well as her instinct for bureaucratic entrepreneurship to create a sustainable after-school program for her local town. The theory of public value offers new concepts to library managers managing inner-city branches and facing similar challenges; they might adopt innovative and entrepreneurial ideas to meet the needs of the teens who converge at the branches. Turning teens away whenever they are disruptive does not justify the mandate

of the library system. The teens at the branches need engagement because they have nowhere else to go to.

In terms of managing after-school activities in the library and sustaining them, two arguments were made by some of the respondents. The teens and parents said that they did not need supervision whenever they were at the library. They argued that they needed the space and the tools, which the library managers and their staff could provide. They needed the library meeting room between the hours of 3:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. and game consoles such as Xbox, Nintendo, Wii, and Play Station; card games; board games such as Monopoly, chess, and checkers; and other games that would be of interest to them. Some of these activities such as card games may not be played inside the library, but having them in the meeting room, away from other patrons, makes sense. On the other hand, managers, library staff, and Friends of the Library who participated in the study argued that teens needed supervision and that leaving them alone in the meeting room without adult supervision tends to create all kinds of problem for the staff. They argued further that teens in these neighborhoods lack the discipline to be by themselves in the meeting room.

Moore (1995) argued that, in order to create public value for the library branches, there ought to be an operational capacity available to the organization. In the case of the branches, they have the internal and external assets available to be mobilized to create sustainable after-school activities. They can mobilize the teens' parents to participate in the activities; they can mobilize members of the Friends of the Library to volunteer and participate in the activities. They can also have staff members participate for 1 hour at a

time. Lastly, they could also have teen volunteers to serve as guides during the activities to keep the teens quiet while engaged in the activities. It is pertinent to note that after-school activities are operationally and administratively feasible because the library administration can support such programs and will be open to enact policies supporting the programs in these branches where such programs are critically needed. The Library Board of Trustees and the Board of Commissioners will also be on board because of the benefits such program or activities provide to at-risk kids in these communities where the public library seems to be the only place where teens can feel safe.

This study may also serve to spur key stakeholders such as the Library Board of Trustees, the Library Foundation, and the County Board of Commissioners to reexamine the current library mandate for serving at-risk teens in the entire library system. Since the 1997 teen initiative, library budgets have gone down, and some of the community branches serving at-risk kids no longer have teen space, and teen collections have gone down as well. Many branches no longer have teen-service librarians as they used to have in the past. Therefore, the internal assets such as staff, knowledge, and tools to plan and implement a sustainable after-school activities program may no longer be available in these branches. The good news is, however, that most of the teen librarians who supervised the 1997 teen initiative are now branch managers, and, as such, they are saddled with the current problem of how to engage teens in their branches. They have the skill set to pursue innovative ideas to meet the needs of the modern-day latchkey kids. Redesigning the 1997 initiative or creating a new after-school policy would go a long way toward solving the current problem and may be the key to spur stakeholders of the

library organization into action and toward committing the necessary funds to support after-school activities for at-risk teens in some of Atlanta's most underserved neighborhoods.

It is well-documented in the literature that public libraries have a centralized management structure, but, as Biggs and Calvert (2013) pointed out, individual libraries will develop their own marketing strategy to attract teens into the library. As Moore (1995) posited, it is the duty of the library manager to achieve the mandated purpose stated in the mission of the library system; however, in carrying out this mission, they also must meet, as efficiently and as effectively as possible, the needs of the community they serve. The themes identified in this study may also help other library systems to develop policies that will contribute toward the successful implementation of sustainable after-school activities for teens flocking to these library system.

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceived role of the public library in the implementation of after-school activities; explore the policy and regulatory framework that guide such implementation; and determine the factors that constrain the implementation of the policy. The study was designed to answer three research questions. The findings amplified the scholarly, peer-reviewed knowledge regarding after-school activities in branches serving teens in generally underserved areas of the Atlanta Fulton Public Library System. I focused on three branch libraries and paid particular attention to factors that tended to constrain the implementation of after-school activities. I also examined how the theory of innovation and public value can provides explanatory or

predictive value to the implementation of the after-school activities in the public library. Previous research on this topic did not take into account the policy and regulatory framework guiding the implementation of after-school activities in the public library. The research findings suggested that the theory of innovation and public value can be used as a model to evaluate after-school activities in the public library and the policy framework guiding such implementation.

I emphasized the role public library managers play in creating public value by ensuring that the teens in the library are engaged when they visit during after-school hours. What is lacking in the various strategies adopted by library managers to engage the teens is a system-wide policy promoting such much-needed activities. Without a policy outlining how these services should be provided, professional librarians may have difficulty fulfilling this purpose. Additionally, formal policies can promote consistency in after-school activities which may, in turn, create public value for the public library system. A policy for the provision of well-planned activities can become highly beneficial to both the institution and to young adults who are on the verge of becoming either social deviants or model citizens and productive members of the workforce.

In evaluating the credibility of the collected data, the interview questions defined specific categories of respondents: teens, parents, library staff, library managers, and Friends of the Library. With their responses emerged certain themes that showed consistency and a certain logic. The set of five interview questions in each category left room for more probing follow-up question, and the responses ushered in new areas of research interest, which should be explored by future researchers. At each step of the

interview process, I as the researcher maintained a careful distance between my personal views and opinions as a professional librarian and those of the participants. I carefully guarded against influencing the respondents with my values and biases. I endeavored to reiterate the responses of the participants through follow-up questions in order to validate their accuracy.

There are similarities in the results and findings of this study that support what has been reported in the literature about after-school activities in the public library. The findings of this study suggested that library managers are constantly trying to engage the teens flocking into their branches despite the absence of a system-wide policy to promote and support after-school activities. The managers have a duty to promote the public value of the branches they manage. The theory of innovation and public value proved beneficial to the understanding of how library managers create public value when engaging teens in the library space. According to the literature, the enrichment activities in the public library ranged from filling out college applications and doing job searches to developing financial literacy and creative media skills. The responses from the branch managers, librarians, and Friends of the Library indicated that the branches were promoting these activities. What may be lacking is a system-wide policy outlining how teen services are to be provided. The absence of a formal policy jeopardizes the manager's ability to engage the teens fully and effectively in the library. A formal policy or regulatory framework can promote consistency at all branches during the critical after-school hours when teens are known to be disruptive, if the literature is to be believed.

It has been almost 20 years since the 1997 teen initiative was mandated for all branches of the Atlanta Fulton Public Library System. There now exists a need to redesign or create anew the mandate to promote consistency at all the branches. Young (2013) posited that public libraries have good youth initiatives, and Losinski (2013) added that libraries of the future need more than good initiatives. The library of the future is a place with community resources where people can connect with the world around them. In essence, the public library is viewed in terms of a global resource center. The new mandate should go beyond just creating a teen space with teen collections and teen activities; it should be such that teens are welcomed to connect with other teens, irrespective of their economic background. The mandate should also erase the digital divide.

Some cities have created new mandates for teens in underserved communities. For example, the city of Baltimore created a teen initiative that is based on four factors: (a) Kids are no longer safe on the streets and playgrounds of Baltimore; (b) kids should not be left alone after school and will, therefore, need quality time and support for school work in the absence of parents; (c) kids from low-income families should be supported with enrichment programs such as arts, sports, and other after-school activities that (d) children from well-to-do families have as a matter of course because these families have the means to provide for their children (Holleman et al., 2010); and further, in order for such mandates to be successful, there have to be leaders who can implement the mandate successfully.

The theory of innovation and public value provides an explanatory understanding of how managers successfully create public value in public-sector organizations. The theory describes how the leader determines the community needs, determines the best approach or strategy to address the needs; and identifies stakeholders and strategic partners that will support the initiative. The leader seeks resources and raises awareness in the stakeholders toward implementation of the initiative. The leader creates a workable service design and delivery mechanisms that can support the initiative when implemented, and the leader develops evaluating mechanisms for program improvement.

In creating public value, as posited by Moore (1995), an organization would have to determine the important "public value" the organization sought to produce; the "sources of legitimacy and support" that could be relied upon to authorize the organization to take action and provide the resources necessary to sustain the effort to create that value; and what "operational capabilities," including new investments and innovations, could the organization rely upon or has to develop to deliver the desired results. I as the researcher am advocating a new after-school initiative or policy for the library system, which currently appears to be without such a policy.

The initiative, when designed, should provide a substantive value to stakeholders and beneficiaries. It should flow from the mission statement of the library system. It must have as its core value the opportunities to increase the value of the organization. The library systems already has leaders in the persons of branch managers who, in the absence of a formal regulatory framework, are consistently trying to engage teens at their respective branches. The library managers are already building support for what they do

and how they do it; they know what is operationally feasible to engage the teens; and they know how to plan and measure and communicate the value of what they are creating in the communities they serve. The creation of a formal policy will promote consistency in after-school activities among the branches, which may, in turn, reduce the disruptive activities or behavioral problems observed in some of the teens in the branches studied.

In explaining the creation of public value, Moore (1995) used the strategic triangle to focus the manager/leader on three key elements of strategy: (a) the authorizing environment, (b) the operational capacity, and (c) public value. In the case of the Atlanta Fulton Public Library System, a system-wide policy would legitimize after-school activities at the branch level and provide the library managers with the authorizing environment to create public value. It is not enough for the branches to provide programs to the hundreds of teens coming to the branches. Others such as the library administration, the Library Board of Trustees, and the County Board of Commissioners will have to share in this effort by providing the financial support for the programs. Once an after-school program is legitimized through the enactment of a system-wide policy, operational capacity can be built with measurable outcomes. Moore's Strategic Triangle is provided in Figure 1.

In conclusion, sustainable after-school programs and activities for public libraries require that policy makers and stakeholders draw from the theory of innovation and public value and adopt a formal policy promoting such programs and activities. Not only will such a policy empower the branch managers to help at-risk kids from underserved communities, who really do need the public library, but it will also make the manager

more innovative in meeting the needs of the teens. The policy should create an authorizing environment for managers to obtain and maintain resources aligned with the funder's goals and mission. It would legitimize the after-school programs and activities at the branch level; it would lead to more participation by teens in after-school activities; it would give parents the assurance that their teens are safe in the library and not on the streets; and, last but not least, it would create the public value that the library systems craves in general and that all 34 branches of the Atlanta Fulton Public Library System desire in particular.

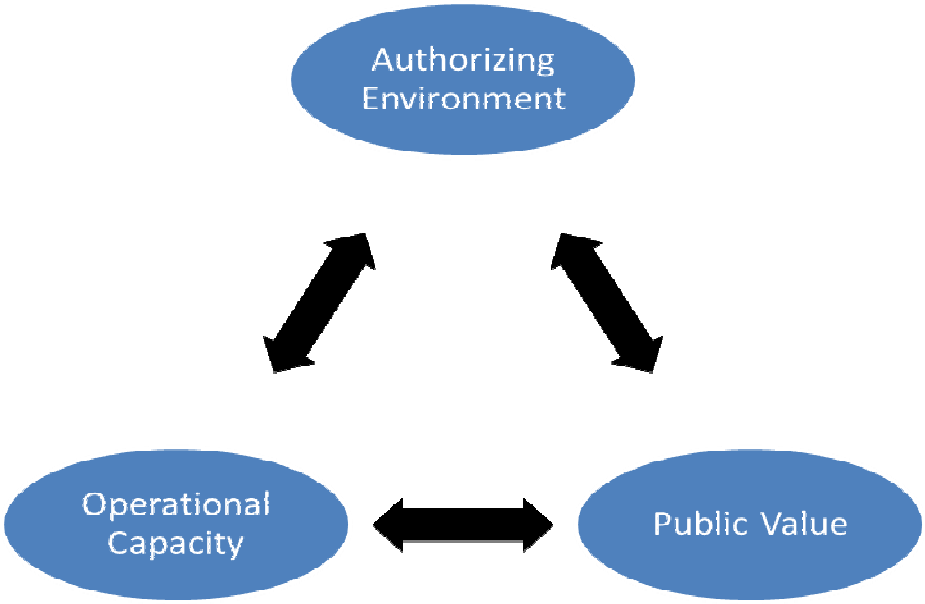

Figure 1. The strategic triangle. Adapted with permission from "*Creating Public Value: Strategic Management in Government*, (1995), by M. H. Moore. Harvard University Press, p. 13.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol for Teens

Date: _____

Time: _____

Location: _____

Interviewer: _____

Interviewee: _____

Release form signed? ____

Notes to interviewee:

Thank you for your participation. I believe your input will be valuable to this research.

Confidentiality of responses is guaranteed.

Approximate length of interview: 30 minutes, five major questions.

Purpose of research:

The purpose of this study is to examine the after-school activities offered by public libraries to teens in low-income communities to get a better understanding of the policies promoting such activities.

The interview will answer the following questions:

i. Why do teens congregate in the library space?

ii. How do the public library engages them, and are there after-school activities in place to engage teens in the public library space?

Interview Questions

1. Are you at the library every school day after school? What are some of the activities that you engage in when you come to the library?

2. How much time do you spend on these activities? What are the benefits of those activities to you?
3. How much help do you get from library staff when engaged in the activities?
4. Can you say that the public library is meeting your recreational and educational needs? Please explain how your needs are being met or not being met?
5. Have any of the library staff asked for your opinion about the kind of after-school activities that teens like you would like implemented in the library?

Appendix B: Interview Protocol for Parents

Date: _____

Time: _____

Location: _____

Interviewer: _____

Interviewee: _____

Release form signed? ____

Notes to interviewee:

Thank you for your participation. I believe your input will be valuable to this research.

Confidentiality of responses is guaranteed.

Approximate length of interview: 30 minutes, five major questions.

Purpose of research:

The purpose of this study is to examine the after-school activities offered by public libraries to teens in low-income communities to get a better understanding of the policies promoting such activities.

The goal of this face-to-face interview is to find out what is the perceived role of the public library in the implementation of after-school activities for teens in the library space.

The interview will seek answers to the following questions:

i. Why do teens come to the public library?

ii. How knowledgeable are the parents about after-school activities in the public library?

iii. How important are the activities to the kids?

Interview Questions

1. Do you have teenage children who go to the public library regularly?
2. How often do your teenage children come to the public library?
3. Does your local library provide after-school activities for your teenage children?
4. Do the after-school activities or extracurricular activities meet the needs of your teenage children?
5. If not, what activities would you like the library to provide?

Appendix C: Interview Protocol for Library Staff

Date: _____

Time: _____

Location: _____

Interviewer: _____

Interviewee: _____

Release form signed? ____

Notes to interviewee:

Thank you for your participation. I believe your input will be valuable to this research.

Confidentiality of responses is guaranteed.

Approximate length of interview: 30 minutes, five major questions.

Purpose of research: The purpose of this study is to examine the after-school activities offered by public libraries to teens in low-income communities to get a better understanding of the policies promoting such activities.

The interview will seek answers to the following questions:

iii. Why do teens congregate in the library space?

iv. How does the public library engage them, and is there an after-school activities policy in place to engage teens in the public library space?

Interview Questions

6. Are you the Youth Services Librarian for the branch? What are some teen services that your branch provides?
7. Are these services grant funded, or are the services provided by volunteers?

8. What are some challenges that you go through in providing these services?
9. Are your efforts rewarded by a large teen participation?
10. Are there policies supporting the activities that you provide to your teen patrons?

Appendix D: Interview Protocol for Library Manager

Date: _____

Time: _____

Location: _____

Interviewer: _____

Interviewee: _____

Release form signed? ____

Notes to interviewee:

Thank you for your participation. I believe your input will be valuable to this research.

Confidentiality of responses is guaranteed.

Approximate length of interview: 30 minutes, five major questions.

Purpose of research: The purpose of this study is to examine the after-school activities offered by public libraries to teens in low-income communities to get a better understanding of the policies promoting such activities.

The interview will seek answers to the following questions:

v. Why do teens congregate in the library space?

vi. How does the public library engage them, and is there an after-school activities policy in place to engage teens in the public library space?

Interview Questions

11. As the manager of the branch library, can you state that there are a lot of teens coming to your branch during the after-school hours between 3 and 6 p.m.?

12. What are the after-school activities that your branch library is currently providing to engage the teens that visit the branch?
13. Are these activities funded by the library or through private funding?
14. It has being argued that activities that are not supported by the administration are not offered during after-school hours? Would that be a correct statement?
15. Are there policies that support the after-school activities offered at this branch? Is the policy written by individual branch managers or is it uniform for all 34 branches of Atlanta Fulton Public Library System?

Appendix E: Interview Protocol for Friends of the Library

Date: _____

Time: _____

Location: _____

Interviewer: _____

Interviewee: _____

Release form signed? ____

Notes to interviewee:

Thank you for your participation. I believe your input will be valuable to this research.

Confidentiality of responses is guaranteed.

Approximate length of interview: 30 minutes, five major questions.

Purpose of research: The purpose of this study is to examine the after-school activities offered by public libraries to teens in low-income communities to get a better understanding of the policies promoting such activities.

The interview will seek answers to the following questions:

vii. Why do teens congregate in the library space?

viii. How does the public library engage the teens in the public library space?

Interview Questions

16. As a member of the Friends of the Library, can you state that your group support the after-school activities of the branch library?

17. What are some activities that your group provides to support the local library?

18. Are these activities funded by your group, or do you seek funding from other sources?
19. Do you think the library is meeting the needs of the teens who come to the library?
20. If the library is not meeting the needs of the teen patrons, in what ways can your group help the library to meet these needs?

Appendix F: Observation Protocol

Observation Point 1: Observe the total environment of the library participants. Take note of the duties of staff members and the general work area.

Observation Point 2: Observe any after-school activities in the public library. Take note of the general rapport between teens and library staff.

Observation Point 3: Observe the presence or absence of other people in the public library such as parents and volunteers. What roles do they play in this environment?