

2018

Phenomenological Dynamic of How ADHD Student Recidivism Affects Alternative Education Teacher Services

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Lisa Charette

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Walden University

2018

Abstract

Phenomenological Dynamic of How ADHD Student Recidivism Affects Alternative

Education Teacher Services

by

Lisa Charette

MEd, Springfield College, 1997

BS, Springfield College, 1984

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

General Psychology

Walden University

August 2018

Abstract

The research problem in this study involved the student cycling, or recidivism, problem associated with specialized education environments. In particular, alternative education students with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder are cycling in and out of alternative and regular education at a concerning frequency. This student recidivism problem affects the services of teachers who are trying to transform them into permanent regular education learners. The purpose of this study was to obtain specific information from these teachers, via the research questions, as it applies to the theoretical foundation of Bandura's self-efficacy construct, and methodological design of the study. The qualitative method of the study used a phenomenological approach and leadership model to obtain the lived experiences, thus, the perceptions and opinions, of the 10 interviewed teachers experiencing the student cycling problem. A continuous iterative process and constant comparative analysis with inductive analyses of significant statements was used to analyze the data. The study results revealed that the complex study problem affects self-efficacy, thus, their belief in the ability to effectively teach these students. Because nearly 4 decades have passed since Bandura introduced the construct of self-efficacy beliefs, it suggests that teachers' efficacy beliefs are related to their instructional practices and various student outcomes. This study helps to fill in the knowledge gaps within specialized education and attempts to bring teacher-voiced positive social change to the teaching profession and its services particularly within alternative education.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated in loving memory of my parents who raised me with constructive values and heartfelt aspirations. I also dedicate this research study to all of those who have encouraged and inspired me to accomplish this educational and professional journey.

Acknowledgments

I thank my Chair, Dr. Rhonda Bohs, for her steadfast support and encouragement so very much appreciated throughout the dissertation process. I also thank my committee member, Dr. Amy Hakim, whose inspiration to develop this qualitative research is very much appreciated. Their unwavering support and guidance helped to accomplish this dissertation goal.

I also thank my friends, family, and all others who kept me motivated and driven throughout the dissertation journey. In particular, my soul mate Mark Charette, my dear friend Andrea Ecchio, my sister Cindy White and brother Bob, Ann Marie and Dan Rowe, Melissa and Artie Solowinski, Mark Rowe and Laura. Thank you so much for being there especially at challenging times.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

The research problem that I focused on in this study involves the student cycling, or recidivism, problem associated with specialized education environments. In Chapter 1, I introduce to the qualitative research method using a phenomenological approach relating the topic background, problem statement, study purpose, research questions, theoretical framework and study nature, definitions, assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, significance, and summary. The background information in this chapter will aid the reader in gaining knowledge of the topic history to better conceptualize this study as a contemporary philosophical research paradigm. In the subsequent chapter sections I will enhance the study specifics to help guide the reader to more completely understand the theoretical framework in application to the research design regarding the problem, purpose, phenomenon, interview questions, and data analysis tactics. Hence, this chapter will lead the reader to the Chapter 2 literature review, the Chapter 3 research methodology, the Chapter 4 results, and the Chapter 5 discussion, recommendations, and conclusions.

Background

The onslaught of problems in general within the U.S. educational system, especially since the education reform movement in the 1960s, has served as a catalyst for the implementation and development of variable programs in school systems. The need for change has been especially prevalent in the public school sector (Alford, Perrault, Zellner, & Ballanger, 2011; Naicker & Mestry, 2011). Because the former educational

system lacked the ability to appropriately handle a population of student with specialized needs, the implementation and development of alternative education commenced.

Alternative education is a specialized academic forum where at-risk students may be provided with an environment that strives to meet their academic differences and behavioral challenges (Maning & Baruth, 1995). Historically, educators have identified a particular group of students and termed them to be an *at-risk* population. The term *at-risk* is defined by Slavin, Madeen, and Karweit (1989) as referring only to academically at-risk learners, based on several factors, thus, at-risk students are unlikely to graduate from high school. The term *at-risk* was derived from the 1983 publication *A Nation at Risk*. This publication noted the need for improvement and change in the American educational system due to a lag in educational progress. The term *at-risk* considered students who were low achievers, school drop-outs, substance abusers, and learners discriminated against because of their gender, culture, and exceptionality (Manning & Baruth, 1995). Furthermore, the term *at-risk* was generally used to identify high school students who were at risk of not graduating high school in the 1990s. The term later expanded to include all students trying to achieve a high school diploma or a graduate equivalency degree (GED).

Alternative education had its roots in the 1930s from the work of Dewey and related ideas of the progression of special education. However, it was not until the 1960s that the term *Alternative Education* became a concept in the American educational process and system. Prior to the 1930s, higher education was primarily considered to be a goal for the upper class children who planned on attending college (Fears, 1997).

During the industrial revolution, the child labor and compulsory educational laws changed the way society thought about education. Basically, as technology advanced, high school graduates became more desirable for employment than unskilled teenage drop-out laborers.

Thus, reader audiences that have an interest in alternative education problems and potential resolutions including innovative factors regarding teachers and student relationships will have a genuine interest in this study. Researchers, who have investigated teachers' performance influences, and how they influence student achievement, are a precipitating inspiration to this study. However, limitations to these studies were that they analyzed only a limited range of situations and resultant behaviors such as absenteeism or suspension (Sherman, Rasmussen, & Baydala, 2008). In addition, the association of other extrinsic factors, and/or constructs, such as teacher self-efficacy, student learning, leadership, organizational aspects, innovation concerns, cognitive dissonance, and so forth, has sparsely been broached when considering causation for these students lack of academic success. Therefore, a gap in the literature exists indicating a need for more in depth analysis pertaining to these aspects of social psychology research.

Many gaps in the literature base exist. The topic that I present is a challenge to develop especially concerning available resources and current literature directly pertaining to the study. For example, indirect literature pertains to classroom specific situations involving alternative education, such as mentoring, but few directly address the student cycling problem and its potential influence on teacher services and/or student

achievement (Booker & Mitchell, 2011; Kelehear & Heid, 2002). Thus, this study is important to those involved in this industry and who face organizational challenges pertaining to progressive advancements in alternative education.

Problem Statement

The field of alternative education is experiencing a high frequency of student cycling (i.e., recidivism) of its student population (Booker & Mitchell, 2011). In particular, kindergarten through grade twelve (K-12) students with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) involved with specialized education, or alternative schools, are returning back to alternative education from regular education transition and placement (Booker & Mitchell, 2011; Manning & Baruth, 1995). The cycling or recidivism problem is disruptive to these students because it delays them from being placed into regular education on a permanent basis (Alford, et al., 2011; Booker & Mitchell, 2011; Slavin, et al., 1989). The problem also negatively affects the services of the teachers whom have limited time, resources, and ability to effectively educate these students (Booker & Mitchell, 2011; Manning & Baruth, 1995). For example, the teachers' classrooms are disrupted by the returning students and their classes increase in size throughout the academic year. The teachers are diligently coping with the disruptions and increased student load. As a result, they appear to be experiencing challenges with self-concept, specifically self-efficacy, and the desire to minimize the negative effects of this problem (Amitay, Popper, & Lipshitz, 2005; Bandura & Locke, 2003).

The teachers perceive the disruptions individually, but also collectively as an educational unit, being affected by the returning students. Perceived disruptions include concerns with organizational processes that may impact the teachers, such as perceptions that school leadership is not adhering to stringent academia protocols, or not following policies that dictate when and how these students may return to alternative education, perceived effectiveness of leadership, and budgetary constraints (Bandura, 1988; Madeen & Karweit, 1989; Manning & Baruth, 1995). Consequently, the disarrayed student cycling problem is attributed to practically anyone or anything, thus, rather than finding effective resolutions, the teachers are exasperated (Kurland, Perez, & HertzLazaearowitz, 2010). Ultimately, the teachers are encumbered with the responsibility to appropriately educate these students within the educational environment (Collie, Shapka, & Perry, 2012; Eyal & Roth, 2011; Frost & Kersten, 2011). The need for more direct information within this field is evident from reviewing the literature especially regarding teachers' perceptions of their educational experience as it pertains to teacher efficacy and the student cycling problem.

Purpose of the Study

The research paradigm of this study was based upon a phenomenological inquiry of its participants to assess the lived experiences of alternative education teachers. My purpose in this study was to determine and better understand alternative education teachers' experiences and perceptions regarding recidivism of their students and its impact upon their educational services in general. The data collected has implications for cumulative viewpoints of the teachers that reflect their concerns for the student cycling

problems and teacher efficacy as a whole. Any additional findings may further implicate district policies, procedures, leadership, and administrative changes. The internalization of change leads to engaging educational purpose which leads to improved teacher performance and the potential of improved student learning.

This dissertation can potentially be used to inform those involved with alternative or specialized education of the perspectives of alternative teachers who are engaged with the daily routine of educating special needs students, such as those with ADHD, and whom cycle in and out of regular and alternative education programs. Through the better understanding of how the research problem affects teacher services, this dissertation may also be used to enhance, develop, or strengthen alternative programs to address the issues of at-risk youths to improve their social, behavioral, and academic success in the future. If these students are cycling in and out of alternative education, they are not on the progressive track of regular education academic achievement. In essence, the recidivism problem is a reflection upon administration and teaching performance whether directly or indirectly is yet to be determined. At a minimum, this dissertation can openly identify perceptions of teacher self-efficacy and how their alternative education experiences impact their ability to successfully instruct.

My focus in this research was to explore and examine teachers' experiences of student cycling, or recidivism, within alternative education. In particular, I want to inquire as to whether/how it has affected their self-efficacy as it pertains to their roles as educational instructors (Lim & Kim, 2014). Due to endemic student cycling that falters and/or fails to permanently place the students in regular education classes, teachers often

experience concerns with their self-regulation, affecting classroom management, and self-concept, specifically self-efficacy, thus teacher efficacy as it pertains to their teaching roles and experiences (Astin, 2009; Bandura & Jourden, 1991). This topic needs further research as finding a method to help teacher efficacy could lead to their improved performance (Bandura, 2004). In particular, interviewed teachers relaying their opinions and perceptions, via qualitative inquiry, will enhance the understanding of their teaching perspectives and experiences. In turn, this study will help to close the research gap of teaching experiences regarding student cycling, or recidivism, within the alternative and/or specialized education field.

Therefore, in consideration of other contributing factors perpetuating student cycling (i.e., recidivism), there is a need for current inquiry into teacher experience to understand the issues involved with the recidivism problem (Bandura & Schunk, 1981; Barker, 2006; Kurland, et al., 2010). Teacher perceptions and experience of leadership and organizational processes, pertaining to the recidivism of K-12 students with ADHD, needs to be investigated because the effect of the processes have not been explored from the perspective of teachers as potential transformational leaders within specialized education organizational forums (Bandura & Jourden, 1991; Catano & Harvey, 2011; Hsaio & Chang, 2011).

My intent in this qualitative study was to learn about teachers' perspectives, and to understand teachers' experiences with factors such as environmental processes (i.e., policies, leadership, and trends) to derive potential resolutions to teacher services (Frost & Kersten, 2011; Hage, 2011; Hulpia, Devas & Van Keer, 2011). I explored the cycling

or recidivism activity of students with ADHD as a contributory factor to teacher service problems. A phenomenological approach is used via interviews of teachers and their perspective roles within specialized education settings (Moustakas, 1994). My goal was to determine whether/how student recidivism effects specialized or alternative education teachers' self-concept, specifically self-efficacy, and ultimately teacher performance. It is unclear at this time exactly what teachers are experiencing regarding the effect upon them of their students' cycling problems, but I explored issues with how their self-concept, in particular, their self-efficacy, thus teacher efficacy, pertained in this study.

It is important to understand from teachers' perspectives how policies and processes influence their services. Therefore, I explored how teachers describe their experiences, for example, with organizational policy as it influences student recidivism and ultimately teacher services within the domain of specialized or alternative education (DuPaul & Eckert, 1998; Eyal & Roth, 2011). Hence, this study will provide teachers' perceptions from a qualitative phenomenological approach, helping to fill the research gap. This study is useful in that it explores teachers' direct viewpoints which will add to gaps in the literature regarding certain alternative education instructional information.

Research Questions

A review of the literature regarding alternative education in general, ADHD, student recidivism, and theories of self-efficacy, specifically teacher efficacy, led to one overarching research question (RQ1) and six sub research questions (SRQ1 through SRQ6) that guided the study:

1. How, if at all, does the student cycling (i.e., recidivism) of your students with ADHD have meaning/relevance/significance to you as a teacher? (RQ1)
2. What meaning/significance/relevance to you as a teacher does the recidivism of students with ADHD ascribe to perceptions, or impact upon the services, of your alternative education instruction? (SRQ1)
3. How do you, as an alternative education teacher, describe your classroom experiences regarding the impact of the cycling of students with ADHD upon your services? (SRQ2)
4. How do you, as an alternative education teacher, describe your lived experiences and/or perspectives regarding effective leadership as it may pertain to the recidivism of students with ADHD? (SRQ3)
5. How do you, as an alternative education teacher, describe your lived experiences and/or perspectives regarding organizational policy as it may pertain to the recidivism of students with ADHD? (SRQ4)
6. How do you, as an alternative education teacher, describe your lived experiences and/or perspectives regarding student learning as it may pertain to the recidivism of students with ADHD? (SRQ5)
7. What issues, if any, in your belief of your capabilities to successfully teach (i.e., self-efficacy) do you as a teacher experience as you experience the recidivism of students with ADHD? (SRQ6)

Theoretical Framework for the Study

In this study I examined social cognitive theory, through its application of self-concept, specifically, self-efficacy via teacher role efficacy, from a qualitative, thus, phenomenological approach as it pertains to teacher services (Creswell, 2014; Moustakas, 1994). Social cognitive theory postulates self-regulation (i.e., of teachers) mechanisms which can be disrupted in situations such as student cycling (i.e., recidivism) problems (Bandura, 1984; Bandura, 1977; Barklay, 1998; Bandura & Jourden, 1991). In turn, this can affect beliefs relating to self and affect their self-concept as teachers (Bandura, 1986; Naicker & Mestry, 2011). Essentially, the recidivism problem of the students affects the teachers' beliefs in their ability to successfully teach (Bandura & Jourden, 1991). Because students return, or cycle back, to alternative education, these teachers seemingly perceive that they have failed as teachers. In addition, effects of self-perception may involve self-concept, specifically self-efficacy, which may affect teachers' educational services influencing student recidivism or vice versa (Beck & Strong, 1982; Rhodewalt & Agustsdottir, 1986; Louis, 2009; Bandura, 1977). The student recidivism problem was explored as a key factor to this phenomenon potentially affecting teacher services within specialized and/or alternative education environments. As discussed prior, the cycling of these students disrupts the classrooms as they are continuously placed into established classrooms throughout the academic year. Therefore, for example, a teacher starting an academic year with twenty students may end up with thirty before the term ends. Realistically, it is difficult for teachers to adequately manage their classroom sizes and be expected to bring these students up to educational adequacy half-way through a term or

whenever returned to alternative education. This realization can affect teachers' self-concept, thus teacher role efficacy, as well as complicate leadership paradigms within a school system (Bandura, 1986; Frost & Kersten, 2011; Lim & Kim, 2014).

The construct of teacher efficacy has a theoretical basis in Bandura's (1977) concept of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1988; Lim & Kim, 2014). It has been defined as teachers' beliefs in their ability to influence how well students learn even among those students considered to be unmotivated or difficult (Guskey & Passaro, 1994; Lim & Kim, 2014). *Teacher self-efficacy* has also been defined as the conviction that an instructor can successfully bring about the desired outcomes in their students such as learning goals (Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Tejeda-Delgado, 2009). These teacher attributes can be challenging to conceptualize especially regarding students with ADHD considerations (Shaughnessy & Waggoner, 2015). Hence, in Chapter 2, I will provide a more detailed explanation of self-efficacy and teacher role efficacy.

I have discussed the generalized information regarding students with ADHD to provide background to the study. The student population with ADHD seems the most prevalent as to having student cycling problems. Furthermore, the aim of the student information is to help the reader better conceptualize the student population with ADHD being considered as potentially affecting teacher services the most at this point in time. The data gathered from their alternative education teacher interviews will help to discern the level of the effect of these students upon teacher services.

Nature of the Study

The nature of the study is a qualitative approach with a focus on phenomenology. Phenomenological research is consistent with understanding and making meaning of the lived experiences of the participants (Moustakas, 1994). In phenomenology, the primary source of knowledge is perception (Moustakas, 1994). In this study, the participants are specialized or alternative education teachers experiencing a cycling or recidivism problem of their students with ADHD. To investigate these teacher experiences as a population, purposive or theoretical selection was explored as a mechanism to select participants to be interviewed for qualitative research purposes (Creswell, 2014; Rudestam & Newton, 2015). In other words, the selection of participants is deliberate and purposeful as they were likely to contribute to a deeper understanding of the posed research questions (Rudestam & Newton, 2015). The appropriate number of participants for qualitative study is open to suggestion, for example, Moustakas (1994) did not provide guidelines for the quantity of participants for phenomenological research. Conversely, Creswell (2014) suggested interviews with up to 10 people whereas Patton (2011) recommended selecting sample size based upon the purpose and rationale of the study. Furthermore, Patton (2002) suggested that there are no definitive rules for participant size when considering qualitative inquiry. I proposed 10 participants for this purposeful sample. I will discuss a more detailed explanation of the sampling method in Chapter 3.

Definition of Terms

The construct of teacher efficacy has been operationally defined, within the theoretical framework of the study noted previously, as teachers' beliefs in their ability to influence how well students learn even among those considered to be unmotivated or difficult and/or identified as students with ADHD. The definition of *Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)* via the *American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5)* defines *ADHD* as a persistent pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity that interferes with functioning or development (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). This pattern is identified by six or more (or five or more depending upon age) symptoms of inattention and/or six or more (or five or more depending upon age) symptoms of hyperactivity-impulsivity for at least 6 months inconsistent with developmental level (APA, 2013). The lists of specific symptoms in each inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity category are identified within age groups in the *DSM-5* (APA, 2013).

The definition of *alternative education* is based upon the concept of special education environments and/or educational forums for students with specialized needs (Frost & Kersten, 2011). I am further defining alternative education via the identification of various types of alternative education schools further described in Chapter 2 via the literature review. In addition, the definition of *cycling/recidivism* is based upon the concept of completing the rounds of regular events or time period for this to occur (Booker & Mitchell, 2011). Therefore, the cycling/recidivism problem of alternative education students explored in this study was based upon their time in alternative

education, referred back into regular education by their alternative teachers, and their subsequent return to alternative education creating a cycling/recidivism phenomenon (Lim & Kim, 2014).

Assumptions

I assumed that the teachers participated as volunteers and did not produce false information regarding their perspectives, opinions, and perceptions based upon a personal desire to alter the study. I observed participants in their alternative school environment and formulated the study ideas and assumptions (Creswell, 2003). I assumed the teachers experienced problems within their teaching environment which prompted the research questions to gain further clarity of the phenomenon being explored in the study. The research questions as designed were to inspire honest answers based upon observations. Any bias was controlled and described more in Chapter 3 via the study methodology specifics.

Scope and Delimitations

The study included 10 teachers originally from the school I was involved within another department area that indirectly interacted but directly observed the teachers and their classrooms. Hence, the study is delimited to interviews based upon the questions derived from field observations (Creswell, 2014). A particular consideration to the study was bracketing observations and personal experiences that make it poignant to determine in what manner observations, understandings, and own experiences might be handled in the research (Creswell, 2014). In addition, in consideration of boundaries, they include time, place, and event constraints (Creswell, 2014). In consideration of the threats to

validity, I made efforts to ensure that findings are transferable between the research because of shared characteristics utilizing thick description and member/interview checking to ensure validity of the data (Creswell, 2014; Erlandson, et al., 1993). Furthermore, as a method of quality control, prolonged time and/or engagement in the field, and participant debriefing was implemented. I enlisted a peer/participant reviewer to engage qualitative data methods via member checking, also termed interview checking, to support credibility (Creswell, 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Furthermore, the consent form was initially used to screen participants in or out of the study. Once the participants were screened in and consented via the same form, I provided an interview guide a few days before the time of the interview to help clarify any potential confusion with the research questions orally presented to the participants.

Limitations

The limitations of the study are those common to qualitative research. Foremost, the participants were predominantly unknown which may or may not have influenced their responses. Hence, the teachers comfort levels with expressing their views could be promulgated upon various thoughts such as a desire to please or avoid the inquiry. In anticipation of this limitation, the researcher presented an interview guide potentially aiding preparation while respecting their time and availability. In addition, the consent form included a few sample research questions and a voluntary demographic questionnaire both presented at the same time. Once interviewing was completed, I sent a thank you note for participating. Due to the small number of participants, there is a

possibility that these teachers may not have been representative of the larger global alternative education teaching population, thus, limiting generalization of findings.

Significance

Knowledge Generation

This research study is unique because it addressed an evolving area of education, known as alternative education, and its problem of student cycling, or recidivism, from a qualitative research posture. The research problem that I addressed in this study was intended to gain knowledge, thus, a better understanding of teacher perceptions of the effects of student recidivism within alternative education environments within the northeast section of the country. The results of this study provide much needed information and further understanding of teachers' experiences of the organizational processes and leadership concerns involved with recidivism as it pertains to students with ADHD in particular. In other words, this study helps to understand or determine the effects student recidivism has upon teacher services. Hence, providing anticipated pathways through information obtained by study data will help to improve those services by better understanding teacher perspectives as the root source of the educational providers' viewpoints. As a whole, this study information aids in filling a gap in the literature involving the field of alternative education in general, but data from its actual teachers in particular is a unique contribution to the profession.

Professional Application

Education has been a source for positive social change by examining inequities in society in general and striving to further identify them to better understand situations in

order to make a difference for those needing specialized support (Cemaloglu, 2011). These inequities often include at risk students whom may be identified by various means such as exceptionality, culture, or gender to list a few examples (Manning & Baruth, 1995). Because alternative education provides a mechanism by which this can be accomplished, by providing an educational environment that is focused on specialized education, supporting alternative means to educate those with special needs is a key component to bringing more youth into the domain of regular education so they may academically succeed. Although the support of students is an integral part of the educational process, the understanding of teachers and their concerns, which can affect their services, was the primary focus of this study.

Social Change

Consequently, the results from this study may perpetuate the influence of improved educational processes, policies, and practices within alternative and/or specialized education environments by providing the viewpoints of its teachers (Bandura, 1986; Bandura, 1984; Booker & Mitchell, 2011). The study has potential to be a source of information and guidance for those who may be seeking similar knowledge in regular education. Essentially, this study expresses the perceptions, opinions, and perspectives of the teachers who are a direct source of information regarding the intricacies of the student recidivism problem. The teachers of alternative education are an untapped resource of direct information as they are best suited to express the recidivism problem because they lived the experience on a daily basis (Creswell, 2013). Through the in depth understanding of teachers' perceptions and lived experiences, this study contributes

knowledge to organizational and educational processes. The study also helps to bring about awareness within the field of alternative education thus aspects of positive social change within the profession of specialized education.

Summary

In Chapter 1, I provided a comprehensive summarization to the study parameters including background, problem statement, study purpose, research questions, theoretical framework, study nature, definitions, assumptions, delimitations, limitations, and study significance. Through these chapter sections, the reader is able to gain better insight into the depth and breadth of the study as a research problem process. This study process involves methodological investigation, data collection and analysis, results, and study conclusions. In Chapter 2, I will detail the literature review needed for the study due to minimal directly applicable current peer reviewed articles on the subject matter and no current directly applicable dissertations. Therefore, the gap in the literature base is profound especially pertaining to Bandura's (1977) theoretical construct of self-efficacy as it pertains to teacher efficacy. This theoretical construct is postulated to be reflective of the impact upon their teaching services regarding cycling students with ADHD within the fields of alternative and regular education thus identified as a recidivism problem.

The research problem of central focus in this study involves the student cycling, or recidivism, problem associated with specialized education environments. In particular, alternative education students with ADHD are cycling in and out of alternative and regular education at a concerning frequency. This student recidivism problem is affecting the services of teachers who are trying to transform them into permanent regular

education learners. My purpose in this study was to obtain specific information from these teachers, via the research questions, as it applies to the theoretical foundation of Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy construct, and methodological design of the study. I used a phenomenological method and leadership model to obtain the lived experiences, thus, the perceptions, opinions, and perspectives of the interviewed alternative education teachers experiencing the student cycling problem (Moustakas, 1994). I postulated that the study problem affects their self-efficacy, thus, their belief in the ability to effectively teach these students. The research questions begin with general inquiry into the recidivism problem then continue with more specificity of how the problem may affect them, such as leadership and organizational aspects, and conclude with direct inquiry into the effect upon their teacher efficacy. Since nearly 4 decades have passed since Bandura (1977) first introduced the construct of self-efficacy beliefs, which have increased in educational research, primarily in studies of academic motivation and self-regulation, it suggests that teachers' efficacy beliefs are related to their instructional practices and various student outcomes. Hence, the gap in the literature base for current theoretical information, as it affects teacher services, is profound. This study will help to fill in the knowledge gaps within special education and attempts to bring positive social change to the teaching profession and its services particularly within alternative education environments. In Chapter 2, I discuss the literature review which will guide the reader to a more comprehensive understanding of the research study especially theoretical concepts, detailed background information, and pertinent study constructs.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

In Chapter 2, I dedicate the discussion to the literature review reflective of the study content topics of exploration, history, background, basis for the research questions, and theoretical application in general. Literature reviews are used to describe a knowledge base both past and current, describe the quality of the available research and its findings, and justify the need for and significance of new research (Fink, 2010). These reviews are done when rigorous observational studies are scarce or unavailable in qualitative research (Fink, 2010). The field of alternative education is experiencing a high frequency of student cycling (ie., recidivism) of its student population (Booker & Mitchell, 2011). In particular, K-12 students with ADHD involved with specialized education, or alternative schools, are returning back to alternative education from regular education transition and placement (Booker & Mitchell, 2011; Manning & Baruth, 1995). The cycling or recidivism problem is disruptive to these students because it delays them from being placed into regular education on a permanent basis (Alford, et al., 2011; Booker & Mitchell, 2011; Slavin et al., 1989). The problem also negatively affects the services of the teachers whom have limited time, resources, and ability to effectively educate these students (Booker & Mitchell, 2011; Manning & Baruth, 1995). For example, the teachers' classrooms are disrupted by the returning students and their classes increase in size throughout the academic year. The teachers are diligently coping with the disruptions and increased student load. As a result, they appear to be experiencing challenges with self-concept, specifically self-efficacy, and the desire to

minimize the negative effects of this problem (Amitay, et al., 2005; Bandura & Locke, 2003). The current literature is sparse with regards to directly applicable research in a Type 4 hybrid alternative school. Hence, as the reader reviews these chapter sections, a more comprehensive understanding of the research thus cycling problem will evolve.

My purpose in this study was to explore the lived experiences of alternative education teachers regarding the impact students with ADHD, cycling in and out of alternative education (i.e., recidivism), has upon teacher services. The knowledge gain of the study is an increased understanding of the phenomenon associated with alternative education as it pertains to students with ADHD, and the cycling or recidivism problem associated with these students, as experienced by their teacher population. The research question responses obtained from the teacher interviews contribute to the literature gap regarding the research problem, purpose, and limited resources for leadership paradigms within specialized education. The direct current literature that established relevance of the problem is sparse. Therefore, the synopsis in this review of the literature established relevance of the research problem as best as possible even with its sparseness of current relevant literature.

The chapter sections include an introduction, theoretical foundation with sub-sections identifying self-efficacy and teacher efficacy, as well as excerpts on the history and background of ADHD. In later chapter sections, I note an overview of alternative education, teacher leadership identified as a transformational leadership model with descriptions of successes and failures. Additional chapter sections include alternative education typology and definitions, organizational learning and development, and

students with ADHD in the classroom setting including behavioral interventions. Finally, teacher efficacy in role relationships follows, with a descriptive section on the different types of alternative schools, with a further section on educational processes that tie into leadership, youth development, and chapter conclusion.

Literature Search Strategy

The strategy that I used for this literature review involved multiple databases with the primary ones being PsycINFO, PsycARTICLES, PsycTHERAPY, Education Research Complete, Education Source, ERIC, Ebrary, and EBSCO ebooks. The database servers and hosts included ProQuest, Google Scholar, and EBSCO via Walden University. The key search terms used were derivatives of *alternative and/or special education, services, instruction, classrooms, teachers, theories, self-efficacy, self-concept, leaders, administration, organizations, autonomy, transformational leadership, innovation, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), academics, GED, goals, problems, student cycling, recidivism, behavior concerns, behavior problems, counseling, therapy, interventions, and so forth.*

The literature search strategy for this study has been an ongoing extensive process that began with a background search of a theoretical construct derived from Bandura (1977) as it relates to social learning theory and self-efficacy pertaining to teachers. Through the years, self-efficacy beliefs have also received increased awareness in educational research primarily in studies of self-regulation and academic motivation (Pintrich & Schunk, 1995). The findings suggest that the efficacy beliefs of teachers are associated with various student outcomes as it pertains to their instructional practices

(Ashton & Webb, 1986). Hence, self-efficacy's broad application across various domains has attributed to its popularity in contemporary research (Graham & Weiner, 1996). The final search strategy encompassed current (2006-2016) peer-reviewed articles using the aforementioned databases with various combinations of search terms with a focus on *self-efficacy AND teachers AND alternative / special education AND student cycling / recidivism*. Because there is little directly applicable current research on this study topic, and no directly applicable dissertations were found, for purposes of germane scholarship, what minimal current literature was found was cited in this chapter for its usefulness and noted in the study reference section.

Theoretical Foundation

The theoretical posture of this study focused on self-efficacy as it relates to teacher efficacy as a theoretical instructional model. The theoretical construct of teacher efficacy was reviewed in its application to Bandura's (1977) theory of self-efficacy derived from his social learning theory constructs as it pertains to teacher services. Furthermore, definitions, theories, theoretical constructs, concepts, and rationales were discussed to provide background information as it pertains to the contribution of this study, to fill a gap in the literature base and add current knowledge, as the study is compiled, examined, and concluded for its usefulness. Hence, delineation of any assumptions is limited due to the lack of directly comparable studies at this time. The theoretical background of self-efficacy will be reviewed in its five main components of affective processes, cognitive processes, motivation, perceived self-efficacy, and self-regulation (Bandura & Jourden, 1991; Bandura & Schunk, 1981). Therefore, this theory

relates to the present study because teacher self-efficacy is a significant factor in how these teachers view their ability to effectively teach students with ADHD.

Theoretical Background of Self-efficacy

The term 'self-efficacy' is derived from the belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action needed or required to manage prospective situations (Bandura, 1994). In essence, self-efficacy influences the effort we put forth, how long we persist (such as when we confront obstacles), and the choices we make. It differs from self-concept which is more of a cognitive appraisal, via self-evaluative judgment, such as self-esteem or self-worth integrated across various dimensions that individuals attribute to themselves (Bandura, 2001). In addition, self-concept is not implicitly context-sensitive nor is it task-specific but is more of a cognitive self-appraisal independent of a goal (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). Conversely, self-efficacy is a context specific assessment of competence to perform a specific task or range of tasks in a given domain (Pajares, 1996). In essence, it is an individual's judgment of their ability and capabilities to perform certain actions within a specific situation or domain. Thus, self-efficacy is context-sensitive and can be task-specific within a specific domain (Schunk & Pajares, 2002). It can be utilized as a judgement of confidence used in reference to some type of goal such as teaching ability and work-related performance (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998; Bandura & Schunk, 1981). Hence, I focused on teacher self-efficacy in this study as the theoretical basis for its instructional model invoking teacher ability, leadership, and performance within the educational domain of alternative education for its qualitative inquiry platform (Bandura 1994; Clarke & Braun, 2015). The research questions open

with general inquiry investigating the recidivism phenomenon then progress to specific areas of inquiry culminating to poignant inquiry into perceptions of teacher self-efficacy. Furthermore, the research questions challenge the participants' opinions and perspectives of their alternative education teaching experiences regarding student cycling including leadership and organizational aspects. The final research question pinpoints and incites the participants' direct response of their teacher efficacy viewpoints that may not have been indirectly revealed via the previous research questions.

Teacher Efficacy

The task of creating learning environments that are conducive to the development of cognitive skills rests heavily on the talents and self-efficacy of instructors. Those teachers who have a greater sense about their teaching capabilities can enhance their students' cognitive development especially with positive motivation (Al Ramiah & Hewstone, 2013). Conversely, teachers who have a low sense of instructional efficacy favor a custodial approach that may rely on negative factors to get students more engaged (Benner & Graham, 2011). In essence, students' beliefs in their capabilities to master academics can affect their aspirations, their level of interest in activities, and their academic accomplishments (Benner & Graham, 2011). When teachers are presented with a population of students who have learning deficits these factors can greatly affect and influence teachers' perceptions of their teaching capabilities. For example, populations of diversified students facing such educational challenges are those students with ADHD. The need for specialized education environments has arisen because of the

specific educational needs of these students which are identified in this study as alternative education learning environments.

These alternative education learning environments impact the cognitive and affective processes as well as motivation, self-regulation, and perceived self-efficacy of its teachers. The affective processes regulating emotional states and elicitation of emotional reactions intermingle with the cognitive processes that invoke the thinking processes involved in the acquisition, organization, and use of information (Bandura, 1995). In addition, the activation to action or level of motivation is reflected in choice of courses of action and in the persistence and intensity of effort. In turn, this impacts instruction thus self-efficacy such as teachers beliefs about their capabilities to produce effects (Clarke & Braun, 2015). I postulated that the participants will identify as leadership models, or transformational leaders, effecting their teacher efficacy perceptions. Finally, self-regulation yields exercise of influence regarding self-motivation, thought processes, emotional states, and patterns of behavior (Cole, 2009). These concepts are helpful to understanding the dynamics involved within alternative education environments (Clark & Braun, 2015). In particular, the population of students with ADHD and their impact upon teacher efficacy, thus, their impact upon teacher services, are positive contributing factors of this study to fill in the gaps in the literature base.

History of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Traditionally, educators have used the term *at-risk* to identify and describe a particular group of students. The term *at-risk* is defined by Slavin, et al., (1989) as referring only to academically at-risk learners, based on several factors, thus, at-risk students are unlikely to graduate from high school. Historically, the term *at-risk* is believed to have been derived from the 1983 publication *A Nation at Risk*. This publication noted the lag in the American educational system and the serious need for improvement. The term *at-risk* enveloped all students who were low achievers, school drop-outs, substance abusers, and learners discriminated against because of their gender, culture, and exceptionality (Manning & Baruth, 1995). Approximately a decade later, in the mid-1990s, the term *at-risk* was generally used to identify high school students who were at risk of not graduating high school. The term later broadened to include all students in the course of trying to achieve a high school diploma or a GED.

Since the 1960s, the educational reform movement has served as a catalyst for the development and implementation of needed changes in the public school system. Alternative education in the 1990s had its roots in the work of Dewey and his ideas of progression, regression, and/or the negative thinking that exacerbates unconstructive educational endeavors. Factors that promote youth resilience to such negativity have been shown to be effective when there is present in the life of a youth at least a single caring adult who positively impacts their growth and development (Garmezy, 1993). When a child's growth and development is impacted, the potential for reaching their full

potential is greatly increased and leads to encouragement to achieve those goals with better stability, and a more positive outlook and attitude.

Communities promote healthy youth development when adults provide appropriate modeling and healthy behaviors to encourage strength and responsibility amongst its advocacy programs (Konopka Institute, 2000). Families promote healthy youth development when they provide support, have positive family communication, spend time together, provide positive role models, and are involved in their schools. Schools promote healthy youth development when they expect commitment from their students, provide structure with clear rules and consequences, and have a caring educational environment that anticipates youth success.

Youth leadership is part of the youth development process and creates the support that accompanies successful goals. There are many factors that contribute to the success of youth leadership and their development (Macdonald, Burke, & Stewart, 2009). These may include self-assessment of weaknesses and strengths while setting vocational goals through the development of self-esteem and self-confidence. For example, ADHD can be perceived as a weakness, but the focus on strengthening positives, and minimizing negatives, can greatly impact youth development. Youth motivation and the ability to carry out plans, including engaging in support networks, is essential to participation in community life in order to effect positive change. In an alternative school environment, the ability to direct or guide others on a course of action while influencing the opinions or behaviors of others while serving as a constructive role model is paramount to the success of youth leadership (Wehmeyer, Agran, & Hughes, 1998).

Overview of ADHD

A brief overview of ADHD as follows helps to better understand the dynamics involved with educating students afflicted with this disorder. The first individual to pinpoint, describe, and ultimately diagnose ADHD was Dr. Heinrich Hoffman. This occurred in 1845 while he was creating books about psychiatry and medicine. Apparently, this process began when he could not find suitable reading material for his three-year-old son so he created illustrated poetry books for him. Dr. Hoffman created a character known as 'fidgety Philip' and titled a book about him. This character as described would be a classic example of a child diagnosed today with ADHD (Rougeaux, 2011).

In 1902, the actual characteristics of ADHD were studied in the medical community by Sir George F. Still. Through his work, he created and published a series of lectures for the Royal College of Physicians in London, England. These lectures examined a group of children who were remarkably impulsive and who possessed other significant problem behaviors. Originally, these symptoms were believed to be caused by a genetic dysfunction rather than poor child-rearing by primary care givers (Rougeaux, 2011).

Today, there are thousands of academic studies and medical papers written about the disorder. These findings have developed many opinions as to the causes, nature, progression, and treatment of ADHD. The pathways that ADHD children, as well as children with learning disabilities (LD), may follow can be very complex, negative, and repetitious. The cyclical recidivism problem of youth with ADHD can be a complicated

paradigm depending upon where they are at in the development of the disorder's signs, symptoms, and ramifications. Children as students with ADHD and/or Learning Disabilities (LD) are significantly less likely to graduate from high school. They are also more likely to be placed in behavioral correction such as juvenile detention facilities. Traditional remediation models for academic failure focused on alternative educational settings. This process typically happens once remediation begins and incarceration ends. As students, they have average to above average intelligence and have the potential to succeed in college even if information processing dysfunction limits their ability to process that information. They are also accident prone as visual processing skills may be limited, thus math ability can be reduced, as numbers get misaligned during equation solving. Often, the student's self-esteem diminishes and a pattern of decreased academics, variable peer support, social withdrawal, increased substance abuse, and emotional problems develop (Ross Kidder, 2002).

Overview of Alternative Education

Much of the research involving alternative education focuses on at-risk youth, drop-out prevention, and special education informative literature (Lange & Sletten, 2002). Only recently have there been investigations and examinations of alternative schools on a broad-based spectrum. Additionally, only a few have focused on their academic programs in particular. None of them have focused on organizational leadership directly involving their teachers and, more specifically, their self-efficacy. Some investigators have attempted to identify the key attributes of affective alternative education programs (Aron, 2006). However, owing to a lack of documentation, caution

has been suggested when reviewing the various characteristics that comprise an interpreted successful program. The suggested cause of the incompleteness of the available documentation is that there are no specific components that verify which attributes for promising programs serves which populations of alternative school students (Lange & Sletten, 2002).

A viewpoint that has been identified, which represents a successful alternative education program, consists of a clear focus on academic learning that is combined with creative, stimulating, and engaging teacher instruction (Aron, 2006). The cultural dynamics of invoking academic readiness combined with high expectations of graduation success play a factor in the ability to promote student engagement. Therefore, the concept of applied learning is an important element of the components of academic learning. It has been interpreted that applied learning must be applicable to life outside of the school and to the work opportunities that arise from its instruction. This is also a critical component for the integration of future learning and desire to inspire higher academic achievement for the students the alternative education program serves (Aron, 2006).

The curricula in place may address the education and career opportunities that interest the student population it focuses upon. Typically, the curricula are rigorous and associated with individual state standards and accountability systems. The learning goals are known by the students, staff, and parents involved. Students have personalized learning plans and set their learning goals on the basis of their individual educational needs with the assistance of staff and parents. Therefore, some students have learning

plans commonly known as individualized education plans (IEPs), and sometimes behavior intervention plans (BIPs), once functional behavioral assessments (FBAs) are completed. The BIPs are commonly compiled by the students' counselors once derived through feedback from the students' teachers during the FBA process. These practices are common developments for the overall education plan when students may require special education services and/or appropriate behavioral interventions. Not every student may require or need this type of educational planning, but if so, an alternative education forum and thus academic format can provide the necessary structure to accomplish these types of learning needs and behavioral goals. There are opportunities for students to catch-up and even accelerate their knowledge and skills once caught up (Davis, Brutseart-Durant, & Lee, 2002). These types of processes have the potential to help accentuate future academic achievements that may reduce, resolve, and even prevent classroom conflicts that often occur in alternative education environments (Rosenthal, 2016).

Fortunately, many alternative education programs are small, ideally with a low student/teacher ratio, thus providing smaller classes that inspire and encourage caring relationships between youths and adults. This can be especially helpful in the areas of specialized needs that may arise with students having ADHD, or attention deficit disorder (ADD), commonly known as ADHD/ADD. An alternative school environment can be extremely helpful to students with specialized needs in certain areas of academic challenges such as this disorder in particular may promulgate. Therefore, appropriately admitting students to a program is an area that requires rigorous organizational

mechanisms in order to regimentally accomplish student success especially in alternative education environments. Given the diversity of alternative education programs, as well as the characteristics and attributes of the students (both positive and negative), the successfulness of the program may be indirectly derived from meeting the student's educational, personal, and social needs. Therefore, it is critical to direct students to the appropriate alternative education programs that will best serve and fit their particular needs on a broad-spectrum basis (Aron, 2006).

What limited research that has been done on the overall academic effects and outcomes of alternative education has shown mixed and sometimes conflicting results. What has been hypothesized is that if little or no academic change has occurred, especially with standardized test scores over the course of a full academic year, alternative education may be deemed helpful (Lange & Sletten, 2002). Some of the findings suggest that the accumulation of these unprogressive test results is due to the negative impact when a student is returned to the regular education setting from an alternative school intervention. This phenomenon seems to be attributable to the recidivism problem that arises with alternative education students especially those afflicted with ADHD.

Teachers as Transformational Leaders

As previously discussed, ADHD is a common disorder known to be associated with academic and behavioral difficulties. There are several treatment options and methods for children with this disorder which may include behavioral therapy, medication, and academic interventions (Frost & Kersten, 2011). Although, there have

been investigations and research studies into the efficacy of these approaches, there is much less understood of how the teachers of these students influence these methods or are affected by them. The beliefs and attitudes about ADHD and the students it impacts, including their treatment options, can influence student behaviors and academic outcomes (Sherman, et al., 2008). The transformation of students with ADHD into productive students, focused on academic achievement, back into a regular education environment, is a challenging accomplishment for teachers especially in alternative education. The opinions and influences of teachers can have significant impacts on various outcome measures especially behavioral intervention plans. Teachers who demonstrate patience, knowledge of intervention techniques, and the ability to collaborate with interdisciplinary teams, with a positive attitude towards children with special needs, can have a significant impact on those students' successes (Sherman et al., 2008). However, once those students have been transformed into academically successful and behaviorally appropriate students they are returned to regular education from the alternative school. The problem occurs when those students fail and are returned back to the alternative school and repeat this pattern and cycle again and again. The term for this cyclical pattern is called recidivism (Booker & Mitchell, 2011). The literature is silent with regards for why this phenomenon occurs and will be examined in this study. The gap in the literature identifying and explaining this phenomenon and its impact on teacher services that may reflect potential causes and potential cures is a significant contribution to this educational field for its anticipated growth and development.

Transformational leadership inspires motivation, innovation, and creativity. It is different from transactional leadership that focuses upon task orientation and completion. These leadership models can be classified as active or passive and identified as effective or ineffective (Robbins & Judge, 2010). Teachers as effective transformational leaders must take an active stance and serve as competent role models in the growth and development of students with ADHD. This concept is imperative in their progress to becoming behaviorally appropriate and successful academic achievers (Macdonald, Burke, & Stewart, 2009). Therefore, teachers as key opinion leaders (KOLs) are instrumental to the success of these students especially in disadvantaged communities and low-income urban alternative schools. Mixed-effect regression models indicate that KOLs, in collaboration with mental health providers, report higher rates of successful behavioral interventions and academic accomplishments (Atkins, Frazier, Leathers, & Graczyk, 2008). The efficacy of these accomplishments can be examined with students with ADHD and their complex academic and challenging behavioral needs in order to help make them successful students. One of the most concerning issues is their recidivism problem, returning back to alternative education again and again, that seems to be an unresolved current dilemma.

The diffusion theory postulates that information is disseminated through a social network by the point of view of key opinion leaders (Atkins et al., 2008). Key opinion leader (KOL) identification is a primary component to the successful study of the recidivism problem of students with ADHD through their perceptions, experiences, and contributions towards its resolve. Teachers as KOLs are a phenomenological attribute to

the success of such study models especially in an alternative school environment. The reason for these attributes is the concentrated focus on students with ADHD experiencing the recidivism problem and the teachers who are directly involved with its negative effects. These effects can contribute to a student's reduced self-esteem, academic stagnancy, and behavioral exacerbations if left unresolved and continuing (Sherman et al., 2008). Thus, the impact upon teacher efficacy is a focal aspect of this study as it pertains to their services. The research questions investigate these concerns and will answer how teachers perceive their situation as a whole.

The complications surrounding the emotional variances that are associated with teaching students with ADHD can affect the leadership roles that these teachers serve. Teachers' sense of self-efficacy appears to be an important motivational factor for teaching practices that develop teacher learning with this disorder (Thoonen, Slegers, Oort, Peetsma, & Geij, 2011). The impact of transformational leadership practices is an important element to understanding its roles within school organizations. A structural model was tested within a school system that implored 502 teacher surveys and a covariance matrix and chi square test that took into account non-independence of observations. The results indicated that teacher engagement in professional learning activities, particularly experimenting and reflection, are a keen indicator of positive teacher practices in general (Thoonen, et al., 2011). Thus, the study concluded in order for teachers to be effective leaders that develop teacher learning, and improve teaching practices, a combination of transformational leadership behaviors is necessary. Further research is important to examine the significant effects of transformational leadership

paradigms on teacher motivations, school organizational conditions, and thus professional learning in schools. Finally, further longitudinal studies were encouraged for school improvement and models for positive social change (Thoonen, et al., 2011). This net effect will further enhance schools' capacities in order to increase their potential growth that leads to subsequent enhancements of teaching practices (Frost & Kersten, 2011). With perseverance, this will potentially help aid teachers in their leadership quests to effectively and efficiently educate students with ADHD concerns. This qualitative study brings a unique opportunity to gain in depth knowledge of teachers' opinions and perspectives regarding their self-efficacy (Lim & Kim, 2014).

The evolving potentials of transformational leadership as teachers further develop their leadership roles within the schools they serve can be seen in other collaborative models such as within communities. For example, the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model in education is becoming importantly valuable in developing countries to aid in the strengthening of their public schools especially in areas where the government is slow (Rajbhandari, 2011). Basically, the PPP model helps to initiate developmental programs that encourage teachers to progress with their desire and thus motivation to teach. The positive aspect of this motivation is that it invites both private and community advances to participate in these collaborations that help bring out of the area students into the school. In this sense, the PPP model can be viewed as transformational leadership or visionary leadership which produces commitment, optimism, a good environment, teacher motivation, and eventually student success (Rajbhandari, 2011). The positive results that this type of transformational leadership model gains through striving for

challenges is ultimately with the strength of the private-public educational partnerships it develops with time. Therefore, the evolving role of transformational leadership especially in alternative education is an exciting progression of this type of leadership model.

As the role of teacher as leader progresses, different methodologies for accomplishing professionalism within the field further evolves its growth potential. One important aspect of this progress is providing effective feedback through teacher evaluations by the school's leader. There seems to be few studies that focus on specific leadership variables that contribute to effective teacher evaluations including their self-efficacy. The aspects of instructional and transformational leadership for the application and purpose of a feedback utility seems to be an important component to study. The results of regression and path analysis suggest that leadership directly influences the feedback utility that directly influences teacher learning (Tuytens & Devos, 2011). Therefore, the role of teacher in leadership can be more readily investigated and explored. This phenomenon may be further developed with the exploration of teacher evaluations as a utility to assist their learning thus improve their leadership skills as well as their self-efficacy. The role of teacher as leader then becomes a give and take scenario as leadership development progresses and professionalism evolves. However, as with any utility driven system, conflicts may arise that need appropriate interventions to curtail differences effectively. In turn, this will help to promote organizational efficiency within an educational setting (Hsiao & Chang, 2011). The balance of evolving those utilities that promote teacher leadership while maintaining organizational efficiency can seem like

a daunting task. The complexity of intertwining conflict resolution into the transformational leadership equation can seem like an insurmountable achievement. Hence, understanding teacher efficacy is a reasonable theoretical foundation for this qualitative study which will help to close the literature gaps as well as improve teaching services.

The conflicts that may arise with teacher leadership utilities can stem from the criticisms that may develop from student evaluations of teachers' performances. Providing effective feedback through methods such as teacher evaluations can become an involved and complex task and process for a school leader. There seems to be few empirical studies that focus strictly on specific leadership variables that contribute to effective and productive teacher evaluations (Tuytens & Devos, 2011). The importance of transformational and instructional leadership for the development and utilization of the feedback utility is an evolving concept for the effective learning process of teachers' growth and development as sound professionals. The results of regression and path analysis shows that leadership in and of itself influences the feedback utility and thus indirectly influences teachers' professional skill development and learning (Tuytens & Devos, 2011). Therefore, to appropriately get through the criticisms that may occur with teacher evaluations, the enhancement of school leadership as a model influences teacher evaluations and highlights its usefulness for their professional goals and achievements. In addition, teacher evaluations help parents of students with ADHD better understand as well as communicate problems they perceive in an educational environment. This type of innovative communication permits the flow of thought to help facilitate and effectively

resolve leadership problems in schools that promote organizational leadership such as may be found in alternative education. Therefore, gaining knowledge in regard to teacher efficacy will play a significant role in helping organizational innovation progress.

Because of the complex nature of students with ADHD, innovative organizations tend to develop conscious efforts to create an environment that permits flexibility and freedom of movement in their directional causes (Hecker & Birla, 2008). Leaders, such as teachers, need to play an active role in developing the model that promotes that process. Therefore, it may be said that transformational leadership is directly aligned with organizational innovation as both factors affect organizational learning (Hsaio & Chang, 2011). This triangular perspective assists the process of educating students with ADHD so that the developmental flow of leadership skills involves all aspects of the organizational process whose ultimate achievement is the preservation and evolvement of ADHD student learning. Moreover, the behaviors of school leaders can pose an impact on student achievement (Seashore Louis, Dretzke, & Wahistrom, 2010). The connection between systems leadership and instructional practices is an imperative point to promulgating the consistent behaviors of students with ADHD in an alternative school environment (Macdonald, Burke, & Stewart, 2009). Furthermore, maintaining the momentum of progressive student achievement, through the influence of their teachers, is yet another contextual variable in alternative education (Hulpia, Devos, & Van Keer, 2011). The nuances and intrinsic problems that impact student achievement will be examined in this study, as the recidivism problem of students with ADHD is explored and described, from the perspectives of their teachers (Pajares & Schunk, 2001). The

effects upon teacher services are expressed via teacher interviews as they react to the leadership style of the organization they teach within.

Success and Failure of Teachers as Transformational Leaders

One of the greatest challenges that teacher's in alternative education face is their ability to be successful as transformational leaders particularly of students with ADHD. In other words, these teachers are models for positive social change. Because the nature of alternative education is so vastly diversified, and at times chaotic and unpredictable, the ability for teachers to transform students with ADHD into regular education learners can at times be beyond challenging for them (Naicker & Mestry, 2011). Furthermore, the complexities involved with alternative education and its diversified leadership roles have led to the emergence of distributive forms of leadership in these schools.

Basically, the traditional hierarchy of leadership has been replaced with more modern collective leadership practices including process unification and relationship building (Naicker & Mestry, 2011). The formulation and development of positive relationships amongst the student population (including those with ADHD), and the school's staff, especially with its alternative education teachers, is paramount to their ability to be successful as transformational leaders (Kurt, Duyar, & Calik, 2011).

The role of teachers as transformational leaders, especially in alternative education, has become more diversified and ultimately complicated within the past few decades. This is due in part to the complex nature of teachers establishing significant relationships with their students in conjunction with their administrative responsibilities. These responsibilities may include the building of action teams that develop into

leadership teams and the potential results of the positive student relationships that flow from them (Rourke & Boone, 2009). These relationship factors and teaming, as well as the teacher's ability to positively impact their students with ADHD educational needs, can greatly effect these students' achievement as regular education learners. When and if there is a failure to identify any significant relationships between student achievement, and teachers as transformational leaders, the legitimacy of the teacher's assumed value may be put into question and scrutiny of that value may be examined (Kurt et al., 2011). This perspective is helpful when assessing students with ADHD academic success in relevance to their teachers' success or failures to adequately transform them into regular education learners.

The evaluation of teachers as effective transformational leaders has many diverse and causal impacts to alternative students' academic success rates. If a teacher fails to be a successful transformational leader it impacts the academic achievement of alternative students as well as compounds the recidivism problem of students with ADHD. If an ADHD student fails to be transformed into a regular education learner there may be a combination of reasons why the transformation has not happened. One reason may be the value of the teachers involved and the efficacy of that student involvement by those teachers. For example, a suggested method by which teacher values may be examined is through the causal effects of teacher self-efficacy as a construct to student achievement (Kurt et al., 2011). To further highlight this example, the collective efficacy in schools can be demonstrated in a cluster-random sample of 813 primary education special education teachers in the 1930s. However, it was not until the 1960s that the term

Alternative Education became a concept in the American educational process and system. Prior to the 1930s, education was thought to be for the upper class children who planned on attending college (Fears, 1997). The child labor and compulsory educational laws during the industrial revolution changed the way society thought about education. A review of the literature will address typology of alternative education, implications of special education and the effects of their processes, including generic definition and history of ADHD. In addition, the literature review will address teachers as transformational leaders of students with ADHD while examining teacher efficacy, learning, and their successes and failures to transform those students into regular education learners. Finally, the literature review will address the effects of organizational learning and the implications of organizational innovation upon students in alternative education. In particular, how these concepts impact teacher leadership interventions in the classroom setting with pertinent study conclusions as potential resolves to the recidivism problem. Ultimately, further understanding of teacher efficacy will be derived through examination and review of the literature in this chapter.

Typology and Definition of Alternative Education

There are many aspects to education that involve methodologies to adjust to the nuances that its regimented disciplines can bring to the populations it serves. While academic programs are typically formulated and revolve around the regular education regime, the influx of alternative education is gaining momentum in present day society. Because alternative schools are a complicated environment toward which one might apply orderly administrative processes, the examination of their purpose, dichotomy, and goals

is an important phenomenon to observe and define. The average alternative school cannot be easily identified because they are very unique to the specific populations that they seek to serve with relevance to the educational needs of its students. Therefore, for example, specific types of alternative schools can be categorized by their teacher populations and three data gathering instruments. These instruments included a combination of the *Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire*, the *Collective Teacher Efficacy Scale* and the *Teacher's Sense of Efficacy Scale*. The basis of examination was through structural equation modeling with path analysis that was utilized to test the research models and hypotheses. The findings of the study showed that collective efficacy and transformational leadership jointly shapes teachers' self-efficacy (Kurt et al., 2011). This comparative analysis lends credence to the subjectivity that may arise in alternative education environments. It further defines the complexity that teachers face in these schools that affects the success and failure rates of transforming students with ADHD into regular education learners.

In addition to self-efficacy, as a forefront to transformational leadership roles in alternative education, including teaching skills for motivating academic success in their students, other factors may be involved in their demise. For example, the Education Reform Act (ERA) of 1988 developed by the British Educational Leadership Management & Administration Society (BELMAS) noted three key components to the failure of teachers to accomplish their educational duties. These components comprised teachers' roles in policy making, curriculum and assessment, and the extension of local autonomy for schools (Strain, 2009). In the realm of alternative education, the need for

local autonomy within each school district cannot be emphasized enough. Because alternative education is so complex, yet unique, to each and every school involved in its educational processes, the ability for its teachers to be directly involved in its curriculum creations and policy making cannot be stressed enough. Furthermore, because the recidivism problem of students with ADHD is so high, no administrative entity can be better qualified to yield direct information as to what will help to ensure academic success of these students than the alternative teachers who instruct them daily (Strain, 2009). Because the daily routines involved with alternative education can be as standard as regular education or as chaotic as alternative education often becomes, the preparedness of its teachers to handle the diverse situations that may arise from learners with ADHD is paramount to their success rates.

The success and failure rates of alternative education teachers is a continuing dilemma for the administrative entities who employ their skills in transforming students with ADHD back into regular education learners and keeping them there. Unfortunately, most public school systems are consistently failing early adolescence students particularly of the middle school grade level (Astin, 2009). Presently, endemic among middle school students is their academic failure compounded by drug abuse, unwanted pregnancy, depression, suicide, homicide, and a host of other problems. Another significant contributing factor is the developmentally mismatched environment of middle schools where teachers have far too many students to nurture them appropriately. Such caring relationships with adults are critical to the healthy emotional and academic development of early adolescence (Astin, 2009). In the alternative education

environment, these student teacher ratios are supposed to be more proportionately matched but unfortunately that is not always the case. In fact, it oddly seems to be more the normative, to be disproportionate in student-teacher ratios, rather than the rule, to be classroom size balanced especially in today's economy. These statistics significantly contribute to the failure rates of teachers being unable to transform their students successfully into regular education learners. Furthermore, smaller schools tend to outperform larger schools on numerous indicators. The benefits of smaller schools in engendering personalized relationships have been well noted and documented. More recent efforts to convert larger schools into Small Learning Communities (SLCs) are somewhat less understood and still at experimental levels (Astin, 2009). Perhaps the surge of interest in these areas has stemmed from surveys that support the premise that educators who are more cognizant towards adolescent misbehaviors, and the need for their connections with adults, are also more likely to report having close personal bonds with their students (Astin, 2009). This aspect of student relationships and the influence and effect they may have on their academic achievement can be a precursor to how effectively alternative education teachers successfully transform their students into regular education learners (Strain, 2009). Therefore, defining what teacher roles best suite an instructor and in what specific teaching environment they best serve, helps to make the student teacher match more direct and effective. This directness helps the positive impact and influences that teachers, particularly as transformational leaders of students with ADHD, need in order to improve their success rates in permanently transforming these students into regular education learners. Needless to say, the

increase in permanency of the transformation of students with ADHD into regular education learners drastically reduces the recidivism rate of these students as a collective body of alternative education learners. Therefore, teacher efficacy becomes a direct factor in their successes and failures as educators for accomplishing the transformational goals of these students, their families, and the administrations that guides them.

The rate of student academic success versus its failures is a variable that may be driven by teachers' concepts, theories, and motivations of the subject matter in general, and of the manner in which they teach. In that sense, alternative education teachers become the forefront conduit of their own failure to effectively transform students into regular education learners. The promising side to this theory is the concept of deeper bonds with their students yields more positive results with their abilities to become effective transformational leaders as teachers. A mixed-methods study, held at a large urban middle school in Los Angeles County, examined factors that led its teachers to become more personally connected to their students (Astin, 2009). This occurred when their school converted to a sixth grade small learning community (SLC) and the study evaluated the processes that helped teachers in their abilities to guide more effective student achievement (Astin, 2009). Additionally, with more than 90% of the teachers participating in the study, it was determined that reduced teacher-to-student ratios is predictive of positive changes in personalization behavior. The study also noted that teams of teachers working as collaborative instructional units increased personalization with students (Astin, 2009). The cooperative instructional strategies positively influenced the student to teacher personalization while increasing morale. The higher

teacher morale the greater reflected efforts among teachers for increased personalization behaviors in a conversion SLC (Astin, 2009). This conclusion greatly supports the premise that sound and cohesive interpersonal relationships with adolescents improves not only teacher morale and teacher efficacy (tentatively boosting transformational leadership skills) but also academic success with challenged learners such as alternative education students with ADHD.

Organizational Learning and Development in Leadership

The relationship building of teachers with students can be as important as it is with the administration that maintains the schools' infrastructure, policies, and procedures as well as supports its daily routine even if variable. These types of organizations develop mechanisms for their growth and development strategies for their learning and evolution of their leadership models. Part of the biggest problem they face is the achievement of their specialized learners, such as students with ADHD, as may be found in alternative schools. Because students with ADHD are unique unto themselves as learners, a large challenge is turning them into regular education learners without having them return to alternative education as learners. This cycling of students with ADHD, when the regular education curriculum and processes taught to them does not stick with them, is identified as a recidivism problem.

The leadership model that is at the forefront of every school system that encompasses alternative education students is at the directives of the district superintendent's administration. These administrations may develop learning methods, identified as organizational learning mechanisms (OLMs), as structural components, and

organizational learning values (OLVs), as cultural components (Amitay, et al., 2005). As an example, a correlational study of 44 healthcare clinics found that organizational leaders determine the overall effectiveness of organizational learning. Additionally, the goal of reducing ADHD student recidivism necessitates OLMs and OLVs. These models may assist the process of closing the achievement gap that many ADHD students face along with their recidivism problem. The leadership of a superintendent may be viewed as a catalyst for organizational learning with implications for closing the achievement gap (Alford, et al., 2011). The reduction of recidivism seems to indicate the need for organizational learning and development catalyzed by its school leadership.

Furthermore, the act of policy making needs to consistently involve alternative education schools so that their curriculum may keep pace with the up to date demands of its associative schools especially within districts (Rosenthal, 2016). It may be that a broader approach is needed to incorporate evidence informed policy making to aide student achievement in exceptional schools (Barker, 2006). This will potentially increase the ability to better understand student successes through teacher leadership models which inspires teacher efficacy (Clarke & Brown, 2015).

The processes that are involved with alternative education students academic successes include the training modalities utilized by their teachers as organizational learners as well as leaders. The service training of alternative education teachers is paramount to their learning and development as leaders in the transformational leadership process. As an example, the school system that recommends service training and reflection as mechanisms to prepare pre-service teachers to become teacher leaders is on

the forefront to developing proactive alternative education models. The reduction of recidivism necessitates active teacher leadership involved in the development of skills, knowledge, and training programs to better educate students with ADHD (Bond, 2011). However, active teacher leadership programs and models may not be sufficient for determining their ultimate effectiveness on the groups they teach. Thus, developing processes that create mechanisms that determine the quality of the effectiveness of teaching are important to any educational environment. This is especially so within alternative education environments that are highly challenged with the daily routines of teaching practices that potentially work and effectively impact their students. The development of teacher competency instruments is a key factor to quantifying their success at effectively teaching their students with ADHD. This in turn will promulgate their self-efficacy concerns to aspire positive social change to improve their services.

The evaluation of teacher competency can be an essential part of the process of determining where there may be problems with student's academic successfulness in a generic sense to start. The measurement of teacher competency scales is a mechanism by which a somewhat critical analysis of student teaching may take place (Catano & Harvey, 2011). The competency scales can be interpolated and equated to leadership styles of school principals as well. This variability of the scales situational usefulness can be an enormous help when situations arise that are beyond the typical daily routines of alternative education. Be it that alternative education is so dynamic to begin with anything outside its norms can fairly be ascertained as exceptional and presumably problematic in nature. A prime example of this situation is bullying that often occurs in alternative

education environments which often exacerbates into health concerns (Catano & Harvey, 2011). When organizational health concerns arise, a clearly defined mechanism to monitor how they are handled and the progressiveness of the resolve cannot be emphasized enough especially from a leadership standpoint. All levels of administration typically get involved with situations such as bullying which is often a precursor to recidivism problems, as students can become cyclically victimized by it, especially in alternative education environments (Cemaloglu, 2011). The negative consequences of bullying can become detrimental to students' academic achievement. The reduction of recidivism requires appropriate leadership to help reduce bullying that commonly occurs in student populations with ADHD. The motivational factors that drive the bullying problem need to be analyzed on all levels of administration including teaching so as to pinpoint its origin and hopefully eliminate any potential situations of exacerbations and repetitive behaviors. Teacher apathy in this area is something that cannot be tolerated as students victimized by bullying need full support in all areas of learning especially at the initial level which teachers occupy daily in the classroom.

The classroom setting is an ideal location to begin initial investigations into students with ADHD academic problems. In order to effectively evaluate problematic academic areas, appropriate communication methodologies from teachers need to be examined for its usefulness in aiding their students' academic needs (DuPaul & Eckert, 1998). The relationship between educational leadership and teacher motivation is an important factor to discern when analyzing problematic student academic areas. The full-range leadership model and self-determination theory are an effective mechanism to

examine transformational leadership predictions of autonomous teacher motivation and transactional leadership predictions of control motivation (Eyal & Roth, 2011). For example, a qualitative study of 122 teachers evaluated with assessment questionnaires regarding transformational leadership as it pertains to teacher motivation and burnout can be a useful tool in areas of concern regarding teaching dynamics. This type of study can also be useful when teacher parent conflicts occur (Eyal & Roth, 2011).

When a universal situation arises, for example, and the parent teacher situation becomes unmanageable, a method of organized learning may need to be explored for the potential of its ubiquitous effectiveness throughout the teaching staff especially if such a problem persists and expands. The situation of burnout is known to be very high in alternative education due to the demands and expectations of the teaching role as a whole. The investigation into organizational learning needs to be emphasized when situations of teacher burnout occur in order to maintain the teaching staffs' interest, motivation, and effectiveness at their leadership roles. Seemingly, these situations can significantly impact their self-efficacy as well. The importance of organizational learning cannot be stressed enough particularly in alternative education due to its complex interpersonal nature and constant academic challenges. For example, a quantitative empirical study of 330 teachers explored how organizational learning mediates the relationship of organizational innovation and transformational leadership. The goal of reducing recidivism in alternative education requires organizational innovation and transformational leadership which organizational learning in essence promotes (Hsiao & Chang, 2011). Another example of the relevance of organizational

learning in transformational leadership is demonstrated in a quantitative study of 1,522 teachers at 46 schools utilizing hierarchical linear modeling techniques. The findings in this study showed a 9% variance in teachers' organizational commitment directly related to supportive leadership, cooperation within the teaching team, and participative decision making (Hulpia, Devos, & Van Keer, 2011). The goal of the reduction of recidivism, especially in alternative education settings, requires cooperative team efforts. These team efforts promote organizational learning and encourage organizational innovation while being supportive of teacher self-efficacy goals such as improved performance (Rosenthal, 2016).

Organizational Innovation in Transformational Leadership

The development of organizational innovation through the promotion and expansion of organizational learning, particularly in the alternative education field, is a crucial aspect to educating students with ADHD. The fulfillment of transformational leadership goals is a challenging educational aspect especially for the teachers who embark on the crusade to transform students with ADHD into regular education learners. In alternative education, as previously discussed here, organizational learning mediates the relationship of transformational leadership and organizational innovation (Hsiao & Chang, 2011). In general, organizational innovation refers to the creation or adoption of an idea or behavior that is new to the organization. In essence, innovation is the implementation of internally generated ideas, whether they pertain to a process, policy, program, service, and so forth that were new to the organization at the time of adoption (Greenhaigh, Robert, Bate, Macfarlane, & Kyriakidou, 2005). Therefore, organizational

innovation is the development and implementation of new ideas by people who engage in transactions with others, within an institutional order, such as an alternative school setting provides. Although, in the realm of alternative education, that type of institutional order can be quite diverse and challenging to say the least.

In general, alternative education yields a complex organizational structure with its vast personnel, policies, procedures, and daily functioning of the school as a whole. This is due, in part, to its unique identity amongst other regular education schools involved within the same district. Typically, administration is considered rather independent amongst other schools within the same district, which is ironic as alternative schools are so unique even amongst themselves. Their independence is due in part to the atypical manner in which they operate as compared to the regimented structure of regular education. This uniqueness can be both a burden and a blessing in regards to autonomy. It is a burden in that they do not receive a lot of direct support and guidance as they are often left to operate on their own record. In that sense, it is a blessing for the regimented type of leadership wanting to operate independently with a lot of lateral 'wobble room' to design and construct their own internal policies without having to get upper administration's approval on everything they do. Therefore, the leadership in alternative schools is typically considered independent and often awarded the autonomy to handle situations rather independently from the normative of regular education. Therefore, this suggests a lot of responsibility and endurance on an alternative school's direct administration which is admirable. This type of administrative autonomy tends to invite and encourage organizational innovation and organizational change quite fluently. These

ideas can be further developed as the aspects and theories of organizational change that reflect the macro-institutional arrangements of an educational system that serves its student population such as regular education does within a community (Hage, 1999). This would be especially effective once alternative education students with ADHD were transformed into regular education learners. The support of students with ADHD in the mainstream of regular education would help to maintain the internal stability they need and acquired while in alternative education to permit them to be transformed into regular education learners. The flow of organizational innovation would then continue in the realm of regular education so as to consistently serve the newly induced ADHD student population as the organizational change now within its organizational structure (Macdonald, Burke, & Stewart, 2009).

Organizational innovation tends to create a three pocket approach to its inception and idea development. Since alternative education works with such a high risk population of students to begin with, this naturally enlists a high risk strategy to its operations. In addition, a complex division of its labor force in an organic structure tends to promote consistency with its internal findings that provokes organizational innovation (Macdonald, et al., 2009). Of these three ideas, the complexity of purpose, grade levels, age groups, ethnicity, educational challenges, goals, and so forth, further complicates educational dynamics. Furthermore, criteria for the selection of alternative programs can be driven by types of students served, geographic locations, credentials offered, and components of non-academic programs and services (Ruzzi & Kramer, 2006).

More specifically, the populations served by an alternative school may have limitations to their entrance permissibility. For example, age range, English Language Learners (ELLs) or English as second language learners, pregnant and parenting teens, education status, and other characteristics, such as incarcerated youth, are factors to consider for program acceptance. Because of these types of designated factors, the age of the participant entering such a program is a consideration as well as the average grade level they completed prior to entrance. Furthermore, the average math and reading levels at entry (that may be measured by assessment tools used by the program) are additional considerations for acceptance. Therefore, the wait list for entry into these programs can be substantial. The percentages of fully credentialed teachers are also factors to consider when reviewing alternative school programs and levels of educational expertise. Thus, the subjects covered by the alternative school's curriculum and the teaching methods utilized, as well as the individual class sizes, are considerations when reviewing specific alternative schools programs. Administratively, the instructional backgrounds of the school's principal, assistant principal, and/or director are all factors to be taken into consideration. The professional development of the school's staff and the programs that encompass their progress, especially on academic content for the teachers, are also important components to consider (Ruzzi & Kraemer, 2006).

Currently, there is not a substantial amount of research designated to the specific description or assessment of alternative school programs including its teachers. In particular, with direct relevance to this situation, is the labor division which is most important because it stimulates the problem solving and creativity capacities of the

organization while encouraging organizational learning (Hage, 1999). In an alternative education environment, this is very important due to the complexity of the educational environment and the need for vision within its complex organizational structure.

Therefore, this study provides current research into the complex subject area which will help to fill in the gaps in the literature base.

Leaders, who can demonstrate a visionary approach to their leadership style, such as transformational ones, coach and develop employees who are proactive and adaptive to change (Thompson, 2010). This approach is very helpful and useful when promoting organizational innovation through the development of school leaders' ability to project their visionary beliefs through their leadership skills onto the staff and students that they lead. For example, in a quantitative regression analysis of 1,474 teachers at 104 elementary schools, principals who were at the forefront of organizational innovation and organizational learning demonstrated the ability to mediate, via their organizational leadership style, which predicted school organizational vision (Kurland, et al., 2010). The complexity in which organizational innovation is developed, especially in alternative education, is intertwined with a leader's roles, such as a principal's vision and creativity, in how they project that onto their transformational leaders thus teachers. Therefore, teacher leadership can be seen as a type of distributive leadership involved with organizational innovation, teacher learning, and organizational change. In practice, it means that teachers are given and thus have the opportunity to lead as well as take responsibility for the most important areas of change that may be needed in the school (Naicker & Mestry, 2011). These distinctive teacher attributes are what makes them evolve into some of the most

dynamic transformational leaders. Another characteristic of transformational leaders is self-sacrifice, which in turn projects self-efficacy, and creates higher effectiveness and higher productivity within the groups and teams they lead (Macdonald, et al., 2009; Rosenthal, 2016). These leadership qualities encourage organizational innovation with their teacher leadership role progressiveness, as it emerges within their learning, especially with effectively accelerating their students with ADHD concerns.

Transformational leaders tend to focus on three behaviors to produce change within an organizational group or team. These behaviors are commonly identified as charisma, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration. Leaders who demonstrate vision encourage organizational innovation as they stimulate the teams, such as teachers, that they may lead (Macdonald et al., 2009). In alternative education, this can assist teacher leaders who are so deeply and daily challenged to effectively educate thus transform their students into regular education learners and keep them at that level consistently and permanently. The ultimate result of these positive influences is the goal of recidivism to be substantially reduced. Additionally, in alternative education, the collaboration of principal, vice principals, teachers, counselors, therapists, and other supportive staff, found in alternative education, greatly influences the flow of organizational innovation (Rage, 1999). The innovation can be further enhanced with parental input and other outside resources such as community based support groups and other formalized intervention teams. Parents of children in variable alternative education programs, for example, who need such support, are faced with decisions that involve

choices that may not be ideal for their child's education and overall well-being (Patton, 2011). Because of the diversity and complexity that is found in alternative education environments, the accumulation of various support groups, programs, and internal as well as external resources, lends balance to the openness required to effectively manage both their individual student needs and collaborative community goals.

The accumulation of these highly differentiated yet specifically skilled organizational groups, including parental influences, is what makes alternative education so vastly challenging and open to organizational innovation. With the progressive development of its potential and cumulative value in alternative education settings, the usefulness of organizational innovation seems almost limitless. This is positive incentive for the advancement of students with ADHD from an alternative school setting and then academically transformed into permanent regular education learners within a modest amount of time. The ability for teachers as transformational leaders to accomplish these goals begins in the classroom setting and expands throughout the alternative school environment on a progressive daily basis. This realistic approach lends value and conformity to the diverse leadership skills and abilities found in alternative education. Since each student afflicted with ADHD is as unique as alternative education is to regular education, the diversity in which each teacher accomplishes their students' potential transformation into regular education learners is a difficult yet unique process to say the least. The behavioral correction processes that go along with the educational ones are now being more regimentally identified in the literature thus the chronology gap of their progress has been somewhat lessened (Al Ramiah & Hewstone, 2013).

Children With ADHD in the Classroom Setting

A vast amount of literature has examined the behavior of and treatment for children with ADHD. A focus of addressing the needs of children who suffer from this disorder can be examined, as an example, through the study of the experiences and thus opinions of the teachers who educate them. The teachers' opinions about various intervention strategies implemented in the classroom setting can affect the students' behavioral and academic success rates (Sherman et al., 2008). Presently, one of the most commonly accepted and effective mechanisms to treat children with this disorder are with pharmacological methods in conjunction with behavioral intervention treatments including specialized educational programs (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2001). The effectiveness of such behavioral programs, especially in the classroom setting, including those with parental training methods, outside the classroom setting, has been rudimentarily examined.

Such treatment of students with ADHD is often identified with structured parameters and strict guidelines in the classroom setting (DuPaul & Eckert, 1998). Such guidelines assist teachers with successful management practices for classrooms especially those with students with ADHD as their predominant participants (Barklay, 1998). The direct examination of the classroom behavior of students with ADHD in conjunction with behavioral management techniques helps to identify those students in need of medication or possibly medication re-evaluation. For example, if the medication is not proving to be of help in controlling those students impulsive, and/or hyperactive, and/or unacceptable behaviors with students with ADHD. The practice of monitoring student behaviors in the

classroom helps teachers to relay important observations to other school staff, such as counselors, therapists, and ultimately parents, to better holistically approach a resolve of inappropriate behaviors whether in school or at home (AAP, 2001).

Despite the years of study, the actual effectiveness of ADHD treatment programs is a controversial subject in many professional associations and therapeutic oriented organizations. Some professionals have concluded that behavior therapy is effective while others believe it is ineffective especially on its own (Pelham et al., 1998). For example, a large clinical trial sponsored by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) undertook a study entitled *The Multi-model Treatment Study of Children with ADHD*. Its purpose was to evaluate the effectiveness of ADHD behavioral treatments, stimulant medication, and its combination in the educational environment. The results of that study concluded that behavioral treatment was considerably less effective than medication (MTA Cooperative Group, 1999).

As a forefront intervention, medication is found to be favored over behavior modification treatment plans (AAP, 2001). A potential causal factor for these findings is the common use of non-intensive levels of behavioral interventions in these clinical trials. The involvements of education programs, such as alternative education, are a missing link to those clinical trials. Alternative education is a potential resource link and thus solution to the development and examination of direct behavioral intervention in conjunction with medication therapy. This phenomenon may be closely examined through alternative education's teacher's experiences and perspectives, such as a diffusion theory study model, utilizing the classroom diversity of both latency (medicated) and

behaviorally challenged students. Diffusion theory postulates that ADHD interventions, such as latency, behavioral, and inclusion classrooms, are often initiated by small groups of teachers as KOLs who may then serve as influential models for others within their social networks (Atkins et al., 2008). These influential models then potentially develop into larger organized associations to help further develop the growing needs of the disadvantaged student populations they serve.

ADHD Behavioral Interventions

The literature is neither prevalent nor conclusive of alternative behavioral treatment methods for students with ADHD. One such program method was described in an educational setting and termed *The Summer Treatment Program (STP)*. Since the program was outlined, it seems to have grown in significance throughout the years. All participants were enrolled in 2001 and all study methods were conducted at the State University of New York located in Buffalo New York (Pelham et al., 2001). The STP included diversified but empirically based educational and behavioral components that are commonly implemented in classroom thus educational settings (Pelham & Hoza, 1996). There were 258 boys enrolled in this particular student study that was conducted over an eight-week STP program evaluation. The study existed for six treatment weeks with weeks three and five having removed all treatment mechanisms. A point system, also known as a token economy reward system, was continuously in place for the students throughout the school day and entire length of the study. The staff provided behavioral feedback continually while the students gained points for positive reinforcements such as privileges or to go on field trips. In addition, students earned

points for appropriate behaviors such as following rules, helping where and when needed, and deducted points for inappropriate behaviors such as annoying, aggravating, interrupting or teasing. Students also received time-outs for serious negative behaviors such as aggression, abusiveness, property destruction, and non-compliance.

Furthermore, when the STP behavior modification plan was removed, during weeks three and five, within approximately two days of removal, the students' misbehaviors returned. The effectiveness of the STP treatment program and its design for students with ADHD invokes examination and scrutiny because of its questionable overall effectiveness (Pelham, et al., 2001). This level of behavior modification, absent any medicinal intervention, did not yield a method that sustained itself for a prolonged period of time. The balance of combining medicine with behavioral corrections becomes more and more evident for progressive interventions for long-term student success. However, the long-term permanent effect of combining these therapeutic methods remains inconclusive to date even though it seems to be on a positive thus progressive corrective track.

Teacher Efficacy and Role Relationships

Much of the research involving alternative education focuses on at-risk youth, drop-out prevention, and special education informative literature (Lange & Sletten, 2002). Only recently have there been investigations and examinations of alternative schools on a broad-based spectrum. Only a few of these have focused on their academic programs in particular. Seemingly, none of them have focused on teacher efficacy directly. Some investigators have attempted to identify the key attributes of affective

alternative education programs (Aron, 2006). However, owing to a lack of documentation, caution has been suggested when reviewing the various characteristics that comprise an interpreted successful program. The suggested cause of the incompleteness of the available documentation is that there are no specific components that verify which attributes for promising programs serves which populations of alternative school students (Lange & Sletten, 2002).

A viewpoint that has been identified, which represents a successful alternative education program, consists of a clear focus on academic learning that is combined with creative, stimulating, and engaging teacher instruction (Aron, 2006). The cultural dynamics of invoking academic readiness combined with high expectations of graduation success play a factor in the ability to promote student engagement. Therefore, the concept of applied learning is an important element of the components of academic learning. It has been interpreted that applied learning must be applicable to life outside of the school and to the work opportunities that arise from its instruction. This is also a critical component for the integration of future learning and desire to inspire higher academic achievement for the students the alternative education program serves (Aron, 2006).

The curricula in place may address the education and career opportunities that interest the student population it focuses upon. Typically, the curricula are rigorous and associated with each state's standards and accountability systems. The learning goals are known by the students, staff, and parents involved. Students have personalized learning plans and set their learning goals on the basis of their individual educational

needs with the assistance of staff and parents. Therefore, some students have learning plans commonly known as individualized education plans (IEPs), and sometimes behavior intervention plans (BIPs), once functional behavioral assessments (FBAs) are completed. The BIPs are commonly compiled by the students' counselors once derived through feedback from the student's teachers during the FBA process. These practices are common developments for the overall education plan when students may require special education services and/or appropriate behavioral interventions. Not every student may require or need this type of educational planning, but if so, an alternative education forum and thus academic format can provide the necessary structure to accomplish these types of learning needs and behavioral goals. There are opportunities for students to catch-up and even accelerate their knowledge and skills once caught up (Davis, Brutseart-Durant, & Lee, 2002).

Fortunately, many alternative education programs are small, with a low student/teacher ratio, thus providing smaller classes that inspire and encourage caring relationships between youths and adults. This can be especially helpful in the areas of specialized needs that may arise with students having ADHD, or ADD, commonly known as ADHD/ADD. An alternative school environment can be extremely helpful to students with specialized needs in certain areas of academic challenges such as this disorder in particular may promulgate. Therefore, admitting the correct students to a program is an area that requires rigorous mechanisms to accomplish that organizationally, regimentally, and successfully especially in alternative education environments. Given the diversity of alternative education programs, as well as the characteristics and attributes of the students

(both positive and negative), the successfulness of the program may be indirectly derived from meeting the students' educational, personal, and social needs. Therefore, it is critical to direct students to the appropriate alternative programs that will best serve and fit their particular needs on a broad-spectrum basis (Aron, 2006).

What limited research that has been done on the overall academic effects and outcomes of alternative education has shown mixed and sometimes conflicting results. What has been hypothesized is that little if no change has occurred, especially with standardized test scores, over the course of a full academic year (Lange & Sletten, 2002). Some of the findings suggest that the accumulation of these unprogressive test results is due to the negative impact when a student is returned to the regular education setting from an alternative school intervention. This phenomenon seems to be attributable to the recidivism problem that arises with alternative education students especially those afflicted with ADHD. The cycling back and forth between alternative and regular education seemingly compounds this problem of mixed and conflicting results thus overall academic effects. While the alternative education teacher may view the student ready for regular education, conversely, regular education may not be ready for the student thus exacerbating the cycling or recidivism problem. Ultimately, this can impact teacher efficacy in both educational environments.

Types of Alternative Education Schools

It is helpful to acknowledge the differentiation amongst alternative education program types in order to draw conclusions especially about their efficacy. There is an often cited typologies model proposed to differentiate alternative schools by their

program goals (Raywid, 1983). These schools are typically identified by their type (i.e., one through four/1-4) of unique identifiers depending upon their ultimate purpose and goals. A Type 1 alternative school is a voluntary, multi-year, full-time program for those students seeking to achieve a high school diploma. These types of schools commonly provide more individualization, an innovative and challenging curriculum, or may accommodate dropouts who want to earn their diploma. A common example of this type of alternative education is found with a charter-type school and may be funded strictly through private pay entities but not necessarily as absolutes for financial resources. A Type 2 alternative school is typically a shorter involuntary program designed for disciplinary actions and may be funded publicly or privately. A Type 3 alternative school program is more commonly a short-term therapeutic program that focuses on the social and emotional problems that are barriers to academic learning and achievement. A Type 4 alternative school program can be a combination of any of the other types and may be a specialized hybrid if it is unique amongst the aforementioned four categories. This uniqueness may be in the overall student population it serves, grade levels, age groups, designated credentials offered, teacher credentials, and services provided including therapeutic and interdisciplinary Raywid (1983) and others seem to have concluded that Type 1 alternative schools are the most successful, whereas Type 2 involuntary disciplinary programs are the least. These conclusions are supported by a wide spectrum of indicators including overall academic achievement of its student populations (Aron, 2006).

The current lack of a developed research base for alternative schools does not necessarily suggest that there is no basis for developing and designing a strong alternative academic program. A body of literature exists that is focused on effective programs and their schools and that identifies predominant academic features for the kindergarten through grade twelve education programs in general and for at-risk students in particular (Ruzzi & Kraemer, 2006).

The Educational Processes: How They May Help or Hinder

Many alternative schools have abridged programs that have variances in their time periods of required attendance. Students who fall behind academically because of circumstances, such as crises in their lives, often need significant time to catch up with their peers. Even if learning is accelerated students may not be able to attain their GED or high school diploma. This creates a whole set of problems and issues for the individual alternative education programs. For a program to be successful it needs to motivate its students; the lack thereof creates a downward spiraling of the student morale especially if unattainable goals are set. The programs' staff needs to establish interim interventions that set academic milestones for the students to work towards that are portable and recognized by appropriate educational institutions (Rezni & Kraemer, 2006). This may be accomplished via each schools established curriculum and timing criteria derived from their students overall academic needs.

Many continuing education programs report that there is a need to connect students with education options that create practical steps for them. This is because many students leave educational forums, such as alternative schools, without credentials. Furthermore,

students may need additional means to continue their education, such as vocational training, and jobs that permit the flexibility to do so. These variable educational, and potential vocational training options, create a hopeful future for students to continue their education even when in an alternative school environment. Although, ideally, the goal is to return them back to a regular education environment so they may complete their high school diploma in the appropriate steps it takes to reach that goal. In the event that a high school diploma becomes unattainable, a GED is also a viable option for those seeking to complete their education.

The GED is the most viable option for many older students, and some younger, who are college ready. However, the research suggests that GED holders do no better in the workplace than high school dropouts. Part of the problem with these students' success rates has been with the diagnostic tools to determine math and reading levels and specific learning issues among students. Another problem is the limited funds and resources for training teachers and instructors to better work with these students. This has become a particular problem in a difficult economy and has spurred the increase of school districts to report the graduation rates. These graduation rates, especially derived from high school diplomas, have been a factor involved with the demands of the *No Child Left Behind Act* (Ruzzi & Kraemer, 2006). The graduation rate of GED learners has not yet been readily involved with the demands of this act thus far. However, the GED still remains a viable option, for those still eager to take the necessary steps to complete the equivalency of a high school education, in an attempt to develop their educational potential.

Aspects of Youth Development and Leadership

Youth development is described as a strategic process to develop the potential of adolescents to reach their full potential. It is a process that challenges youth in adolescence to meet the demands of adulthood. It is promoted through activities and experiences that help youth to embrace and develop ethical, emotional, social, physical, and cognitive competencies (Schmink & Schargel, 2004). These goals may be achieved through many formats. Providing the atmosphere and conditions for positive youth development is a responsibility shared by families, schools, and communities. For example, the dynamic process of education, and thus achievement of these goals, may be accomplished as students within a structured educational environment in order to develop their academic skills. Students who have fallen by the wayside, or have had their regular education curriculum disrupted, because of factors such as misbehavior, poor attendance, truancy, bad grades, and so forth, may ultimately wind up in an alternative school. An alternative school's purpose is to correct maladaptive behaviors, and focus the student toward academic achievement, hopefully through re-acclimation into a regular education environment (Raywid, 1983). Of course, this may be easier said than done. Youth who are constructively involved with learning and connected to positive adults and peers are less likely to engage in risky or self-defeating behaviors. These connections also help youths avoid the pitfalls of less than ideal settings and environments that can hamper growth and development.

Conclusion

The literature is very sparse with specifics directly related to this study particularly of the recidivism problem of students with ADHD and its effects upon teacher services. Foremost, there is no current literature directly pertaining to the recidivism problem associated with alternative school students especially those with ADHD. These problems are compounded by their impact on the teaching staff as they are responsible for the educational growth, development, and progress of these students. While the literature is prevalent with matters pertaining to ADHD, and its effects on overall health and activities of daily living (ADLs) of youth afflicted with this disorder, it does not specify academic matters pertaining to recidivism of these students. A gap in the literature exists regarding discussion and analysis of those students who return back into alternative education after having been transformed back into regular education after receiving alternative education's behavioral interventions. There is a further gap in the literature as to how this student cycling problem, or recidivism, impacts alternative education teacher services. Nor does the literature address certain academic curricula that could be involved with solving the problem of recidivism of these students especially in an alternative school environment. Furthermore, this lack of curricula components compounded by a lack of information in the literature of the educational processes that may help or hinder the recidivism problem of students with ADHD, particularly in a Type 4 hybrid alternative school as this study indirectly focuses upon, is concerning. The literature is informative of teacher perceptions and observations as key opinion leaders (KOLs) to help understand

the complexities of studying students with ADHD (Atkins et al., 2008). The literature further highlights the effectiveness of multiple therapeutic methods to treat the disorder such as behavioral interventions and medication treatment modalities in combination and separately. However, the currency of the literature is sparse.

Therefore, the primary purpose of this study was to connect the gap in the literature as it pertains to the recidivism problem of students with ADHD in an alternative school environment and the effects upon its teacher services. The primary goal of the study was to resolve the research problem, or minimally understand it better, by its analysis of the interview results regarding the impact students with ADHD have on those who teach them. Hence, the impact of ADHD on those students afflicted effects their academic achievement and thus teacher services as a whole. This study helps to identify and express teachers' perceptions with its specificity of research questions that pertains to the research problem as it impacts their self-efficacy thus services. Therefore, the progressiveness of educational services and interventions as well as the development of organizational innovation and the effects of teacher learning, failure, and success are all examined and explored in this study. The results of this study enriches the literature to aid the gap in it to help resolve the recidivism problem of students with ADHD so that their academic success can be increased and the influences upon their teachers better understood for future reference (Fink, 2009). Ultimately, the present study fills a gap in the literature and extends knowledge in the profession and discipline of alternative education teacher services.

In the next Chapter 3, the research methods and sampling strategy will connect the gap between the research methods proposed and analysis of the methodological processes. Essentially, Chapter 3 conceptualizes how application of the research questions helped to fill in the gaps in the literature. The data analysis aids the reader to understanding how the answered research questions produced findings and results so the researcher can more readily conceptualize the analysis in a more comprehensive manner with the study conclusions.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

This chapter is dedicated to methodological processes, because the review of the literature in Chapter 2 revealed the need for more qualitative studies in the area of self-efficacy. My purpose in this study was to explore the lived experiences of alternative education teachers regarding the effects students with ADHD, cycling in and out of alternative education (i.e., recidivism), has on teaching services. This chapter includes the research design and rationale with its social cognitive theoretical perspective using a phenomenological approach in this qualitative design. The role of the researcher as observer, and indirect professional relationships with participants, along with potential research bias was explored. In addition, in the study methodology, I identify the population, sampling strategy, and participant size as well as addresses recruitment, instrumentation, data collection, and saturation specifics for the data analysis plan. Furthermore, I address the reliability and validity of the study to establish validation of content. In addition, I discuss ethical procedures, thus, methods for protection of the participants, and data collection along with a chapter summary.

Research Design and Rationale

My purpose in this study was to determine and better understand alternative education teachers' experiences and perceptions regarding recidivism of their students and its impact upon their educational services in general. The data collected is the viewpoints and concerns of teachers regarding student cycling problems as well as their thoughts on teacher efficacy as a whole. Additional findings may influence district

policies, procedures, and leadership, and potentially lead to administrative changes.

Conceptually, the internalization of change leads to engaging educational purpose which leads to improved teacher performance and the potential of improved student learning (Hulpia, Devos, & Van Keer, 2011).

This dissertation could be used to inform those involved with alternative or specialized education of the perspectives of alternative teachers who are engaged with the daily routine of educating special needs students, specifically students with ADHD, who cycle in and out of regular and alternative education programs. Through a better understanding of how the research problem affects teacher services, this study may also be used to enhance, develop, or strengthen alternative programs to better address the issues of at-risk youths to improve their future social, behavioral, and academic success. If ADHD students are cycling in and out of alternative education, they are not on the progressive track of regular education academic achievement. The extent to which the recidivism problem of students with ADHD is directly or indirectly a reflection of administration and teaching performance is yet to be determined. In this study, however, I identified perceptions of teacher self-efficacy and revealed how their alternative education experiences affected their ability to successfully instruct students with special education needs.

Research Questions Restatement

RQ1 How, if at all, does the student cycling (i.e., recidivism) of students with ADHD have meaning/significance/relevance to alternative education teachers?

SRQ1 What meaning/significance/relevance to teachers does the recidivism of students with ADHD ascribe to perceptions, or impact upon the services, of alternative education instruction?

SRQ2 How do alternative education teachers describe their classroom experiences regarding the impact of the cycling of students with ADHD upon their services?

SRQ3 How do alternative education teachers describe their experiences and/or perspectives regarding effective leadership as it may pertain to the recidivism of students with ADHD?

SRQ4 How do alternative education teachers describe their experiences and/or perspectives regarding organizational policy as it may pertain to the recidivism of students with ADHD?

SRQ5 How do alternative education teachers describe their experiences and/or perspectives regarding student learning as it may pertain to the recidivism of students with ADHD?

SRQ6 What issues, if any, of self-efficacy (belief in their ability to successfully teach) do teachers experience as they experience the recidivism of their students with ADHD?

Phenomenon Being Studied.

I examined social cognitive theory, through its application of self-concept, specifically, self-efficacy via teacher role efficacy, from a qualitative, thus, phenomenological approach as it pertains to teacher services (Creswell, 2014; Moustakas, 1994). Social cognitive theory postulates self-regulation (i.e., of teachers) mechanisms

that can be disrupted in situations such as student cycling (i.e., recidivism) problems (Bandura, 1991; Bandura, 1982; Bandura, 1977). This situation, in turn, can affect beliefs relating self and affect to their self-concept as teachers (Bandura, 1988; Naicker & Mestry, 2011). The recidivism problem of the students affects the teachers' beliefs in their ability to successfully teach (Bandura, 1991). Because students return, or cycle back, to alternative education, these teachers may perceive that they have failed as teachers. In addition, effects of self-perception may involve self-concept, specifically self-efficacy, which may affect teachers' educational services impacting student recidivism or vice versa (Beck & Strong, 1982; Rhodewalt & Agustsdottir, 1986; Louis, 2009; Bandura, 1977). The student recidivism problem was explored as a key factor to this phenomenon potentially effecting teacher services within specialized and/or alternative education environments.

The cycling of special needs students disrupts the established classrooms into which they are placed throughout the academic year. Therefore, for example, a teacher starting an academic year with 20 students may end up with 30 before the term ends. It is difficult for teachers to adequately manage a classroom of fluctuating size making it unrealistic to expect these special needs students to attain educational adequacy half-way through a term or whenever returned to alternative education. This realization can impact teachers' self-concept, thus teacher role efficacy, as well as complicate leadership paradigms within a school system (Bandura, 1988; Frost & Kersten, 2011; Lim & Kim, 2014).

The construct of teacher efficacy has a theoretical basis in Bandura's (1977) concept of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1988; Lim & Kim, 2014). It has been defined as teachers' beliefs in their ability to influence how well students learn even among those students considered to be unmotivated or difficult (Guskey & Passaro, 1994; Lim & Kim, 2014). Teacher self-efficacy has also been defined as the conviction that an instructor can successfully bring about the desired outcomes in their students such as learning goals (Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Tejeda-Delgado, 2009). These teacher attributes can be challenging to conceptualize especially regarding their interactions with students with ADHD considerations (Shaughnessy & Waggoner, 2015).

The generalized information regarding students with ADHD has been discussed to provide background to the study. Of special needs students, those with ADHD seem the most prevalent as to having the cycling (i.e., recidivism) problem. Furthermore, the aim of the student information is to help the reader better conceptualize the students with ADHD population being considered as potentially affecting teacher services the most at this point in time. The data gathered from teacher interviews helped to discern the level of the effect these students have upon teacher services (Kurt, Duyar, & Calik, 2011).

Nature of the Study

The nature of the study was a qualitative approach with a focus on realistic phenomenology as it relates to the human sciences integrating social and behavioral aspects (Embree, 2016). Phenomenological research is consistent with understanding and making meaning of the lived experiences of the participants (Moustakas, 1994). In phenomenology, the primary source of knowledge is perception (Moustakas, 1994). In

this study, the participants are specialized or alternative education teachers experiencing a cycling or recidivism problem of their students with ADHD. Hence, phenomenology is a pertinent selection for a qualitative research approach with this study population (Creswell, 2013; Moustakas, 1994). To investigate these teacher experiences as a population, purposive or theoretical selection will be explored as a mechanism to select participants to be interviewed for qualitative research purposes (Creswell, 2013; Rudestam & Newton, 2015). That is, the selection of participants will be deliberate and purposeful to increase the likelihood that they can contribute to a deeper understanding of the posed research questions (Rudestam & Newton, 2015). The appropriate number of participants for qualitative study is open to suggestion, for example, Moustakas (1994) did not provide guidelines for the quantity of participants for phenomenological research. Conversely, Creswell (2013) suggested interviews with up to 10 people while Patton (2011) recommended selecting sample size based upon the purpose and rationale of the study. Furthermore, Patton (2011) suggested that there are no definitive rules for participant size when considering qualitative inquiry. Therefore, I proposed 10 participants to be interviewed for the study with option to continue until redundancy, thus, saturation reached.

Role of the Researcher

I have been involved with alternative education for numerous years in the areas of counseling, consulting, and diagnostic therapeutic services. I have had indirect interaction with the participants, but direct observation of the phenomenon regarding the study problem. According to Rubin and Rubin (2005), the researcher should examine

how their own ideas and perspectives may reflect in the study compilation. Thus, they suggested that the researcher be diligent and deliberate with their questions to ensure that any potential bias does not influence the findings. Hence, the research questions were generated from an observational perspective of the study phenomenon. Since qualitative researchers generally create their own interview guides and data collection tools, for this study a demographic questionnaire was also generated as a data collection mechanism (Creswell, 2013). Prior to the interviews, the requisite steps were taken to gain permission from the university Institutional Review Board (IRB) as well as informed consent from the participants.

Methodology

Participants, Setting, and Sample

The participants in the study were alternative education teachers who have a minimum of one year of experience teaching in alternative education classrooms (i.e., Kindergarten or grades 1-12, or a combination thereof). The participants were recruited from alternative education teachers having direct teaching experience in alternative education environments. The country is variable in how it handles students with alternative education needs regarding the availability of such schools, school types, districts, and so forth.

The research setting is the northeast section of the country and I have field observed alternative education teachers at a K-12 school entirely dedicated to alternative education (i.e., Type 4 hybrid school), as an example, for prolonged engagement of more than three years. For this study, purposeful selection was conducted to collect the data

and record its information as systematically and accurately as possible. The concept of purposeful sampling is used in qualitative research as a mechanism by which I selected individuals and an empirical (experience) site for observation regarding the study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study (Creswell, 20014). The central phenomenon in this study is the recidivism problem of students with ADHD who cycle in and out of alternative and regular education. In addition, how the sampling of those individuals keenly aware of the problem was strategized, to obtain as much detailed information as possible, to support the recidivism problem concept, and was another matter of research concern due to ongoing variations in alternative education in general.

The sampling strategy or typology of inquiry can take on a specific form or definition or can be a combination of qualitative sampling strategies (Creswell, 2013). For instance, maximum variation (heterogeneity) is a helpful approach in order to maximize differences particularly at the beginning of a study (Patton, 2011). This process is often selected because it increases the probability that the findings reflect variation and different perspectives which is ideal in qualitative research. Essentially, maximum variation strategy documents diverse variations and identifies common patterns as it focuses, identifies saturation through redundancy of responses, reduces, simplifies, and facilitates group (alternative teachers in general) interviewing optimization (Patton, 2011; Creswell, 2013). In addition, emergent opportunity sampling could have been utilized to offer flexibility of sampling as the study evolved. This type of sampling is good for on-the-spot decisions about sampling to take advantage of new

opportunities that occur during data collection (Patton, 2011). Finally, because credibility, not representativeness, is the purpose of a small random sample, as a fall back to any unanticipated problems, with the original anticipated sample group of teachers, as another mechanism of data collection, purposeful random sampling was initiated (Patton, 2011). Therefore, since according to Creswell (2013), sampling can be a combination of qualitative sampling strategies, purposeful random selection was the primary sampling strategy for this study and emergent opportunity sampling was considered for a back-up strategy for maximum variation purposes (Patton, 2011).

The sample size consisted of 10 teachers comprised from all three grade levels such as kindergarten through grade twelve (K-12). The primary goal was to reach saturation of the data being collected. Hence, data saturation was accomplished with 10 qualitative interviews of the participants who also served as the catalyst for the purpose and rationale of the study (Creswell, 2014; Mason, 2010; Patton, 2011).

The randomly selected participants are for validity considerations since they were chosen by the first 10 teachers who responded to the email invitation to participate in the study (Boddy, 2016). The criterion for their selection included that they have taught in alternative education environments, which is the purposely selected research setting, for a minimum of one year teaching experience (Creswell, 2014). The teachers were screened for inclusion in the study for their length of teaching experience utilizing the Consent Form.

Instrumentation

The participants for the study were screened in via the Consent Form and provided the voluntary Demographic Questionnaire prior to interviewing. The Demographic Questionnaire can be found in Appendix A. The inclusion criterion for the study was minimally one year of alternative education teaching experience. Once participants were screened in for the study, and thus consent obtained, the participants were presented with an Interview Guide, which can be found in Appendix B, a few days prior to the scheduled interviews. The guide seemed to help them better understand the orally presented research questions upon interviewing.

The Interview Guide was developed by operationalizing the study's research questions. In essence, the guide was designed to minimize variability interpreting the research questions to support content validity (Creswell, 2014). The questions were developed based upon researcher observations, the student cycling phenomenon, alternative education teacher reactions, and review of the literature (Booker & Mitchell, 2011; Frost & Kersten, 2011; Lim & Kim, 2014). The research questions for the Interview Guide were designed to get to the point of the interview inquiry while allowing for questions that might emerge from participant responses (Hatch, 2002). In essence, Hatch (2002) suggested that the researcher initially direct the flow and direction of the planned questions but allow participant responses to guide the subsequent path. Therefore, the participants were encouraged to expand upon their responses if they so desired. Based upon the research topic and its emphasis, as outlined in Chapter 1, there was one overarching or primary research question (RQ1) and six sub or secondary

research questions (SRQ1 through SRQ6) depending upon the response to the first question (RQ1). The interviewing of participants took on average one and a half hours depending upon the depth and breadth of responses (Creswell, 2014; Patton, 2011).

Procedures for Data Collection, Recruitment, and Participation

Data Collection. The data was collected from teachers experienced in alternative education instruction for a minimum of one year. The data was collected from the teachers at convenient times for them via telephone interviews utilizing speakerphone while digitally recording their responses in a secluded location to ensure privacy and confidentiality. The context of the data stemmed from teachers recruited via email to request their participation in the study. The participants were recruited from public lists of teachers having experience teaching within alternative education environments.

Interviews and Protocols. There are a myriad of steps involved with data collection, its maintenance, and storage procedures when conducting a qualitative research study. The interviews were comprised of the identified research questions provided in the Interview Guide as a helpful tool to aid the participants a few days prior to interviewing. The voluntary Demographic Questionnaire was also an information tool for data collection purposes. Hence, data was collected via the administration of the Demographic Questionnaire, and research questions administered orally, and via the Interview Guide. The interviews took one to two hours to complete depending upon the length of each answer. I anticipated that the responses to each of the research questions would be in depth and thus lengthy. It was possible that other questions might have arisen as the interviews progressed, but I planned and followed the structure of the study

as presented. Upon completion of the interviews, the participants were thanked for their time, offered to review their interview transcripts for accuracy, and provided the opportunity to respond within two weeks if they desired. This process enhanced validity of the study. The digital recordings were immediately deleted upon transcription. The participants were also offered the opportunity to receive the study results if they wished as part of debriefing. If the study results were declined, the interviews were concluded and no further data collection from the participants took place. However, any of the participants who wished to receive the study results were sent to them via email to conclude debriefing. Therefore, there were no follow-up procedures after debriefing thus no additional data collection.

From a qualitative perspective, semi-structured interviews were conducted via purposive selection and I used the software program NVIVO10 for categorizing, coordinating, and storing data systematically (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013; Patton, 2011). The digitally recorded interviews were transcribed utilizing the Nuance speech recognition software program which has 99% accuracy per manufacturer specifications (Nuance Communications, Inc., 2014). In addition, a constant comparative analysis was implemented to derive descriptive codes from the data transcribed from the interviews (Milton, Watkins, Spears, Studdard, & Burch, 2003). This approach helped to ensure efficiency and consistency amongst the data being collected, coded, and analyzed to discern the inferences and conclusions drawn from it (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). A continuous iterative process was implemented by comparing data sets derived from NVIVO10 categorizing and/or coding and hand searched methods. The codes were

compared to each data set to determine if new codes emerged and/or repeated (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003; Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2012). In addition, journaling helped to organize thoughts, perspectives, and ideas as teacher interviews commenced and progressed (Janesick, 2011). This process enhanced the continuity and flow of information as journal entries became more meaningful, descriptive, thought provoking, and organized. Furthermore, as mentioned prior, participants were debriefed and thus offered the study results as a method of culmination for them.

A qualitative mechanism of participant interviews was used to organize the interviews of the teachers so that responses were ultimately thematically categorized in application to the answers to the research questions. Through the interview responses, noting repeating significant statements, thus, establishing derived meanings into codes then streamlining them into themes and subthemes were organized methods of gathering meaningful data regarding categorical aspects of the research findings. Hence, the Demographic Questionnaire items were integrated with the Interview Guide response data to coordinate information as well as characterize the sample to speak to the research questions. For example, conceptualized categories initially included codes for grade level and years taught, gender, and so forth. This information was better conceptualized with the use of NVIVO10 to further organize the data into themes and subtheme components (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). These components assisted the analysis of information so that the qualitative research approach was more thoroughly deciphered. Conceptually, with a more profound and deeper understanding of the data, the study results provide more definitive conclusions.

Analysis

As part of the steps involved with data collection, its maintenance, and storage procedures were important to consider when conducting a qualitative research plan. For this study, the data was analyzed through the analysis of significant statements, an essence depiction, and the generation of units of meaning (Moustakas, 1994). Essentially, the data was interpreted for meanings and descriptions and coded in an organized manner to prepare it for analysis (Patton, 2011). The data was collected one time from each participant and no new definitive information was gained during the analysis process, thus, redundancy and/or saturation was reached. In addition, the disconfirming and/or discrepant case was identified once data collection and analysis was complete (Booth, Carroll, Llott, Low, & Cooper, 2013; Patton, 2011). Furthermore, participants' responses, thus, data were connected to the research questions so that horizontal depictions were made of the information in order to build upon evolving themes (Patton, 2011).

Issues of Trustworthiness

Reliability and Validity

Validity in qualitative research is used to determine the accuracy of the study from various points of view such as the participants, researcher, and readers (Creswell, 2013). Furthermore, internal validation strategies and reliability perspectives were considered in as efficient and cost effective manner as reasonably possible (Creswell, 2013). For instance, Creswell (2013) lists eight main factors to consider for verification of qualitative research processes. The researcher included peer/participant review and/or

debriefing, clarifying research bias, prolonged and persistent engagement, in depth or thick description, member/interview checking, and so forth. At least two of the eight validation strategies are recognized by Creswell as necessary (Creswell, 2013). I used thick description through the interview questions, prolonged and persistent engagement through field observations, and member/interview checking through a willing participant. These processes support transferability thus the external validity of the study. In addition, there were concerns of threats to external validity due to the observed research setting being a Type 4 hybrid alternative education environment. Hence, the findings are limited to my observations within a Type 4 environment correlated with teachers' experiences within the northeast section of the country. Thus, any generalizations to other alternative schools (i.e., types 1-3) are limited to the participant responses to the research questions. In addition, the participant interview checker was used to validate interview responses to further enhance content validity supporting credibility thus internal validity. This was accomplished at the conclusion of the interview and then offered to the participant to review the content of the transcript of their responses. At the conclusion of the interviews, I informed the participants that the content of the interview was to be emailed to them asking for an accuracy response within two weeks for feedback. This process supports dependability within the study thus the reliability of the overall study while providing confirmability. This process ultimately enhanced coding reliability since the participants verified their own responses to the research questions. Furthermore, when a study is exploratory and there is little theory informing what kind of responses to expect, inductive coding was appropriate and used in this study (Frankfort-

Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). Essentially, the responses mentioned most frequently were used to develop the coding scheme. Thus, repeating significant statements and terms guided the development of meanings from which codes were derived to establish themes into more streamlined themes or subthemes.

Ethical Procedures

I obtained Walden Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval and consent. The data is maintained and stored in a password protected external hard drive stored in a secured location to protect any confidentiality and privacy concerns and in compliance with IRB principles of ethical research practices. These techniques helped to ensure compliance with ethical considerations to ensure soundness of the study processes and procedures (Creswell, 2013). The data was collected from multiple alternative education teachers having experience teaching within hybrid alternative education environments.

The ethical considerations of this qualitative phenomenological study were addressed in the manner of implemented safeguards to ensure confidentiality. Hence, the study findings and results are generalized for all of the participants. In order to ensure confidentiality, the interview and demographic questionnaire data is securely stored in a password protected external hard drive and all hard copies of the transcripts shredded. Additionally, disclosure of the purpose of the study, assurance of the voluntary nature of participation, informed consent, and researcher identification of having access to the data comply with ethical suggestions for qualitative research (Hatch, 2002). The consent form is kept in a flash drive back-up but there is no link-up between data and identity. In consideration of the data cleaned and analyzed, there were no participants identifiable

information only generic categories for horizontal organizational purposes such as discerned and evolved themes (Patton, 2011). Furthermore, the participants were informed via the Consent Form that they could withdraw at any time during the study.

This study was conducted through a phenomenological approach which included 10 teachers who had a minimum of one year of teaching experience within alternative education environments. The data was analyzed using the inductive analysis process in order to ascertain and extract themes relating responses to the research questions from the Interview Guide provided to the participants. Additionally, several methods of validity were utilized to ensure data accuracy emphasizing the importance and relevance of qualitative research within the educational field of psychology. The researcher utilized observation bracketing, personal experience, and self-reflection which contributed to the study validity and thereby improving research integrity (Creswell, 2013). Additionally, the researcher attempted to control bias and predisposition through reflexivity in order to become more self-aware (Pyrzczak, 2013). The primary goal of this qualitative study was to gain an in-depth understanding of the research problem, presented through the research questions via the Interview Guide, and subsequent analyses of the responses from teachers who had the particular experience of alternative education instruction.

Summary

In this Chapter 3, regarding research methods, I have presented an introduction to its content, the research design and rationale, the role of the researcher, the research methodology, the participant recruitment, participation, data collection procedures, and trustworthiness of the study. These chapter sections effectively describe the qualitative

methods parameters of the study to aid the reader in better understanding the overall methods, protocols, processes, and procedures of the study as a conceptual whole. In essence, this qualitative study design used a phenomenological approach to the research problem which is formatively captured in this research methodology chapter.

The next Chapter 4, regarding the study results, further discusses the study setting, demographics, data collection, analysis, trustworthiness of the results, and summary.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

This qualitative phenomenological study was conducted in the northeast section of the country with 10 teachers who experienced teaching in alternative education environments. The purpose of the study was to understand teachers' experiences regarding student cycling, termed recidivism, particularly those students with ADHD and its effects upon their services. The inquiry was postured by what teachers perceived impacted their services guided by the specificity of the research questions. The outcome of the results was intended to inform and hopefully help the teachers to feel more effective in their work. The research may also help teachers to better understand and improve upon the alternative education learning environment. This chapter includes a review of the data collection process, described in Chapter 3, as well as reviews the study demographics, data analysis, quality of the findings, and results summary. The study was based upon the following research questions:

1. How, if at all, does the student cycling (i.e., recidivism) of your students with ADHD have meaning/significance/relevance to you as a teacher? (RQ1)
2. What meaning/significance/relevance to you as a teacher does the recidivism of students with ADHD ascribe to perceptions, or impact upon the services, of your alternative education instruction? (SRQ1)
3. How do you, as an alternative education teacher, describe your classroom experiences regarding the impact of the cycling of students with ADHD upon your services? (SRQ2)

4. How do you, as an alternative education teacher, describe your lived experiences and/or perspectives regarding effective leadership as it may pertain to the recidivism of students with ADHD? (SRQ3)
5. How do you, as an alternative education teacher, describe your lived experiences and/or perspectives regarding organizational policy as it may pertain to the recidivism of students with ADHD? (SRQ4)
6. How do you, as an alternative education teacher, describe your lived experiences and/or perspectives regarding student learning as it may pertain to the recidivism of students with ADHD? (SRQ5)
7. What issues, if any, in your belief of your capabilities to successfully teach (i.e., self-efficacy) do you as a teacher experience as you experience the recidivism of students with ADHD? (SRQ6)

Setting, Demographics, and Characteristics

The demographics of the study were acquired by 10 teachers who had experience in alternative education environments including those in the crux of organizational resets within the northeast section of the country. The demographics and characteristics inquired by the study were ethnicity, race, gender, age, number of years teaching experience, and grade(s) taught. The ethnicity of the participants included eight of those who identified themselves as American and two as Hispanic but all identified as White/Caucasian. There were eight females and two males with the average age being 36 years old amongst all participants. The inclusion criteria of minimally one year of alternative education teaching experience was met by all participants with the average

being five years of experience. The grade levels taught were five strictly middle school teachers, three elementary, one high school, and one primarily middle school but they also taught high school when needed.

Data Collection

I obtained permission from the Institutional Review Board (IRB, Approval # 2017.06.14 15:12:46-05'00') to conduct the qualitative study research. Per the data collection parameters described in Chapter 3, the participants were selected as they responded to the researcher's invitation to participate in the study and screened in when they acknowledged one year of alternative education teaching experience verified by the Consent Form. The Consent Form included background information, intentions of the research, and the voluntary nature of the study (Hatch, 2002; Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Once consent was obtained, interviews were scheduled at convenient times for the participants and voluntary demographic data, via a Demographic Questionnaire (Appendix A), was also simultaneously obtained (Hatch, 2002). A few days prior to the interviews, the participants were provided an Interview Guide (Appendix B) to help clarify the research questions presented upon interviewing. The location and time of the telephone interviews were at the privacy and convenience chosen by the participants. The interviews were recorded via speakerphone in a private and secure location to ensure participant identity protection. The interview protocol coincided with the processes depicted in Chapter 3 of the study's research methods and study appendices.

The data for the study were collected in the form of semi-structured interviews (Patton, 2011). The data collection plan presented in Chapter 3 was followed with the

addition of the recordings being immediately destroyed, per the IRB's suggestion, upon transcription using Nuance speech recognition software (Nuance Communications, Inc., 2014). Seemingly, some common variations in data collection included interview coordination and rescheduling due to fluctuating participant schedules. An unanticipated or perhaps unusual circumstance that arose upon data collection was receiving a Student Transition Rating Screen (STRS) form from a participant and found in Appendix C. This form or guide is an example of the criteria they followed as a teacher pertaining to the student cycling problem as described in this and the previous chapters regarding alternative education student recidivism. The STRS example helps to better understand and conceptualize the student recidivism problem with practical guidance for alternative education teachers perhaps in general. This form is an interesting addition to the study as it supports the quality and realistic phenomenology premise of the research.

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed via a constant comparative analysis to derive descriptive codes from the data transcribed from the interviews (Milton, Watkins, Spears, Studdard, & Burch, 2003). The repeated significant statements were coordinated to create meanings from the transcription data and systematically categorized and stored initially using NVIVO10 software (Bazely & Jackson, 2013; Patton, 2011). The specific codes, categories, and themes that emerged from the data were derived through the use of repeated significant statements. From these meanings, inductive codes were derived to streamline the data into themes to clarify the themes into subthemes. From these themes

and subthemes, the research questions were organized and coordinated with the responses and grouped, if applicable, within this chapter's results section.

The inductive approach (Hatch, 2002) was considered to be the most applicable method for analyzing the data. From the perspective of Hatch (2002), the inductive method of data analysis proceeds from the specific to the general which illuminates the relationship among the different aspects. Hence, responses to each research question were noted for similarities amongst participants in order to decipher common significant statements as a constant comparative analysis. Rubin and Rubin (2005) identified initial similarities in the data as a mechanism for researchers to reiterate an idea essential to their research questions. Hatch (2002) specified that the early reading of the data sets the framework for how a researcher breaks down the data into parts to be analyzed. Hatch (2002) indicated that the researcher should structure the reading of the data with an idea as to how the data will be framed for analysis. These frames for analysis are identified as the specificity levels by which the data is considered. Therefore, upon reading and rereading the data, the goal was to look for significant statements that repeated upon presentation of each research question to each participant.

A precoding matrix was compiled noting key words from the literature and words arising from participants (Saldana, 2012; Schwandt, 2015). In essence, a category and/or coding list emerged from NVIVO10 and compared to hand searched methods for coded similarities and differences (Appendix D). Hence, the data sets became a comparison tool to help cross-reference the developing themes. Thus, the reading and rereading of the data became a continuous iterative process by which statements, phrases, and words

could be reduced to codes as meanings were assigned as essence depictions (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003; Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). The iterative sequence of rereading provided a mechanism by which significant statements could be identified and categorized for their meaning from each research question response. These meanings provided ideas for coding the data so that themes emerged and were further streamlined into subthemes (Creswell, 2014). The focus of the data analysis was to explore, compare, and decipher patterns in the data which correlated to the central phenomenon being investigated. The relational connections helped to formulate generalizations within the data so that words, terms, and phrases had derived meaning/significance/relevance to the phenomenon of student cycling and its affects upon teacher services. This process lends credence to the quality of the research.

Next, domains based upon relational statements were generated to observe what was happening in the data and to begin assigning emphasis for words and phrases (Creswell, 2014; Hatch 2002). Basically, upon rereading, the data was being read with specific semantic relationships in mind (Creswell, 2014). As the transcripts were read, comments were noted in the margins that depicted significant statements heard in prior interviews. This permitted an inductive approach to determine salient domains important to the study because of their prevalence among the data. Once commonality was depicted, importance to the study was noted by assigning a code as the meanings and relational connections emerged (Creswell, 2014). Next, the collective statements were aligned with particular questions thus collectively grouped. The transcripts were then examined further for their significance or relevance to the experiences of the participants.

Finally, a framework emerged from these responses indicating the relationships among the domains. Examples from this data were selected to support the framework.

This framework is the basis for what Creswell (2014) identified as the participants' collective experiences or a textural or structural depiction of the essence of those experiences. The inductive analysis approach optimized the plausibility that the data and subsequent findings would lead to generalizations that addressed the research questions. Initially, 21 categories emerged from preliminary analysis of the data. Each transcript was read and reread thus reviewed for similarities in ideas, concepts, and meanings (Hennink, Kaiser, & Marconi, 2017). Through the constant comparison of similarities and differences in the data while searching for both supportive and disconfirming findings analysis was achieved (Brod, Tessler, & Christensen, 2009). Categories were formulated and organized initially with software to derive codes from the data but subsequently hand searched as it became more direct to identify the commonalities and discern the differences. Through identifying, highlighting, and/or circling repeating words, terms, and significant statements groups and clusters of meaning formed. Comments in the margins were utilized to track and identify comparisons to other participant responses to organize and connect the flow of participants' perspectives. Hence, a textural or structural depiction of the participants' experiences developed (Creswell, 2014). Categories were clustered for meanings to further develop themes and subthemes. Combining the similar significant statements and so forth into further clusters of meaning, four major themes emerged: (a) organizational policy, (b) administrative paradigms, (c) student learning, and (d) leadership model.

These organized groupings can be depicted through a saturation grid which notes each of the participants' expressions in response to the research questions that were identified to form the textural or structural depiction of the essence of their experiences.

The data from this study were categorized according to these four themes and can be found in Appendix E and the Theme Table noted later. The appendix identifies the organization of categories and assigned codes. The categories were formed by gaining an essence depiction or categorical identifiers of commonly identified words, phrases, and repeating significant statements (Hennink, et al., 2017). Once these commonalities formed, further analysis of the data brought them into clusters of meanings or thematic depictions of the data (Hennink et al., 2017). The assigned codes helped to organize the groupings more systematically and were later compared to the hand searched data as a type of cross-reference tool. Once I was able to compare the findings from the data sets, and the two coincided, the developed themes were compared for frequency of responses to group them into themes and subthemes.

The refined saturation grid, found in Table 1, regarding the organization of the data pertaining to overlapping themes and subthemes, is noted later. Sufficient data was collected to reach conceptual saturation, thus, complete elaboration of the variations and dimensions that constitute each domain or category inclusive of themes and subtheme properties is depicted in the table (Brod, et al., 2009). The subdomains or concepts were used to identify and develop the depth and range of concepts as they related to the study phenomenon which was useful to gain a better understanding of their relationships among concepts and categories.

Table 1

Saturation Grid

Themes	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8	T9	T10
Organizational policy ▪										
✓ Alt ed schools	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪
✓ Zoned schools	▪		▪			▪		▪		▪
✓ District	▪	▪		▪	▪		▪		▪	
✓ State alt ed support		▪	▪		▪		▪		▪	
✓ City alt ed support	▪		▪	▪			▪	▪		▪
Administrative paradigms •										
✓ Individualized alt ed		•	•		•		•		•	
✓ Practices alt/reg ed	•		•	•				•	•	
✓ Central alt/reg ed		•			•	•	•			•
✓ Constructive feedback	•		•	•				•		•
Student learning ▪										
✓ Alt ed classroom size	▪		▪		▪			▪	▪	
✓ Reg ed disruption			▪	▪		▪		▪		▪
✓ Varying curriculums		▪	▪		▪				▪	▪
✓ Recidivism confusion	▪	▪		▪		▪	▪			
✓ Instructional strategies			▪	▪				▪	▪	▪
✓ Teacher/student ratios	▪		▪		▪		▪	▪	▪	
Leadership model •										
✓ Teacher innovators	•		•			•	•			•
✓ Teacher guides		•		•	•			•		•
✓ Teacher conduits	•		•	•			•			•
✓ Teacher change agents		•	•		•	•	•	•	•	
Subthemes	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8	T9	T10
Educational processes ▪										
✓ Within alt ed types	▪	▪		▪			▪			▪
✓ Within grade level		▪	▪		▪			▪	▪	▪
✓ Complexity varies	▪			▪	▪	▪	▪			
✓ Variances w/types	▪		▪				▪		▪	▪

(table continues)

Subthemes	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8	T9	T10
Organizational development •										
✓ Alt school driven		•			•		•	•	•	
✓ Teacher change	•		•	•			•			•
✓ Time constraints		•	•		•	•		•	•	•
✓ Daily chaos	•		•	▪		•		•		
Teacher efficacy ▪										
✓ Teacher/student bond	▪		▪		▪		▪		▪	▪
✓ Student needs		▪		▪	▪	▪	▪	▪		
✓ Resources		▪	▪		▪	▪		▪	▪	
✓ Counselors IEP/BIP	▪		▪	▪				▪	▪	▪
Teacher leaders •										
✓ Student progress	•			•		•			•	•
✓ Student advocates		•			•	•	•	•		•
✓ Policy enforcers		•	•	•				•		•
✓ Transition planners	•		•		•	•	•		•	
✓ Student transformation •				•	•		•			•
✓ Teacher knowledge		•	•	•		•		•		

The repeated expressions from the participants regarding their use of terms, words, and significant statements yielded a better understanding of their experiences as a whole.

A few examples of the participants' overlapping perspectives are as follows:

Types of alternative schools can impact the curricula among districts within states which can vary in complexity especially within grade levels. (Teacher 7)

The time constraints we teach within are largely based upon the policies of the various administrations overseeing the alternative education programs within cities. (Teacher 3)

As alternative educators we must be knowledgeable of student advocacy trends and resources to help meet their needs and aim for their progress. (Teacher 8)

Evidence of Quality and Trustworthiness

The credibility strategies stated in Chapter 3 were implemented using member checking, or interview checking, which enhanced content validity supporting internal validity (Creswell, 2014). The member/interview checker had no identifying information from the transcribed data to ensure privacy and to protect participants' identities. Both the researcher and member/interview checker made notes of observations gleaned from the data and salient points of discussion. These notes were compared and used to discern the commonalities and differences amongst participant responses. In essence, the process helped to further organize the data and aided the researcher in developing foresight for establishing categories, or domains, and developing themes. In other words, it served as another vantage point of a participant rather than only me gleaning through the data. Overall, both the member/interview checker and I had positive reflections from the notes and concluded that the interviews were meaningful expressions and perspectives from the experienced alternative education teachers. This consensus helped to ensure the quality of the participants' responses (Creswell, 2014). The quality of the data is essential to

conceptual saturation of the data especially for data sufficiency considerations (Brod, Tesler, & Christensen, 2009). The helpfulness of this process can be better conceptualized as described in the results section of this chapter discussed later.

The transferability strategies stated in Chapter 3 were implemented with thick description via the interview questions, prolonged persistent engagement via field observations, and member/interview checking which supported transferability thus external validity of the study. I reviewed the transcripts and had three plus years of field observations at a Type 4 alternative education school. This prolonged persistent engagement via field observations helped to ensure the quality of the presented research questions to the experienced participants (Creswell, 2014). The experienced alternative education teachers' used thick description via their in depth responses which further enhanced quality of the study.

The dependability strategies stated in Chapter 3 were implemented using participant review of transcripts supporting reliability while providing confirmability. The participants were given two weeks to review the transcripts for accuracy and to make adjustments to the transcripts if necessary. This amount of time was given to the participants due to the length of the interviews and to accommodate their schedules. They were to either return the corrected transcripts or state that the text was correct as transcribed. Only one participant made changes in transcription that related to structural issues and not content. All other participants indicated that their responses were correct as transcribed. Therefore, the confirmability strategies stated in Chapter 3 were

implemented which enhanced coding reliability within the analysis process of the study data and provided further confirmability of the findings.

The findings from the qualitative data in this study included teachers' experiences working within alternative education environments. Direct quotes were used to illustrate participants' descriptions of their collective experiences and to generate multiple sources of data related to the phenomenon being studied. The quotes from participants were used in this qualitative phenomenological study to present evidence of validation and quality. The responses were read numerous times to identify the repeated significant statements and to extract meaning from them (Patton, 2002). Once meanings were identified, grouped, and organized into domains or categories, codes were created and refined through iterative data readings then streamlined to identify themes and subthemes (Corbin & Strauss, 2007). The categories, codes, themes, and subthemes can be found in Appendix D. The Saturation Grid, noted previously in Table 1, provided another view or structural depiction of how the data was systematically organized and analyzed.

Study Results

The theoretical framework for this study is based upon social cognitive theory through its application of self-concept, specifically, self-efficacy via teacher role efficacy, from a qualitative, thus, phenomenological approach as it pertains to teacher services (Creswell, 2014; Moustakas, 1994). Social cognitive theory postulates self-regulation (i.e., of teachers) mechanisms which can be disrupted in situations such as student cycling (i.e., recidivism) problems (Bandura, 1984; Bandura, 1977; Barklay, 1998; Bandura & Jourdan, 1991). Bandura's (1977) theory of self-efficacy is central in this

study as the phenomenon of student cycling can influence beliefs relating to self and its effects upon teachers' self-concept (Bandura, 1986; Naicker & Mestry, 2011).

Essentially, the recidivism problem of the students indirectly affects the teachers' beliefs in their ability to successfully teach (Bandura & Jourden, 1991). In other words, the teachers believe they are effective teachers, but the circumstances surrounding their teaching constructs directly affects the success of the transformation of alternative education students into permanent regular education learners. The teachers were at the disposal of the various influences that directly and indirectly affected their ability to successfully teach. Consequently, recidivism was not the only concern with these teachers regarding their students and their educational progress since participant information noted student drop-outs as well.

There was only one discrepant case amongst the participants. This case was from the interview of a high school instructor who did not experience cycling of their students in particular, but did experience student drop-outs. Hence, this teacher's responses were in essence reflective of their perception of teacher efficacy in that they felt they were effective at teaching. However, they felt their drop-out students did not have enough support mechanisms to keep them in school and thus they lacked overall motivation to reach graduation. Therefore, student recidivism did not have direct relevance to them as a high school teacher, but they were aware of its significance in general regarding other teachers who experienced the problem.

A guiding premise of this study was that student cycling, or recidivism, as a phenomenon reflected philosophies similar to those posited in the literature. A further

interpretation of the findings will be analyzed in Chapter 5 discussions, recommendations, and conclusions in comparison to Chapter 2 which notes the literature review. Subsequently, the primary themes that were derived through data analysis, as discussed previously, were further analyzed and four subthemes emerged: (a) educational processes, (b) organizational development/innovation, (c) teacher efficacy/role relationships, and (d) teachers/transformational leaders.

The data from this study are further categorized according to these four subthemes and can be found in Appendix D and the Themes/Subthemes Table 2 noted later.

The study results are organized by responses to the interview questions and related themes derived from the data to address the seven research questions:

1. How, if at all, does the student cycling (i.e., recidivism) of your students with ADHD have meaning/significance/relevance to you as a teacher? (RQ1)
2. What meaning/significance/relevance to you as a teacher does the recidivism of students with ADHD ascribe to perceptions, or impact upon the services, of your alternative education instruction? (SRQ1)
3. How do you, as an alternative education teacher, describe your classroom experiences regarding the impact of the cycling of students with ADHD upon your services? (SRQ2)
4. How do you, as an alternative education teacher, describe your lived experiences and/or perspectives regarding effective leadership as it may pertain to the recidivism of students with ADHD? (SRQ3)

5. How do you, as an alternative education teacher, describe your lived experiences and/or perspectives regarding organizational policy as it may pertain to the recidivism of students with ADHD? (SRQ4)
6. How do you, as an alternative education teacher, describe your lived experiences and/or perspectives regarding student learning as it may pertain to the recidivism of students with ADHD? (SRQ5)
7. What issues, if any, in your belief of your capabilities to successfully teach (i.e., self-efficacy) do you as a teacher experience as you experience the recidivism of students with ADHD? (SRQ6)

The research questions responses were coordinated and organized into clusters of meaning from the obtained data. These clusters were formed into two basic groupings of the participants' responses to the research questions. The groupings were coordinated based upon the commonalities and differences in the responses. The Themes/Subthemes Table 2 noted later identifies the coordination of participant responses in relation to particular identified themes as previously described. The textural groupings or clusters of thematic meaning organized data interpretation and provided structural depictions of the data to evaluate data saturation and supports researcher interpretations of the data. The reading and rereading of the data helped to identify and confirm patterns through repeated words, terms, and significant statements. This iterative process coordinated category depictions and code formulation that lead to evolved themes and subthemes identified in Appendix D as previously described. Thus, Table 2 as follows provides data structural depictions to support validity of my interpretations of the data.

Table 2

Themes/Subthemes

Research Question Clusters	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8	T9	T10
RQ1, RQ2, RQ3, RQ6 RQ1, (SRQ1, SRQ2, SRQ5)	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Themes:										
Administrative paradigms			√		√	√		√	√	
Student learning	√	√	√			√			√	
Subthemes:										
Organizational development			√		√			√	√	√
Teacher efficacy	√	√		√	..	√	√	..		√
Research Question Clusters	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8	T9	T10
RQ4, RQ5, RQ7 (SRQ3, SRQ4, SRQ6)	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Themes:										
Organizational policy	√		√			√			√	√
Leadership model		√	√	√			√	√		√
Subthemes:										
Educational processes		√		√	√		√		√	
Teacher leaders	√			√				√	√	√

The following sections of the findings include the themes and subthemes generated from the data based on analysis of the responses to the research questions. The sections also show how participants' responses to the interview questions addressed the research inquiry of the study. The research questions were grouped when deemed appropriate for this chapter discussion as previously described. Pertinent commentary was organized to coordinate the flow of the meaningful responses and also to help omit any superfluous repetition of the data

Findings for Research Questions 1, 2, 3, and 6

Research Question 1 (RQ1) asked how, if at all, does the cycling (i.e., recidivism) of your students with ADHD have meaning/significance/relevance to you as a teacher? Research Question 2 (RQ2/SRQ1) asked what meaning/significance/relevance to you as a teacher does the recidivism of students with ADHD ascribe to perceptions, or impact upon the services, of your alternative education instruction? Research Question 3 (RQ3/SRQ2) asked how do you, as an alternative education teacher, describe your classroom experiences regarding the impact of the cycling of students with ADHD upon your services? Research Question 6 (RQ6/SRQ5) asked how do you, as an alternative education teacher, describe your lived experiences and/or perspectives regarding student learning as it may pertain to the recidivism of students with ADHD? Responses to interview questions as related to these four research questions were grouped together due to repeating significant statements and clusters of categorical meanings. Upon data analysis it became evident that the teachers' perspectives and experiences were directly related to their classroom experiences, cycling students with ADHD, and overall student learning thus having various effects upon their services. Therefore, discussion of the interview findings were combined for these four research questions in one section. These research questions relate to themes of student learning and leadership model and subthemes of teacher efficacy/role relationships and teacher leaders/transformational model.

The overarching inquiry poised in Research Question 1 (RQ1) was imperative to understanding the teachers' experiences as a whole to flow the interview dialogue with

the subsequent research questions (SRQ1, SRQ2, and SRQ5). Research Question 1 began the study premise of the teachers finding meaning/significance/relevance to the essence thus nature of the study inquiring into the phenomenon of student cycling, or recidivism, and its effect upon their services. Once the teachers acknowledged meaning/significance/relevance of the student cycling phenomenon, or problem, the subsequent research questions were asked. Therefore, the teachers' responses were gathered and analyzed to RQ1, SRQ1, SRQ2, and SRQ5 collectively.

The teachers' collective responses to the experience of student recidivism and its effect upon their services relating to their classrooms suggested the connectivity of the student cycling problem. A significant point is that five teachers (Teachers 3, 5, 6, 8, and 9) made specific comments about how imperative it was to have "classroom productivity" and how "its manageability" related to "its size" and how "the student teacher ratios" were critical to effective teaching. Additionally, teachers felt "student cycling" causes "disruptions for the class" which can impact the "curriculum being presented" thus "student learning". The "students with ADHD" were mentioned to be at the forefront of the student recidivism phenomenon.

It is evident that classroom productivity is impacted by its manageability thus its size affects the classroom setting. Student cycling can cause disruptions for the class as a whole and the curriculum being presented can become strained. We try to encourage student transition into regular education but when they return unexpectedly to alternative education it creates interruption not only for the

returning student but for the entire class as a comprehensive learning environment. The student teacher ratios are important to effectively teach which impacts student learning. (Teacher 3)

The recidivism problem associated with students particularly those with ADHD impacts the ability to effectively teach. The classroom and its manageability are interrelated to classroom productivity and the curriculum being presented at the time. When students are returned to the alternative education classroom intermittently throughout the academic year the curriculum is interrupted for them. The student teacher ratios are thrown off and there is overall disruption for the class. The teacher is left with trying to bring the returning students back into the mainstream of the existing class while trying to keep its manageability intact. The result is adjustments to student learning especially regarding those students with ADHD. (Teacher 8)

A further significant point is that four teachers (Teachers 2, 4, 7, and 10) made specific comments and related perspectives about how “varying curriculums” invokes adjustments for the students involved in the cycling phenomenon. When “students are transitioned” into regular education they become immersed in the regular education curriculum. Traditionally, they are to remain in regular education for a “minimum of 45 days” and then “further evaluated” as to their progress. The Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and, if applicable, Behavioral Intervention Plans (BIPS) derived through

“alternative education intervention” are to be adhered to as best as possible.

Unfortunately, some “transitioning students” do not do well when they are “returned to regular education” and get “returned to alternative education” rather quickly (less than 45 days) which “creates confusion for the students” and “disruption for the teachers” and their classrooms. The cycling student has to be re-acclimated to the alternative education curriculum and school environment.

The students within alternative education are involved with varying curriculums as they typically start in regular education get transferred to alternative education and then returned to regular education as the goal. The transition goal is for these students to become permanent regular education learners. When students cycle back to alternative education not within a minimum of 45 days in regular education per policy it creates confusion for the students and disruption for the teachers. The classrooms become disrupted as the teachers attempt to bring the returning student back into the curriculum they recently left. (Teacher 2)

Part of the alternative education process is to permit students who are returned to regular education the opportunity to be further evaluated in regular education after a minimum of 45 days. If that occurs it is great for student progress however if it does not and the student gets returned to alternative education sooner it complicates matters. The alternative education teacher becomes the innovator and advocate for the further student evaluation. The teacher takes on the

responsibility thus leadership role that was supposed to occur within the regular education setting. (Teacher 7)

Another significant point is that the teachers further expressed specific comments about their interactions, varying roles, process tools, and leadership modeling. Hence, the alternative education teachers became resource “guides to the cycling students”, worked in “tandem with the counselors” to update the returning students IEPs/BIPs, and re-established their “student bonds” to uniformly address their multifaceted leadership type roles. An example of the student transitioning criteria can be seen in the Student Transition Rating Screen (STRS) guide found in Appendix C.

Our experience with the student recidivism situation places us in the forefront of student motivation. When students are cycled in and out of regular and alternative education they can become exasperated because they may feel that they do not belong with their peers. We find this situation to be the most prevalent for students especially those with ADHD. The alternative teachers become guides to the cycling students and work in tandem with the counselors reevaluating their behavioral intervention plans in conjunction with their individualized education plans. (Teacher 4)

The entire process of student recidivism is complex impacting the teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs in their ability to successfully teach. This impacts teacher efficacy

because the teachers are at the forefront of deeming the student to be “ready for regular education” based upon their “recommendations to shift student learning” to the regular education environment.

One of the most important tasks that we as alternative education teachers can do for our students returned to alternative education is to encourage our student bonds while perpetuating awareness to administration. It is evident that student cycling is a problem because students we have recommended to be returned and ready for regular education have progressed based upon our experiences efforts and recommendations to shift student learning. We become the voice and advocate for student intervention changes as the problem perpetuates and persists. The connectivity between student success and effective leadership especially involving administrative policy begins with the teachers’ input and suggestions being at the frontline of positive student learning experiences. (Teacher 10)

Findings for Research Questions 4, 5, and 7

Research Question 4 (RQ4/SRQ3) asked how do you, as an alternative education teacher, describe your lived experiences and/or perspectives regarding effective leadership as it may pertain to the recidivism of students with ADHD? Research Question 5 (RQ5/SRQ4) asked how do you, as an alternative education teacher, describe your lived experiences and/or perspectives regarding organizational policy as it may pertain to the recidivism of students with ADHD? Research Question 7 (RQ7/SRQ6)

asked what issues, if any, in your belief of your capabilities to successfully teach (i.e., self-efficacy) do you as a teacher experience as you experience the recidivism of students with ADHD? Responses to interview questions as related to these three research questions were grouped together due to repeating significant statements and clusters of categorical meanings. Upon data analysis it became evident that the teachers' perspectives and experiences were directly related to their lived experiences and/or perspectives regarding effective leadership, organizational policy, and teacher self-efficacy, thus, having significant affects upon their services. The comments made reflected influences that related most prevalently involving cycling students with ADHD. Therefore, discussion of the interview findings were combined for these three research questions in one section. These research questions related to themes of administrative paradigms, organizational policy, and subthemes of organizational development/innovation and educational processes impacting teacher services. Therefore, the teachers' responses were gathered and analyzed to SRQ3, SRQ4, and SRQ6 collectively.

The teachers' collective responses to the experiences of student recidivism and its impact upon their services related to administration, leadership, and organizational policy suggested the connectivity of the student cycling problem. A significant point is that five teachers (Teachers 1, 3, 6, 8, and 10) made specific comments about how important it was to consider existing "organizational policies" and to have openness to "progressive innovation" along with the willingness to explore new "policy development". Teacher commentary revealed it was important to recognize differing "administrative innovation"

paradigms amongst “alternative schools”, “zoned schools”, “districts”, “states”, and “overall communities” in general. Cumulatively, these components reflected teachers’ perspectives regarding their “self-efficacy beliefs” in their capabilities to “successfully teach” which illustrated significant points of issue to consider as influences upon their services.

The connection between student success and effective leadership especially involving administrative innovation and policy development begins with the teachers’ input and suggestions being at the frontline of positive student learning experiences. When an administration is open to teachers’ perspectives it is open to progressive innovation and positive change. Since alternative education typically functions under different organizational policies than zoned schools it can become daunting when students cycle between them especially rapidly which often happens for students with ADHD. We try to prepare returning students to regular education as best as possible but recidivism just compounds students’ confusion frustrations and feelings of not belonging. Teachers can also feel overwhelmed when their class sizes unexpectedly change especially increases in attendees when the classroom is already full. (Teacher 10)

The overall communities at large vary with their organizational policies regarding zoned schools and alternative schools. These variances can also impact various alternative education school structures based upon their types. Some schools are

limited to grade levels while others are all inclusive encompassing K-12 alternative programs. Teachers who may rotate amongst the varying alternative schools within states or districts have diversified curriculums to adjust their teaching formats and styles. The student recidivism problem just adds to the complexity of the various examples differing administrations can yield. These organizational adjustments can be very strenuous for the teaching staff as well as the students who cycle in and out of alternative and regular education. The zoned schools typically have district wide curriculums whereas the alternative schools are more individualized. These variances can vastly impact teachers' self-efficacy beliefs in their capabilities to successfully teach. (Teacher 1)

The differing practices amongst alternative schools can be as vast as those going through entire organizational resets. When the leadership struggles to maintain the status quo and the various schools' beneath them experience the chaos the teachers and students feel the calamity. The students with ADHD seem to be impacted the most as the teachers experience the cycling effect with them more frequently. The foremost problems arise when existing policy is not followed and student cycling becomes the norm instead of the exception. This situation creates the imminent need for administrative innovation and expansive change especially with leadership and current organizational policies. (Teacher 3)

The organizational policies that we have are in need of many improvements especially in the alternative education environment. Many of the policies are antiquated and barely adhered to at all. The students with ADHD are especially prone to recidivism which greatly affects our workloads and ability to successfully teach. When a student has been returned to regular education only to be returned to alternative education in less than the minimum requisite 45 day evaluation period it is very disruptive to the classroom. This impacts our ability to successfully teach because we are teaching in circles rather than in a linear formation aiming for progress. The progress is when the student becomes a regular education learner on a permanent basis. (Teacher 6)

The teachers become the conduits of effective leadership when administrative innovation becomes stagnant. We have to let our voices be heard or else the students get caught up in the cycling and do not advance with the goal of regular education. This situation impacts our effectiveness to successfully teach. By letting our experiences known to administration only then can we hope to inspire organizational policies to be revamped and adhered to so that our students especially those with ADHD have the chance to be mainstreamed. Since we are at the forefront of direct student interaction our opinions and perspectives need to be heard so that policy improvements can be accomplished adequately. We then become the advocates and leaders for positive reinforcement when policies are not followed. (Teacher 8)

Summary

This chapter contained a comprehensive look at the findings and results of the study based upon the research questions. The chapter also included an in depth explanation of the qualitative method of data collection, the inductive process of data analysis, and how the results and findings related to the research questions.

The seven research questions were comprised of one over-arching research question (RQ1) and six secondary research questions (SRQ1 through SRQ6). The crux of the answers to these research questions can best be described as all participants' experiences affirmed direct meaning and/or significance/relevance to RQ1 except one participant had indirect experience with the study phenomenon. The participant with indirect experience was deemed a discrepant case within the research study. The remaining secondary research questions (SRQ1 through SRQ6) were all answered in the affirmative by the participants and indirectly answered by the discrepant case as previously described in this chapter. However, teacher based knowledge was considered for all of the participants providing greater compatibility and support with their similar characteristics as a teaching unit or representative group and further supported content validity for the study (Brod, et al., 2009). The wide range of purposeful sampling yielded participants that demonstrated variations within a common group while providing a representative heterogeneous population in regards to gender (Brod et al., 2009; Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). The heterogeneity of the sample combined with the data quality supports the research findings and confirms that sufficient results were obtained.

This posture supports the realistic phenomenology approach of the study and conceptual saturation as a whole for the study conclusions.

The next Chapter five (5), regarding the study conclusions, will further discuss the interpretation of the findings, limitations, recommendations, and implications for positive social change derived from the study of the research phenomenon.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

Purpose of the Study

This chapter includes an overview of the study reflected in its purpose, nature, and key findings, an interpretation of the findings, limitations of the study, recommendations, implications for positive social change, and study conclusions. Since the purpose of the study was to understand teachers' experiences regarding student cycling, termed recidivism, particularly those students with ADHD, and its effects upon their services, this chapter will further enhance understanding the nature of the study with better breadth and depth.

Nature of the Study

The nature of the study was a qualitative research approach with a focus on phenomenology. Phenomenological research is consistent with understanding and making meaning of the lived experiences of the participants (Moustakas, 1994). In phenomenology, the primary source of knowledge is perception (Moustakas, 1994). In this study, the participants are specialized or alternative education teachers who experienced a cycling or recidivism problem of their students with ADHD. To investigate these teacher experiences as a population, purposive selection was used as a method to select participants to be interviewed for qualitative research purposes (Creswell, 2014; Rudestam & Newton, 2015). In other words, the selection of the participants was deliberate and purposeful as they were likely to contribute to a deeper understanding of the posed research questions (Rudestam & Newton, 2015).

The appropriate number of participants for qualitative study is open to suggestion, for example, Moustakas (1994) did not provide guidelines for the quantity of participants for phenomenological research. Conversely, Creswell (2014) suggested interviews with up to 10 people while Patton (2002) recommended selecting sample size based upon the purpose and rationale of the study. Furthermore, Patton (2002) suggested that there are no definitive rules for participant size when considering qualitative inquiry. The researcher interviewed 10 participants in the northeast section of the country for this purposeful sample population and reached conceptual saturation of the obtained data. A more detailed explanation of the sampling method was discussed in Chapter 3. The data analysis of the findings and results was discussed in Chapter 4. The findings interrelated to the presented research questions and assimilated with the participants' perceptions and experiences expressed in their responses.

Key Findings Summary

The key findings of the study were the evolved themes and subthemes upon data analysis derived from the clusters of meaning assimilated from the grouped research questions based upon responses. The data was collected via semi-structured interviews of participants presented with an interview guide and analyzed using a continuous iterative process to identify shared themes and subthemes from their relayed perceptions, opinions, and experiences (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003; Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). There were eight themes and subthemes identified: Administrative paradigms (examples), Student learning, Organizational development, Teacher efficacy, and Organizational policy, Leadership model, Educational processes, Teacher leaders, and

grouped into two research questions clusters of meaning: RQ1, RQ2, RQ3, RQ6, and RQ4, RQ5, RQ7 respectively. While there is no perfect organizational method to coordinate each and every word, term, and significant statement derived from the interviews, I found the groupings of the key findings to be the most useful to discuss and confirm, disconfirm, and particularly extend knowledge to the field and literature base. The Themes/Subthemes Table 2, found in Chapter 4, is a useful structural depiction of these thematic groupings, thus, a helpful tool to denote the key findings of the study as a comparison to the peer-reviewed literature described in Chapter 2 for further discussion.

Interpretation of the Findings

Chapter 2 Comparison

first clusters of meaning research questions grouping.

rq1. – How, if at all, does the student cycling (i.e., recidivism) of your students with ADHD have meaning/significance/relevance to you as a teacher?

All teachers interviewed had direct experience with the student cycling problem with the exception of one having indirect knowledge of student recidivism. This teacher was considered the discrepant case within the data findings and scope of the study. Therefore, in some or various aspects, all teachers found meaning with the initial overarching research question (RQ1). The level of relevance depended upon individual experiences or knowledge of the teachers and the significance of the effects upon their teaching services. Based upon these data results, the interview questions continued with the remainder of the research questions presented to the participants. According to Atkins et al., (2008), teachers' key opinions are an essential factor as a primary

component to the successful study of the recidivism problem of students with ADHD through their perceptions, experiences, knowledge, and contributions towards its resolve.

rq2 (srq1). – What meaning/significance/relevance to you as a teacher does the recidivism of students with ADHD ascribe to perceptions, or impact upon the services, of your alternative education instruction?

According to Thoonen et al., (2011), teachers' perceptions can affect their self-efficacy beliefs which appear to be an important motivational factor for teaching practices that develop teacher learning especially understanding students with ADHD. These constructs play a pivotal role in teachers' gaining insight into various paradigms within the educational system of alternative instruction. According to Hsiao and Chang (2011), to balance organizational efficiency, the experiences, perceptions, and opinions of teachers enhance the perspective dynamics of alternative education. A part of that dynamic involves administrative paradigms where leadership is at the forefront of positive social change aspects. Hence, according to Tuytens and Devos (2011), effective leadership influences teachers' professional skill development and learning. This perspective was further explored in RQ4 for its utility application to the recidivism problem of students with ADHD.

rq3 (srq2). – How do you, as an alternative education teacher, describe your classroom experiences regarding the impact of the cycling of students with ADHD upon your services?

According to DuPaul and Eckert (1998), the classroom setting is an ideal location to poise and posture initial investigations into students with ADHD academic problems.

According to Eyal and Roth (2011), a qualitative study of 122 teachers evaluated assessment questionnaires that pertained to teaching dynamics. These dynamics reflected the concepts of the teacher leadership model, self-determination theory, and transformational leadership predictors. According to Rosenthal (2016), the goal of the reduction of student recidivism in alternative education settings required cooperative team efforts. These team efforts promoted organizational learning and encouraged organizational innovation while being supportive of teacher self-efficacy goals such as improved performance. The administrative paradigms that were expressed reflected various teacher perceptions as to how involved, concerned, or aware the tiers of administration were collaboratively engaged in the daily classroom experiences. As an example, teachers who perceived that their administrative leadership was supportive of teaching dynamics that helped to reduce student cycling felt hopeful and empowered. The foremost expressed concerns that related teachers' experiences was to inform and raise awareness to distanced administrations that do not actively inquire as to how the alternative education classrooms functioned. The influx of cycling students affected the classrooms as a whole and strained the teachers' abilities to follow curricula particularly on a daily basis. According to Kurt et al., (2011), collective efficacy and transformational leadership jointly shapes teachers' self-efficacy. This comparative analysis lends credence to the subjectivity that may arise in alternative education environments. It further defines the complexity that teachers face in these types of schools that affects the success and failure rates of transforming students with ADHD into regular education learners.

rq6 (srq5). – How do you, as an alternative education teacher, describe your lived experiences and/or perspectives regarding student learning as it may pertain to the recidivism of students with ADHD?

According to Clarke and Braun (2015), alternative education provides a different educational platform from which student learning evolves. This platform is different as compared to regular education learning platforms. The structure, curricula, and variances of alternative education as compared to regular education can be confusing to some students. According to Davis et al., (2002), the alternative education curricula are rigorous and associated with individual state standards and accountability systems. The goal of transforming alternative education students into permanent regular education learners is diverse and challenging to the teachers. According to Aaron (2006), the cultural dynamics of invoking academic readiness combined with high expectations of graduation success play a factor in the ability to promote student engagement. The foremost connection between teachers' experiences of student learning and the cycling problem of students in and out of regular education and alternative education was the disruption to their learning that cycling perpetuated. The group of students seemingly affected the most was those students with ADHD. According to Rougeaux (2011), the cyclical recidivism problem of youth with ADHD can be a complicated paradigm depending upon where they are in the development of the disorder's signs, symptoms, and ramifications. The foremost goals of the teachers were to transform their students into regular education learners on a permanent basis so that their learning could progress.

second clusters of meaning research questions grouping.

rq4 (srq3). – How do you, as an alternative education teacher, describe your lived experiences and/or perspectives regarding effective leadership as it may pertain to the recidivism of students with ADHD?

According to Thompson (2010), leaders who can demonstrate a visionary approach to their leadership style, such as transformational ones, coach and develop proactive employees adaptive to change. According to Macdonald et al., (2009), visionary leaders encourage team innovation such as alternative education teachers often engage to propel their students to become regular education learners on a permanent basis. As mentioned in RQ2, Tuytens and Devos (2011) postulated the significance of effective leadership regarding teachers' professional skill development and learning. The participants relayed their perceptions of how educational processes were helped or hindered by the skillfulness of an administration's leadership model. For example, when positive social change aspects were included in organizational policy development, teachers were encouraged to provide their input and suggestions. This inclusion of teachers as a leadership type model that affects improvements, such as with instructional practices within the alternative education teaching environment, helped to increase their self-efficacy. According to Macdonald et al., (2009), the connection between systems leadership and instructional practices is an imperative point to promulgating consistent behaviors of students with ADHD in an alternative school environment. Therefore, these perspectives helped to confirm the study findings as they related and expanded the knowledge base of the scholarly literature.

rq5 (srq4). – How do you, as an alternative education teacher, describe your lived experiences and/or perspectives regarding organizational policy as it may pertain to the recidivism of students with ADHD?

According to Hsiao and Chang (2011), organizational development such as innovation refers to the creation or adoption of an idea or behavior that is new to the organization. In essence, according to Greenhaigh et al., (2005), innovation is the implementation of internally generated ideas whether pertaining to policies, processes, programs, services, and so forth. Teachers are innovators within alternative education environments striving for policy improvements every chance they get. Improved policies can assist the student recidivism problem. According to Strain (2009), when teachers fail to accomplish their educational duties, three key components that may affect their success involved teachers' roles in policy making, curriculum, assessment, and the need for local autonomy within each school district. Because alternative education is so complex yet realistically unique to every region, state, city, town, and so forth, the ability for its teachers to be directly involved in its curriculum creations and policy making is paramount to both student and teacher success. Therefore, the academic success of alternative education students is intertwined with the educational processes the teachers become actively engaged such as with organizational policy development.

rq7 (srq6). – What issues, if any, in your belief of your capabilities to successfully teach (i.e., self-efficacy) do you as a teacher experience as you experience the recidivism of students with ADHD?

According to Clarke and Braun (2015) and Bandura (1994), teachers' beliefs regarding their capabilities to produce effects stems from motivation reflected in actions, persistence, and intensity of efforts. According to Cole (2009), self-regulation influences can affect motivation, thought processes, emotional states, and behavioral patterns. According to Al Ramiah and Hewstone (2013), teachers who are more keenly aware of their teaching capabilities can enhance their students' progress with positive motivation. For example, encouraging students to aspire the goal of regular education is a positive indicator. According to Rosenthal (2016), one of the goals of teacher self-efficacy is improved performance which can only enhance their beliefs in their capabilities to successfully teach. When the teachers relayed their willingness to expand their roles as a leadership type model to help their students academically succeed, their self-efficacy beliefs also increased thus perceptually improving their teacher services.

Limitations of the Study

Trustworthiness

As described in Chapter 1, the limitations of the study are those common to qualitative research. Foremost, the participants were predominantly unknown to the researcher which may or may not have impacted their responses. Hence, the teachers comfort levels with expressing their views was found to be variable depending upon their desire to answer the research questions as presented. This variability seemed more due to their knowledge base and levels of experience rather than a desire to please or avoid the inquiry. In consideration of this limitation, the researcher presented an interview guide aiding preparation while respecting the participants' availability. Additionally, the

Consent Form included a few sample research questions and a voluntary Demographic Questionnaire (Appendix A) was presented at the same time. Once interviewing was completed, a thank you note for participating was sent. Due to the small number of participants, there is a distinct plausibility that these teachers may not have been entirely representative of the larger global alternative education teaching population, thus, limiting generalization of findings. This assertion is rational recognizing limitations of the study, but it does not necessitate that the study findings are not a constructive and useful addition to the knowledge base of the field. Conversely, it adds realistic credibility and rationale to the purpose of the study as a meaningful contribution to the domain of specialized education (Creswell, 2014). Since internal validation strategies and reliability perspectives were considered and carried out in as efficient and cost effective manner as reasonably possible, the validity and reliability of the study is sound (Creswell, 2014; Schwandt, 2015). Hence, this qualitative study is a trustworthy contribution to the larger global alternative education teaching population as a whole group of specialized education instructors.

Recommendations

Further Research and Actions

I recommend that further investigation in the alternative education domain be explored. For instance, other types of alternative education schools (i.e.; types 1, 2, and 3) may potentially be observed along with other intermingled testing parameters. In addition, as was discussed in Chapter 2, application of data gathering instruments such as the *Collective Teacher Efficacy Scale*, the *Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire*, and the

Teacher's Sense of Efficacy Scale seem helpful to this realm of research (Kurt, Duyar, & Calik, 2011). There seems to be few empirical studies that focus strictly on specific leadership variables that contribute to effective and productive teacher services (Tuytens & Devos, 2011). These suggestions, in whatever combinations may yield interest to future researchers to explore, seemingly may help to add more depth and breadth to the knowledge base of the field as further research potentially expands its boundaries within the alternative education forum. This qualitative study brings a unique opportunity to gain in depth knowledge of teachers' perceptions, opinions, and perspectives regarding their self-efficacy (Lim & Kim, 2014). Therefore, I encourage further exploration and study within the field.

Implications

Positive Social Change

The results from this study may perpetuate the influence of improved educational processes, policies, and practices within alternative and/or specialized education environments by providing the viewpoints of its teachers (Bandura, 1986; Bandura, 1984; Booker & Mitchell, 2011). Furthermore, the study has good potential to be a source of information and guidance for those seeking similar solutions in regular education as well as enhancing awareness. Essentially, this study expresses the perceptions, opinions, and perspectives of the teachers who are a direct source of information regarding the intricacies of the student recidivism problem. The teachers of alternative education are an untapped resource of direct information as they are best suited to express the recidivism problem because they lived their experiences on a daily basis (Creswell,

2014). Through the in depth understanding of teachers' perceptions and experiences, it is postulated that this information contributes to organizational and educational process knowledge and helps to bring about positive social change. Furthermore, the study explores aspects of a leadership model in its exploration of teacher interactive dynamics thus experiences.

One of the greatest challenges that teacher's in alternative education face is their ability to be successful as transformational leaders particularly of students with ADHD. In other words, these teachers are models for positive social change. Because the nature of alternative education is so vastly diversified, and at times chaotic and unpredictable, the ability for teachers to transform students with ADHD into regular education learners can at times be beyond challenging for them to accomplish (Naicker & Mestry, 2011). Additionally, the complexities involved with alternative education and its diversified leadership roles have led to the emergence of distributive forms of leadership in these schools. Basically, the traditional hierarchy of leadership has been replaced with more modern collective leadership practices including process unification and relationship building (Naicker & Mestry, 2011).

The formulation and development of positive relationships amongst the student population (including those with ADHD), and the school's staff, especially with its alternative education teachers, is paramount to their ability to be successful as transformational leaders (Kurt, et al., 2011). Hence, the interactive group dynamics of alternative education teachers is paramount to them as individuals with as much fervency as they formulate responsibilities and leadership roles for the student

populations they serve. At times, these teachers seem to have a ubiquitous schedule that prompts admiration for their tenacity and perseverance in their dedication to their students' specialized needs. In other words, the alternative education teachers' willingness to expand their teaching boundaries is also admirable. They are aware that their efforts are needed in order to help their students reach their goals of being permanent regular education learners. These perspectives are win win situations for both the students and teachers since the students hopefully benefit and the teachers ultimately improve their services. Hence, by teachers being proactive, it seems to help the reactivity of the student cycling, or recidivism, problem and their hefty workloads. Although the study boundaries are limited to field observations within a Type 4 alternative education school, the implications for positive social change are evident for other school types contemporarily worthy of further study.

Methodological, Theoretical, and Empirical Interpretations

The choice of a qualitative research study method utilizing a phenomenological approach was affirmative regarding this population of teachers' experiences (Saldana, 2015). The teachers were an inspirational population to interview regarding the theoretical premise of Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy construct. I discovered that this population of teachers held positive opinions of their ability to successfully teach, but were somewhat constricted yet seemingly liberated by the extraneous elements that entwined their teaching strategies (Smith, 2007). In other words, the participants' teaching experiences, as expressed by their answers to the research questions, sparked their autonomy and leadership skills. These elements included administrative paradigms

(examples), student learning perspectives, organizational development quagmires, and teacher efficacy as well as organizational policies (adhered to or not), leadership models, educational processes, and teachers as leaders. These essence depictions were assimilated through the derived evolving themes from the participants' responses to the research questions and demographics. Their expressed experiences provided insight into the phenomenon of alternative education student cycling from the perceptions and perspectives of teachers as key opinion leaders (Atkins et al., 2008; Padgett, 2004).

Recommendations for Practice

Education has been a source for positive social change by examining inequities in society in general and striving to further identify them to better understand situations to make a difference for those needing specialized support (Cemaloglu, 2011). These inequities often include at-risk students whom may be identified by various means such as exceptionality, culture, or gender to list a few examples (Manning & Baruth, 1995). Because alternative education provides a mechanism by which this can be accomplished, by providing an educational environment that is focused on specialized education, supporting alternative means to educate those with special needs is a key component to bringing more youth into the domain of regular education so they may academically succeed. From a practical standpoint, teaching practices within regular education are not the same within alternative education. Therefore, by better understanding the viewpoints and experiences of alternative educators, regular education instructors may become more cognizant of the challenges their colleagues endure on a daily basis. Through better understanding and levels of support, teacher services may improve all around.

Researcher Reflection

While the support of students is an integral part of the educational process, the understanding of teachers and their concerns, which can affect their services, was the primary focus of this study. The continued investigation and exploration of this educational field can only enhance the understanding of this very challenging student population to serve. The inclusion of teachers' perceptions, opinions, perspectives, and experiences brings an important component to understanding the field as a whole. Through gaining information from teachers' experiences, the educational domain expands and grows from their knowledge. Therefore, I reflect that this research graciously provided a significant vantage point directly from the teachers' perceptions and experiences of the alternative education system and its intrinsic problems. This study inspires the examination of one of the foremost problems that being student cycling, or recidivism, especially those students with ADHD in the alternative education domain. The present day awareness this study brings to the field enhances the need for further research.

Conclusions

Key Essence of the Study

Currently, there is not a substantial amount of research designated to the specific description or assessment of alternative school programs including its teachers. In particular, with direct relevance to this situation, is the labor division which is most important because it stimulates the problem solving and creativity capacities of the organization while encouraging organizational learning (Hage, 1999). In an alternative

education setting, the labor division is important due to the complexity of the educational environment and the need for vision within its organizational structure. The study enhances awareness of the profession and provides insight into the experiences of the primary conduits of information within the field and that being its teachers.

Therefore, this study provides current research into the complex subject area of alternative education which helps to fill in the gaps in the literature base. I am hopeful that the study brings an informative contribution to positive social change aspects within the field of specialized education services.

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Appendix A: Demographic Questionnaire

Demographic Questionnaire

The following Demographic Questionnaire was voluntary.

Please identify and/or describe:

1. Ethnicity – What is the social group with whom you identify or belong to by either a common national or cultural tradition? i.e., American, Hispanic, Italian, Irish, etc.
2. Race - i.e., White/Caucasian, Black/Negroid, Indian, Asian, etc.
3. Gender - Male or Female?
4. Age – Presently
5. How many years teaching experience with alternative education students do you have?
6. What grade(s) did you teach? i.e., Kindergarten or 1st through Grade 12?

Appendix B: Interview Guide

Interview Guide

The following interview questions were provided as a guide to the participants once consent was obtained. The interview guide was developed by operationalizing the study's research questions. In essence, the guide was designed to minimize variability interpreting the research questions to support content validity (Creswell, 2013).

The research questions for the interview guide were designed to get to the point of the interview inquiry while allowing for questions that might emerge from participant responses (Hatch, 2002). In essence, Hatch (2002) suggested that the researcher initially direct the flow and direction of the planned questions but allow participant responses to guide the subsequent path. The interviews of the participants took one to two hours (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2011).

Based upon the research topic and its emphasis, there was one overarching research question (RQ1) and six secondary research questions (SRQ1 through SRQ6) depending upon the response to the first question (RQ1) as follows:

1. How, if at all, does the student cycling (i.e., recidivism) of your students with ADHD have meaning/significance/relevance to you as a teacher? (RQ1)
2. What meaning/significance/relevance to you as a teacher does the recidivism of students with ADHD ascribe to perceptions, or impact upon the services, of your alternative education instruction? (SRQ1)

3. How do you, as an alternative education teacher, describe your classroom experiences regarding the impact of the cycling of students with ADHD upon your services? (SRQ2)
4. How do you, as an alternative education teacher, describe your lived experiences and/or perspectives regarding effective leadership as it may pertain to the recidivism of students with ADHD? (SRQ3)
5. How do you, as an alternative education teacher, describe your lived experiences and/or perspectives regarding organizational policy as it may pertain to the recidivism of students with ADHD? (SRQ4)
6. How do you, as an alternative education teacher, describe your lived experiences and/or perspectives regarding student learning as it may pertain to the recidivism of students with ADHD? (SRQ5)
7. What issues, if any, in your belief of your capabilities to successfully teach (i.e., self-efficacy) do you as a teacher experience as you experience the recidivism of students with ADHD? (SRQ6)

Appendix C: Student Transition Rating Screen

Student Transition Rating Screen (STRS)

Student: _____ Date: _____

DOB: _____

Zoned School: _____ Counselor: _____

The STRS is used to rate a transitioning student's pre-transfer behaviors, return behaviors (to their sending school) as well as for the sending school to rate the student's success within a 45-day trial period.

0-Never, 1-Sometimes, 2-Most of the Time, 3-Always

1 .	Student attends school as scheduled:	0 1 2 3
2 .	Pre-transfer behaviors significantly reduced with additional intervention:	0 1 2 3
3 .	Pre-transfer behaviors are significantly reduced with regular intervention:	0 1 2 3
4 .	Student is compliant with all prescribed medications if needed:	0 1 2 3
5 .	After interventions, staff is confident about student's improved behavior:	0 1 2 3
6 .	Student has expressed readiness to return to assigned classroom setting:	0 1 2 3
7 .	Receiving school staff has expressed understanding of supports needed:	0 1 2 3
8 .	Supports for student are available at the receiving school:	0 1 2 3
9 .	Student's parent(s) effectively engaged in student's behavior successes:	0 1 2 3
1 0 .	Non-school supports effectively engaged in student's behavior successes:	0 1 2 3

Low scores, 14 and below, makes a student eligible for alternative education transfer.
High scores, 15 and above, makes a student eligible to return to zoned school.

Appendix D: Categories/Codes and Themes/Subthemes

Recidivism/student cycling	R/st cyc
Teacher perceptions	TPrcps
Instructional strategies	Istrat
Time (teachers)	Tt
Classroom size/student ratios	Cs/Sr
Effective teaching	Etch
Teacher efficacy	Teff
Reflective practices	Rprc
Leadership/transformation reg ed	L/Tr re
Student learning	SLn
Resources/books/tools	R/b/t
Administration	Adm
Collaborations/zone/district	Cll/z/d
Policies	Pcy
Peer collaboration/alt ed/reg ed	PCll/ae/re
Support systems	Ssys
Modeling	M
Counseling	Cslg
Feedback/Innovation	F/I
Goals/Plans	G/P
School types	Styps

Codes Grouped by Themes and Subthemes

Themes:

Organizational policy

- Alternative school
- Zoned school
- District
- States vary with alternative education support
- Alt ed support can vary amongst cities/towns

Administrative paradigms

- Individualized per alternative school
- Differing practices alternative/regular education
- Central office balancing act alt/reg ed
- Constructive feedback variable

Student learning

- Alternative education/classroom size problematic

Student learning (continued)

- Regular education/disruption from cycling
- Varying curriculums invokes adjustments
- Recidivism/cycling increases confusion
- Instructional strategies helps progress
- Teacher/student ratios maxed

Leadership model

- Teachers as innovators
- Teachers as guides for administration
- Teachers as conduits of pertinent information
- Teachers as positive social change agents

Subthemes:

Educational processes

- Within alternative school (type)
- Within grade level (K/M/H)
- All in one alt ed school complex (type 4)
- Vary amongst school types

Organizational development/innovation

- Alternative school driven
- Teacher derived/inspired change
- Time constraints to implement goals/policies
- Difficult to put plans into action/daily chaos

Teacher efficacy/role relationships

- Teacher/student bond
- Help address student needs
- Resource (guides transition)
- Work in tandem with counselors IEPs/BIPs

Teacher leaders/transformational model

- Evaluates student progress
- Student advocates for reg ed placement
- Policy enforcers/re-evaluators
- Transition planners/goal setters
- Initiators of student transformation
- Teachers most knowledgeable of student potential