

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE COMPLETION OF THE HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY
PROGRAM BY BLACK FEMALE INMATES

by

Erica Latres Yuille

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

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Sharon Michael-Chadwell, Ed.D., Committee Chair

ABSTRACT

There is limited available research to date that has investigated the factors influencing the completion of the High School Equivalency Program (HEP) by Black female inmates. A high school education is an important subject explored by researchers when studying females in prison. This predictive correlational study used archival data to determine if age, length of sentence, type of crime, and family status influenced Black female inmates' HEP completion rates. A logistic regression analysis was used to examine 100 Black female inmates in state prison. After completing the investigation, it was determined the criterion variable of age was statistically significant in predicting the completion the HEP by Black female inmates; however, the other criterion variables including length of sentence, type of crime, and family status were not statistically significant in predicting the completion of the HEP by Black female inmates.

Keywords: high school equivalency program, correctional facilities, female inmates, Black female inmates, prison programs

Dedication

You always expected the best of me, so when I accomplished great things you were not astonished. You taught me that I was destined for greatness, so when it happened I should not be in disbelief. You taught me how to be humble and never complacent. Once a mission was accomplished, it was help someone, then on to the next!

Even in death you have constantly encouraged me to be the best woman that I can be. I often hear your voice telling me I am doing a good job and I need to keep going. You never cared what my dreams were, only that I ran towards them and never stopped. I could not have asked for a more loving, supportive, and charismatic man to guide me through this life!

Dad, a piece of my heart will be FOREVER missing because you took it with you when you died. I will make sure to leave the same imprints of love and lessons that you instilled in me. I will continue to build our legacy.

Loving you forever and a day,

Erica

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List of Abbreviations

Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS)

Adult Basic Education (ABE)

Bureau of Prisons (BOP)

Career and Technical Education (CTE)

Color-Blind Racial Attitude Scale (CoBRAS)

Critical Race Theory (CRT)

Date of Birth (DOB)

Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA)

General Equivalency Development (GED)

High School Equivalency Program (HEP)

High School Equivalency Diploma (HSE)

High School Equivalency Test (HiSET)

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Kuder-Richardson Reliability Index (KR20)

Legal Defense and Educational Fund (LDF)

Methadone Maintenance Treatment (MMT)

National Association for the Advancement of Color People (NAACP)

National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)

Post-Secondary Education (PSE)

Reasoning through Language Arts (RLA)

Standard Error of Measurement (SEM)

Statistical Analysis Software Package (SPSS)

Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC)

University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

This study determined the best predictors (age, length of sentence, type of crime, and family status) influencing Black female inmates to complete the HEP. Completing the HEP while in prison may be the difference between a reformed offender and an endangered population of Blacks in society. Chapter one discusses the background of correctional facilities, some of the educational services these facilities offer, and critical race theory. Lastly, the purpose of the study is given and the significance of the study is also explained.

Background

The color of mass incarceration is Black with over one of the two million incarcerated being Black people (Tucker, 2017). From routine police stops to long-term incarceration, Blacks are five times more likely to be arrested than Whites (Hetey & Eberhardt, 2018). The number of female prisoners is also growing at an alarming rate (Hongo, Katz, & Valenti, 2015) and like Black males; Black females are the majority (Swavola, Riley, & Subramanian, 2016). Lower educational attainment has been correlated with the Black rate of prison entry (Evans, Garthwaite, & Moore, 2016). Therefore, the completion of the HEP by Black female inmates will assist with employment after release and contribute to lowering the recidivism rate (Brock, 2017).

Historical Overview

Correctional facilities were instituted on the idea that people's attitudes, thoughts, and actions can be improved with discipline and education. Since the conception of the penal system, education and discipline have been the foundation for prison programs (Gordon & Weldon, 2003). Gordon and Weldon (2003) had confidence that educational programs influence inmates

to reduce recidivism and after release make them an asset to the community (Coates, 2016). Hall (2015) discovered inmates who did not participate in the educational programs had more post-release arrests than those inmates who completed educational programs while incarcerated.

Rehabilitation services dealing with mental health, religion, self-help, recreation, medical treatment, career, and technical education are offered to inmates (Seigafo, 2017); career and technical education is the oldest and most successful of the services (Gordon & Weldon, 2003). These services are provided to promote healthy living and to discourage the return of inmates back to prison once released (Rodriguez, 2017).

Peterson (2016) claimed that unlike other prison programs that choose to use incentives to reduce recidivism, prison education showed its worth upon release with a lower recidivism rate. Most inmates who completed the HEP had a better second chance in society. Fabelo (2002) affirmed the more education inmates received in jail, the better prepared they are for the community and the workforce.

In 2014, some parts of the United States made the HiSET an alternative for the GED test (Zinth, 2015). There has been very little research conducted on the High School Equivalency Program (HEP) so past and current studies point to the GED program. Like the HEP, the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) compared the GED program provided in jail to the equivalent of a high school diploma (Federal Bureau of Prisons, 2003). An instructor, who has inmate tutors as assistants, is responsible for the GED program in correctional facilities. Like the GED program, all inmates have the opportunity to participate in the HEP.

Black male students are known for having the lowest graduation rate and the highest dropout rates compared to other races (Mezuk, 2009). Nationwide, 75% of white males graduate high school while only forty-seventy percent of black males finish (Vital Signs, 2008).

Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter emphasized that over 50% of Black males do not complete their high school education (Pluviose, 2008).

Black male students are more likely grouped in special education classes and labeled with learning disabilities than male students of other races (Palmer & Maramba, 2010). When Black males do not have the necessary skills to function in society it results in many of them experiencing recidivism (Hall, Wooten, & Lundgren, 2016). Recidivism is being rearrested for any offense (Cottle, Lee, Heilbrun, 2001). Historically, Black males have been the leaders on the school to prison pipeline. The school to prison pipeline is where students are introduced to the justice system because the school system uses law enforcement rather than in-school discipline to reprimand students (Owens, 2017).

Black females are indeed not exempt from the road to the prison. Covington (2008) conveyed that females in America's jails, prisons, and community correctional facilities are the most unseen, neglected, and misunderstood in society. The oppression that poor black mothers receive through the use of racism, sexism, and classism makes them a far higher risk for the penal institution than other females (Sandoval, Baumgartner, & Clark, 2015). There is no known evidence to support Black female inmates' use of rehabilitation services such as educational and technical studies, drugs and alcohol, and depression while behind bars. However, according to Staton-Tindall, Duvall, McNeese, Walker, and Leukefeld (2011), there is evidence that some incarcerated females benefit from jail-based programs. It depends on the female, her strengths, her weaknesses, and the ability to overcome. Zgoba, Haugebrook, and Jenkins (2008) documented that poorly educated parolees have a far higher risk of unemployment and living a criminal life.

Theoretical Background Overview

The theory underpinning the issue of Black females in prison is the critical race theory (CRT). CRT was formed in the 1970s and at conception was considered a more subtle form of racism (Delgado, Stefancic, & Liendo, 2012). The concept of CRT is related to critical legal studies and critical theory. Critical legal studies are the foundation of CRT. Wing and Willis (1999) described critical legal studies as originating to bring awareness to the different relationships of power that exist in a so-called *neutral* society. Boyle (1984) realized that critical legal studies examined the neutrality of the legal system when dealing with minorities and levels of power in the justice system and politics.

According to Wellmer (2014), Max Horkheimer derived critical theory in 1930 in Frankfurt, Germany. Critical theory was the notion that we as people would become blind to the human forces that support our separation (Parker, 2012). The human forces that defend separation could be things like social status, gender, height, weight, economic value, and the list goes on (Parker, 2012). Horkheimer believed that all human beings were involved in the struggle to become equal and conquer self-development (Wellmer, 2014). The idea of critical theory was to encourage individuals to become better people by looking beyond what others did not have (Wilding, 2008). By ignoring the shortcomings of others, a person would have more time to develop himself or herself into a better-rounded individual.

CRT argues that White people have and continue to dominate all races, gender, sexual power, and the law (Mocombe, 2017). Although Black people being in the bondage of slavery are over, it is a fact that race still matters (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Racial inequality still exists in neighborhoods, the education system, the economic system, and the judicial system (Ray, Randolph, Underhill, & Luke, 2017). CRT has been present in the courtrooms since

archaic laws allowed Whites to testify against anyone, but prohibited Blacks from testifying against Whites (Rose, 2017). CRT does not only pertain to reality; it exists everywhere, even on the television. When Black females began working in television, they more than likely played the role of the slave or the drug-addicted mother (Oforlea, & Mullen, 2012). CRT has and will always be an issue that affects the lives of Black females. Until CRT is non-existent the only hope incarcerated Black females have in finally escaping the judicial system is to become educated while in prison.

Problem Statement

The problem for the proposed quantitative research study was that little was known concerning the variables that influence Black female inmates in completing the high school equivalency program while in state prison. There have been little to no studies conducted on the HEP. However, studies have been conducted on the use of the General Education Development program (GED); which is equivalent to the HEP. Like the HSE, the GED is equivalent to a high school diploma (Larson, Gaeta, & Sager, 2016). Dowdy, Nurss, Nelson, Pottinger-Bird, and Walters (2005) investigated a group of Black females completing the GED program, but the participants were not incarcerated. There are currently 12,511 female inmates in federal prison (BOP, 2017) but researchers have yet to analyze Black female inmates receiving their High School Equivalency diploma (HSE). Akers (2013) researched the influences of the GED program on male inmates and recommended that research continue beginning with the female population. Completion of the HEP while incarcerated is the key to Black females maintaining their freedom and advancing them and their families upon release.

Tangney et al. (2016) and Mendoza (2007) observed female inmates with alcoholism. Tangney et al. (2016) interviewed inmates during their initial processing into prison, during

incarceration and post-release. The results showed that participating in the substance abuse treatment program decreased the alcoholism rate among those former inmates (Tangney et al., 2016). During Mendoza's (2007) study each participant was asked questions about their addiction before they entered the jail and while they were inside. The study concluded that many of the females drank the day a crime was committed or considered drinking a daily habit. Tangney et al. (2016) and Mendoza (2007) proved there is a massive need for substance abuse programs in prison.

Williams and Schulte-Day (2006) administered a study on 120 pregnant prisoners. The study produced the result that pregnant incarcerated females have a worse time with post-partum depression than those who are free. This study stressed the importance of mental health programs in jail. Kubiak et al. (2017) orchestrated a test that used 809 females who experienced sexual misconduct by mostly male prison staff. This study made it evident that procedures need to be put in place to ensure victims have supportive networks. Although there have been studies that examined alcoholism, mental health, and sexual abuse toward female inmates, the problem is there have been no known studies regarding factors that influence Black female inmates to receive their HSE diploma using available educational services.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this predictive correlational study was to determine if a relationship existed between the predictor variables of age, length of sentence, type of crime, and family status and Black female inmates' completion of a High School Equivalency Program (HEP) while in state prison. The predictor variables are age, length of sentence, type of crime, and family status. The age of the participants was determined by their time spent alive since being born and measured in years (Schwall, Hedge, & Borman, 2012). The judge that presided over

the case interpreted the length of the sentence in months; which is determined by severity of the crime, the danger involved, and other individual factors (Jordan & Freiburger, 2015). Type of crime was distinguished by violent crime or non-violent crime. Fajnzylber, Lederman, and Loayza, (2002) proclaimed violent crimes consist of the intent to threaten or harm a person or force used in a criminal act. Durose and Mumola (2002) clarified non-violent crimes as crimes that do not consist of harming an individual physically. Umberson (1987) identified family status as an inmate who possessed a parent to child relationship.

Significance of the Study

The foundation of Black families can become solid if Black female inmates have at least a High School Equivalent diploma (HSE) when they return home. In Brewster's (2015) opinion, prison programs allow inmates to be creative, use their hearts, apply their minds, and find their self-worth. Link and Roman (2017) assured that one of the main reasons repeat offenders are relentless in their criminal ways after release is the lack of employment and financial stability. Until the HiSET was created in 2014, the state of North Carolina used the GED test to allow adult inmates to finish high school and earn a diploma (Zinth, 2015). The HiSET and GED test are considered to be equal test; both result in a secondary education diploma (HiSET, 2018). The GED program is one of the tools provided to Black female inmates to improve their chances of becoming law-abiding citizens upon release (Nuttall, Hollmen, & Staley (2003). Nuttall et al. (2003) admitted that an offender who has a GED once released from prison is less likely to contribute to recidivism rates. Harlow, Jenkins, and Steurer (2010) took the stance that inmates who have participated in prison educational programs tend to perform equally or at a higher rate than most people in the community. Tyler (2003) insisted a GED certificate would lead to more

money for one's family and Siegel (2016) affirmed a GED certificate meant more employment for the community, which benefits society.

Akers (2013) researched the influences of the GED program on male inmates and recommended research should continue with the female population. Dowdy et al. (2005) completed a study about Black females receiving their GED, but they were not incarcerated. The lack of research on Black female inmates and their quest for the HSE diploma proves that this area is imperative to the improvement of the Black family, Black community, and the world. Rodriguez (2017) implied that positive changes in inmates' education lessened new criminal behavior. Also, positive changes in education led former inmates to find jobs faster than those who did not obtain an education while incarcerated (Rodriguez, 2017).

There are currently 12,511 female inmates in federal prison (Bureau of Prisons, 2017). There has been exploration relating to female prisoners. Tangney et al. (2016) and Mendoza (2007) observed female inmates with alcoholism. Tangney et al. (2016) interviewed inmates during their initial processing into prison, during incarceration and post-release. The results showed that participating in the substance abuse treatment program decreased the alcoholism rate among those former inmates (Tangney et al., 2016). During Mendoza's (2007) study each participant was asked questions about their addiction before they entered the jail and while they are inside. The study concluded that many of the females drank the day they committed the crime or considered drinking a daily habit. Tangney et al. (2016) and Mendoza (2007) showed there is a massive need for substance abuse programs in prison.

Williams and Schulte-Day (2006) administered a study on 120 pregnant prisoners. The study produced the result that pregnant incarcerated females have a worse time with post-partum depression than those who are free. This study stressed the importance of mental health

programs in jail. Kubiak et al. (2017) orchestrated a test that used 809 females who experienced sexual misconduct by mostly male prison staff. This study made it evident that procedures need to be put in place to ensure victims have supportive networks.

One type of support network is education. Education makes people have more self-confidence, self-esteem; it provides opportunities for better jobs and to improve the economics for family survival. Without an education some people feel they are looked at as failures; therefore, having a HSE boosts self-esteem and gives recipients self-confidence (Gruen, 2018). People who obtain a GED have skills required to join the workforce (Batchelder et al., 2015). It is possible having a GED contributes to the reduction in recidivism rates, which leads to a safer society (Leone & Wruble, 2017).

Research Question

RQ1: Is there a relationship between age, length of sentence, type of crime, and family status of Black female inmates' while in a state prison and their completion of a High School Equivalency Program (HEP)?

Definitions

1. *Antagonist* - Someone who uses color-blindness to stop the study or improvement of equality (Mazzocco, 2017).
2. *Bureau of Prisons (BOP)* - Protects federal inmates using federal programs and safety daily (Bureau of Prisons, 2017).
3. *Critical Race Theory (CRT)* - Supports the argument that White people have and continue to govern race, gender, sexual power, and the law (Mocombe, 2017).
4. *Egalitarian* - Person who considers racial injustice close to being solved and also thinks talk of racism can cease because it is no longer a pressing issue (Mazzocco, 2017).

5. *General Equivalency Development (GED)* - The equivalence of a high school diploma (Federal Bureau of Prisons, 2003).
6. *Internal Review Board (IRB)* - “A committee of five or more diverse individuals who review research protocols and monitor ongoing studies to ensure the protection of human research subjects” (Oakes, 2002, p. 443).
7. *High School Equivalency (HSE)* – The equivalence of a high school diploma (HiSET, 2018).
8. *Kuder-Richardson Formula 20 coefficient (KR20)* - Tests the reliability in each subject area (math, social studies, science and reasoning through language arts) of the GED (Whitney, Malizio, & Patience, 1986).
9. *Protectionist* - A person who believes minorities use the race card to their advantage by acting like the victim in situations that apply (Mazzocco, 2017).
10. *Reasoning Through Language Arts (RLA)* - Portion of the general equivalency test that requires reading and reasoning (Lockwood, Nally, Dowdell, McGlone, & Steurer, 2013).
11. *Recidivism* - Being rearrested for any offense (Cottle et al., 2001).
12. *Rehabilitation* - An intervention that reduces reoffending (Day, Casey, Ward, & Vess, 2013).
13. *Satisfactory (SAT)* - Given when a student has completed the minimum 240 hours or more to pass the general equivalency test (Federal Bureau of Prisons, 2003).
14. *Unsatisfactory (UNSAT)* - Given when a student has not completed the minimum 240 hours to pass the general equivalency test (Federal Bureau of Prisons, 2003).

15. *Visionary* - A person who knows there is a race relation problem, but believes the best way to solve it is to focus on the things that people have in common rather than the difference among them (Mazzocco, 2017).

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

Many Black females go to jail uneducated and return home the same way leading to a re-arrest. Dodge (2019) wrote many females are imprisoned because of a lack of education, which leads to economic and social hardships and re-arrest. Completion of the High School Equivalency Program (HEP) while incarcerated is the key to Black females maintaining freedom and advancing themselves and their families upon release. Chapter two discusses the theoretical framework, critical race theory (CRT), theorists for and against CRT, correctional facility education, the HEP, the General Education Development program (GED), and the philosophical underpinnings of each. Research related to age, length of sentence, type of crime, and family status will be discussed in the context of motivation, attitudes, and socioeconomics.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework guiding this study is critical race theory (CRT). CRT is built on the foundation that racism is unfortunately a natural and normal way of American life (Asch, 2017). Race is the foundation for Black oppression (Groves & Moore, 2016). Derrick Bell created CRT from the personal experiences and mistreatment endured by Black people (Hughes, Noblit & Cleveland, 2013). Bell and other Black activists started using the term critical race theory (CRT) after extensive studies into the contradictory laws that did not value the lives of Black people (Solórzano, 1997).

Bell was a member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). The government asked Bell to resign from the NAACP because his neutrality between the NAACP and the government was becoming questionable. Instead of relinquishing his position with the NAACP's Legal Defense and Educational Fund (LDF) he left his

government position (Bell, 1975). He questioned the notions of race as they were used against Black people in the justice system (Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, & Thomas, 1995). He believed Black people were not afforded the same rights as Whites in the justice system, society, and education.

The Black student protest for a Black faculty member at the Harvard School of Law led to the hiring of Derrick Bell. Bell continued his writings explaining and examining CRT. He derived the themes (along with other CRT theorists) of CRT from his experiences as a civil rights attorney and as a Black man in America (Hughes et al., 2013). He along with students staged protest and sit-ins to encourage the faculty at Harvard to hire more Black educators. Harvard eventually hired three Black professors, but they were all male (Delgado, 1987). Again, he protested and ended up leaving his post as a tenured professor at Harvard because the administration would not agree to hire at least one Black woman at the prestigious school. Not only is Bell an award-winning author, but he also has an award named in his honor. The Derrick Bell Legacy Award was created to pay respect to the CRT theorists that work to advance the right for social justice (Urrieta Jr. & Villenas, 2013). Bell died in 2011 but is known for his leadership in civil rights, justice, and the CRT.

Gilborn (2015) declared CRT challenges the injustices of race, law, and power within society and culture. Wing and Willis (1999) wrote that CRT was formed not only to address and focus on race, discrimination, law, and power, but also to provide productive ways to eliminate the injustices that live within these categories. CRT applies to the study of Black female inmates and their quest of HEP completion because race, discrimination, law, and power could all possibly contribute to the reason why some Black female inmates are uneducated and imprisoned.

Horkheimer (1976) remarked that CRT draws its meaning partially from the critical theory. Just as Horkheimer viewed human separation as being social status, gender, height, weight, and economic value, Martinez (2014) revealed that CRT theorists' declare human separation for Black people as being, but not limited to: race, gender, class, social status, and economic value. Derrick Bell took critical theory and expanded it to CRT. Instead of focusing on all people he targeted Black people and their fight for justice and equality. Delgado and Stefancic (2013) highlighted that CRT (like critical theory) also stood on the notion that people should become blind to the things that separate them from others, in particular, the color of one's skin.

CRT is a movement created to draw attention to and also end White supremacy and endorse equality for all people (Bracey, 2015). Bracey (2015) defended that CRT was established because the two races of White (the oppressor) and Black (the oppressed) were not equal in power, class, gender, knowledge, or economics. The social view of critical theory is correlated with the racial view of critical race theory not only, by the use of groups to separate people from one another in life, but also by proposing the theory to change society.

Martinez (2014) admitted that the term critical race theory (CRT) originated in the Law schools of the United States. In 2007, Delgado and Stefancic realized there are two conflicting stories on the origin of CRT. The first story takes place at Harvard University in the 1980s. Harvard School of Law hired two civil rights attorneys to teach the race and law class. One of the civil rights attorneys was a Black man and the other was a White man.

The male Black law students boycotted the class because they did not believe a White attorney could be authentic and be in tune with the students when teaching a predominately Black class about race and law (Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000). They believed that the White

instructor would negatively influence the collegiate racial climate. There was a racial difference in how Blacks and Whites were treated in the judicial system. The students wanted to hear the voice of the Black man through words, who would not ignore the unfair treatment of Blacks when it came to power, racism, and education (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005). The Black students protested the class and began holding the same course at the law school on Saturdays. The students took it upon themselves to schedule thriving and well-known Black lawyers, activists, scholars, and authors who wrote and spoke about race and the justice system to lecture their course.

The second story takes place at Berkley University around the same time as the Harvard story (Delgado & Stefancic, 2007). The faculty at Berkley University would not hire any Black teachers and the students wanted to open the administrators' eyes to the enormous amount of inequality that was happening. The students marched on the campus, staged sit-ins, and staged non-violent confrontations (Reynolds & Mayweather, 2017). Delgado and Stefancic (2007) detailed the intention of the teach-ins held by students was to make the faculty aware they needed to hire Black teachers. A teach-in was where Black teachers came on the campus and used their collective knowledge to get the university's attention, raise awareness of the issue, and intentionally change the public opinion (Delgado & Stefancic, 2007). These nonaggressive acts did not lead to victory. No Black teachers were hired because of this protest, but this sparked the use of the CRT in the education field (Delgado & Stefancic, 2007).

However, CRT had existed long before it ever had a name (Stefancic, 2014). Whites used African slaves to build America up economically and physically during the seventeenth century until slavery was abolished in 1865 (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000). Blacks worked unthinkable

hours for free and lived in horrible conditions provided for them by the master, the White man (Fede, 2011).

Guinier, Lawrence, Matsuda, and Delgado are critical race theorists who followed Bell's teachings as well as, educating people on critical race theory. Lani Guinier was the first tenured Black woman professor at Harvard University in 1988 (Lewis, 1998). Like Derrick Bell, she too worked for the NAACP's LDF and was in charge of their voting rights project. She spoke up and wrote about how the voting system was not inclusive (Tate, 1997). In 1993, she was nominated by President Clinton to lead the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division (Mass Humanities, 2006). He later withdrew his nomination after Guinier produced some law review articles about voting rights that he claimed he did not agree with in totality (Ladson-Billings, 2004).

Professor Charles Lawrence is another theorist who has spent his time studying CRT. He is a lawyer and works diligently on the anti-discrimination laws. Professor Lawrence believed instead of discriminating through the use of laws; society should examine the different cultures and biases that are used against them (Lawrence III, 2007). He has written many articles and books that focus on anti-discrimination and equal protection for Blacks and other minority groups. Lawrence III (2007), son of Professor Lawrence, authenticated that Professor Lawrence has taken home awards for Most Distinguished Professor and the Law Teachers National Teaching Awards. He has earned honorary doctorates from Georgetown University and Haverford College.

Another CRT theorist, Mari Matsuda is known for her contributions to the creation of critical race theory. Matsuda (1991) expounded critical race theory as,

The work of progressive legal scholars of color who are attempting to develop a jurisprudence that accounts for the role of racism in American Law and that works toward the elimination of racism as part of a larger goal of eliminating all forms of subordination (p. 1331).

She was outspoken about how the presence of critical race theory is overpowering in education (Solórzano, 1998). She was the first Asian American female law professor tenured in the United States at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). Her writings are the most viewed articles by the Supreme Court of all time (Shapiro & Pearse, 2012). Matsuda is currently the teaching at the University of Hawaii, William S. Richardson School of Law.

Richard Delgado is another pioneer in the CRT school of legal scholarship. He was alongside Derrick Bell at the first convent for CRT in Madison, Wisconsin (Solórzano, 1997). Delgado is known for his writings on the effects of hate speech and ways to remedy the act (Matsuda, 2018). Delgado has received numerous national awards for his work. He currently teaches race and civil rights at the University of Alabama School of Law.

Patricia Williams is another prominent CRT theorist. She graduated from Harvard Law School and is currently a Professor of Law at Columbia University. Williams continued her push forward with CRT because she believed that the themes could be extended because traditional civil rights laws benefit Whites more than Blacks and racism is routine (Crenshaw, 2010).

Kimberle Crenshaw is a well-known author feminist and civil rights activist for CRT. Crenshaw is a professor at both Columbia Law School and UCLA where she teaches about race and gender issues. She is also the creator of the intersectional theory, which is a theme of CRT (Crenshaw, 1991). Intersectional theory is the phenomena that a person cannot determine why they are discriminated against, because their race, gender, class, sexual orientation, and age are

intertwined as the bases for their discrimination. The theory began with Black females (Johnson, 2015). It was difficult to determine whether race or gender was the setback for them within society because both were permanent staples in the lives of Black females (Johnson, 2015). She believed it is impossible to separate the inequality and determine the factor. Because it was hard to separate the two, Black females were shunned and often endured violence (Crenshaw, 1991).

There was one theorist, Mocombe, who spoke out against CRT. Mocombe (2017) presumed CRT theorists screamed about changing the political structure when in reality they wanted to be treated like the Whites. Mocombe (2017) concluded that they are fighting to win, but do not know what winning really will look like and have no idea what the outcome will bring. Mocombe (2017) maintained that CRT theorists do not want to change how society operates other than gaining equality in all areas of social construct while dealing with discrimination.

CRT is even present in today's pop culture. *Orange is the New Black* (OITNB) is a Netflix's original series based on a New York Times Best Seller's memoir (Kerman, 2010). This series, labeled a dark comedy, is supposed to give audiences a chance to go behind the prison walls and see what females experience in a state of confinement (Enck & Morrissey, 2015). However, Caputi (2016) responded it gives off the illusion that instead of females getting trapped in the unjust laws of the land, they made bad decisions that led them to prison.

The characters come from all walks of life. The main character is introduced as a blonde haired girl from next door that used to be mischievous but now has her life together. Unfortunately, the law catches up with her from a past incident, and she is forced to go to jail.

Austin (2014) narrated Taystee as a Black female who immediately came across as aggressive and not caring about her appearance in OITNB. The backstory also mentioned that

she had been in foster care with no family to lean on all of her life. Sophia is another person presented in this series as a Black transgender female who struggled with not only her life inside the prison but with who she is inside and outside. The characters Taystee and Sophia are both stereotypical roles for Black actors (Bonilla-Silva, 2015).

In one scene the main character (a White woman), a Black woman, and a Latino woman are sent to solitary confinement. The show only follows the main character during the solitary confinement. She is also released before the others because her husband calls and complains about her treatment. Although this show brings to the light the issues of race, privilege, and gender that females encounter in prison, it was all completed while bringing the issues of the White main character to the forefront and allowing the audience to first connect with her problems and emotions (Austin, 2014). The Black and Latino characters' stories are overshadowed and considered not important enough to take the lead. OITNB proves that CRT is alive and present on television screens in 2019.

Several themes define CRT: normalcy of racism, color blindness, interest convergence, material determinism, social construction of race, differential racialization and the Black/White binary of race, intersectionality and antiessentialism, legal storytelling and narrative analysis, and hate speech (Delgado, Stefancic, & Liendo, 2012).

Normalcy of Racism

Racism is so ingrained in human existence that people tend not to recognize it anymore. It is a part of everyday living and is expected (Delgado et al., 2012). Racism exists in education, positions of power, housing, employment, and the judicial system. Taylor (1998) clarified that racism is not isolated incidents; it is the mirror image of White supremacy that is structural and has been so since the conception of race.

Racism is so typical that Dunn's (2003) study exposed that many Australians did not think that social privilege existed. Most of those that were born in Australia held racist attitudes towards those Australians who were from Muslim, Jewish, or Indigenous ethnic groups. Sullivan (2006) cited that many White people do not think racism is as conventional as it is, because (sometimes unconsciously) they are used to being part of the problem and their White race being so widely accepted.

Color Blindness

Color blindness is currently the system's best way to avoid racism and the effort to end the issue. The justice system and society contend that race does not matter and that human beings are all equal (Crenshaw, 2010). Whites often voice they do not see color (Plaut, Thomas, Hurd, & Romano, 2018). Quillian (2008) revealed when it is mentioned that one's color does not matter it means that one's color does; proving there is no such thing as color blind. People have become accustomed to ignoring and minimizing inequalities and being 'color blind' is a subtle way of doing that.

Mazzocco (2017) explored color-blindness and produced four categories that justified the phenomena. Ohio State University (2017) validated the four categories of Mazzocco's (2017) research on color-blindness; which are protectionist, egalitarian, antagonistic, and visionary. Mazzocco (2017) illustrated a protectionist as a person who believes minorities' use the race card to their advantage by acting like the victim in situations that apply. The protectionist believes that racism exists, but minorities exaggerate racism because of their culture. This type of color-blindness shows that the individual has great prejudice and low awareness.

Ohio State University (2017) dissected Mazzocco's view on the egalitarian as people who consider racial injustice close to being solved. The egalitarian also believes that talk of racism

can cease because it is no longer a pressing issue. The egalitarian aspect of color-blindness shows little prejudice and low awareness of racism. Mazzocco (2017) referred to an antagonistic person as someone who uses color-blindness to stop the study or improvement of equality. These people are aware of racism, but because of racial privilege, they believe they have the right to discriminate. Lastly, Mozzocco (2017) established the visionary as knowing there is a race relation problem but thinks the best way to solve it is to focus on the things that people have in common rather than the difference among them.

Paul Croll's (2013) research on whiteness was created to measure White people's awareness of their benefit in the racial system. Hartmann, Gerteis, and Croll (2009) laid the foundation that allowed Croll (2013) to use the color-blind racial attitude scale (CoBRAS) to measure color blindness. This study verified that many Whites did not think that racism was a problem because it does not affect them and their daily lives. It was more of a problem for minorities to deal with daily.

Interest Convergence and Material Determinism

Interest convergence and material determinism take place when White people benefit from other races through the use of standardized testing, job qualifications and merit (Asch, 2017). Interest convergence is accomplished only when the interests of Black people align with the interests of White people. For years there had been a debate about the interest convergence of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and student-athletes (Hawkins, 2017). Most students who received athletic scholarships were Black and committed to attending these colleges and universities because they are granted a free education. Meanwhile, Donnor and Harper (2017) announced that the stakeholders for these institutions are making millions off the

hard work and dedication these Black student-athletes exude on the football field and the basketball court. The NCAA is more interested in monetary gain than post-secondary education.

One of the earliest examples of interest convergence is the 1954 case of *Brown vs. the Board of Education*. *Brown vs. the Board of Education* established that both Black and White students deserve the same type of public education. In reality Driver (2011) debated that America was only trying to improve their image during the Cold War, not assist Blacks with their suffering.

Material determinism is when a person is not judged on who they are because of their faith or who they are in the inside; instead, they are judged by who they are from something on the outside, such as their race. According to Guinier (1994) examples of material determinism are being judged on merit via standardized testing and occupational qualifications. These aspects contribute to the low number of Blacks represented in high power positions.

Social Construct of Race

The social construct of race leads other races to believe that there is a biological deficit when compared to Whites (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Hartigan (1997) found throughout history that people have associated being White with privilege, advantage, entitlement, and being equal to or above other races. Johnson (2003) imparted being Black as being connected to underprivileged, disadvantaged, unentitled, and less than other races. According to Smedley and Smedley (2005), the few genes that make up hair texture and the color of skin can no way predict intelligence, behavior, or personality. However, society has linked skin color to advantage for years.

Delgado and Stefancic (2017) recapped in 1806 that the law stated if a Black woman was birth from a free woman, she was indeed free. If a Black woman was born from enslaved

females, she was born a slave. Rightfully, three enslaved females sued for freedom in Virginia because they professed they came from a maternal line of free females. However, according to Delgado and Stefancic (2017) the grandmother, mother, and daughter could not prove their lineage of free females, so the courts judged them by their Black skin to be slaves.

Differential Racialization

Differential racialization is a CRT theme that Leonardo (2004) related to the way the system has used discriminatory laws to block the advancement of Blacks. In the 1830's comedian, Daddy Rice created the character Jim Crow (King, 2015). Jim Crow was a White man who covered his face with charcoal and acted like he was physically disabled to imitate the Black slave (Recchio, 2011). He made the character sing and dance the Jim Crow song. The Jim Crow song mocked Black people and their yearning for freedom and equality (Reed, 2010). The song became so popular, Daddy Rice performed it all over the country, and many people started referring to Black males as Jim Crow (Dailey, Gilmore, & Simon, 2000). Jim Crow stood for the dehumanization of the Black person.

The Jim Crow laws (originating from the character Jim Crow) were laws that were passed in the late 1800s to promote segregation and give Whites even more control over Blacks (Tischauer, 2012). Blacks were not allowed to be with Whites on the same side of the street, in schools, during transportation, while eating in restaurants, and while visiting theaters, parks, or cemeteries (Pilgrim, 2000). But eventually, Blacks were allowed to have 'Black' schools, use public transportation if White were not present, and use of 'Black only' amenities. Hence, the 'separate but equal' act was established. Urofsky (2017) communicated, "It was codified on the local and state levels and most famously with the 'separate but equal' decision of the U.S. Supreme Court in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896)" (para. 2).

The 'separate but equal' decision involved Whites giving Blacks the equality that was reasonable based on the Constitution (Cases, 2013). Black people could do some of the things that Whites were doing; they could not do it beside them. The Separate Car Act was a law passed that stated Whites could only ride with White on the train and Blacks could ride with Blacks (Adams, 2012). Although the train ride would be separate, the law stated it would be equal because Blacks were at least allowed to ride the train.

Plessy v. Ferguson challenged the Separate Car Act in Louisiana. An individual of mixed race (Black and White) named Homer Plessy bought a train ticket and sat in the cart reserved for White passengers (Thomas, 1997). According to Thomas (1997) after being asked and refusing to move to the vehicle for Black passengers, Plessy was arrested and jailed. Plessy proved with this act that 'separate but equal' was not consistent, because there was no clear distinction for those who have deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) that was not 100% White or 100% Black (Medley, 2012). The Supreme Court upheld its decision, and the Separate Car Act was law until 1954 (Margo, 1990).

The end of the Civil War in 1865 meant the end of slavery, but it did not mean the end of discrimination against Blacks. The Civil Rights Movement was a movement of inclusion for Black people (Dierenfield, 2007) and some White people joined their fight to form the Civil Rights Movement (Fendrich, 1977). The members organized peaceful protests, sit-ins, marches, and boycotts (King, 2015). Blacks and Whites that participated in the Civil Rights Movement were raped, shot, tortured, and lynched for their continuing efforts to gain legal rights for all (Fendrich, 1977). Martinez (2014) stated, "While the Civil Rights Movement dismantled racism *de jure*, the racisms of systemic and institutional prejudice, discrimination, and inequities remain and very much inform the lived realities for people of color in the US" (13).

Black/White Binary Race

The Black/White binary of race theme relates to the American concept that only two racial groups exist: Black and White (Perea, 1997). To believe that only two races exist is to ignore the ethnic identities of Asians, Latinos, Indians, and other ethnic groups. Perea (1997) relayed if Whites were to understand Blacks, it would not mean they also understand Asians and Latinos. Mutua (1998) held it irresponsible and disrespectful to group all races that are not White into the Black category. Delgado (2013) determined the Black/White binary race theme proves that there will continue to be new developments in this area with the continued mistreatment of minorities.

Intersectionality and Antiessentialism

Hunt (2018) said intersectionality related to CRT is the overlapping of disadvantages of race, class, and gender of an individual or group. Crenshaw (1991) declared it is impossible for Black people to know which category they are being discriminated against in because race, class, and gender usually run together simultaneously. Intersectionality within the CRT will be the most useful in this study. The fact that the subjects of the proposed research are Black, females, uneducated, and caught in the legal system, would confuse many CRT theorists on which is the main reason so many of them are behind bars. Modood (1998) discussed antiessentialism as the concept that not all people (in this case Black people) have the same experiences. Grillo (1995) contended that even though some White women and Black women share the same gender they are each unique individuals who have different experiences in life.

Legal Storytelling

Legal storytelling and narrative analysis is another theme of CRT. Massaro (1988) understood that legal storytelling was using stories in the form of fables, experiences, observations, or myths to expose broad audiences to what life is like racially, economically, and socially for a Black person. In the 1960s a schoolteacher named Jane Elliott (2019) led a legal storytelling experiment that allowed her eight-year-old students to experience what it is to be black. Dr. Martin Luther King had just been assassinated and Elliott's (2019) students did not understand the importance of what was happening in the world. Elliott (2019) divided her classroom into two teams: blue eyes and brown eyes. The students with blue eyes were the disadvantaged group. The group with brown eyes were the privileged group.

During the class, Elliott (2019), as well as the students in the brown eye group, were allowed to mistreat and bully the blue eye group. The blue eye group had to take the mistreatment from Ms. Elliott (2019) and the other group. This experiment showed that using discrimination using something as simple as eye color is unfair. Ms. Elliott (2019) proved that the most delightful children could become racist and turn against each other because of their eye color and other students recognized how unfair discrimination and racism is to others. Stewart, Laduke, Bracht, Sweet, and Gamarel (2003) voiced that the blue eyes brown eyes experiment has been administered all over the world for more than forty years in the hopes of giving participants a personal glimpse of what racism is and what it feels like when others have to endure this involuntary pain.

Narrative Analysis

The narrative analysis presents itself when two people have an issue that is conflicting, but both believable. Hairston and Strickland (2011) maintained that the narrative analysis attempts to help better understand the disagreement or confusion. Riessman (1993) circumscribed narrative analysis as an in-depth investigation of both sides of a story since both narratives seem to be different, but equally persuasive about the same situation. The 2012 shooting of Trayvon Martin is an example of narrative analysis. Blow (2012) justified that there was evidence in the Trayvon Martin case that pointed to Trayvon Martin not warranting the treatment he received from which his death resulted. However, Lee (2012) supported there was evidence showing that Zimmerman was within his rights to use self-defense on the Florida teenager.

Hate Speech

Hate speech is the last theme of CRT. America upholds freedom of speech, but a person's freedom of speech should not devalue others based on unchangeable traits. Gurstein (2018) evaluated hate speech and concluded it consists of racial slurs and name-calling. Djuric et al. (2015) elaborated that hate speech also comes in the form of free speech and can lead to violent behavior against minorities, and hostile environments. As long as racism exists, so will the tenets of CRT. CRT will continue to expand with the abuse of others due to their non-White skin. For example, Rosenfeld (2002) predicted there would be a continuation of violence against others because of their non-White skin. Although CRT is identifiable by themes, there has not been a solution to end racism. Hopefully, new developments will further assist in understanding how people get treated for the color of their skin and hopefully being better educated about it

will lead to the end of the use of CRT as a framework to understand social behaviors associated with race.

Related Literature

Rabuy and Wagner (2017) estimated more than two million males and females occupy cells within the pretense of law and order. For years Gramlich (2018) speculated more Blacks have been incarcerated when compared to Whites. Butler (1995) illuminated that since the conception of jail, some Blacks have been left powerless to the circumstances of racism. CRT is heavily related to the reason why Black males and Black females heavily populate jails. Research shows “African Americans are incarcerated at more than five times the rates of Whites” (NAACP, 2018). With most of the attention focused on males in prison, society is discounting the record number of females going to prison each year (Munro, 2005). There are over 200,000 females serving time in the criminal justice system (Kajstura, 2017). The number of Black female inmates is overrepresented when compared to their White female counterparts (Schiffer, 2014). According to the NAACP (2018), Black females are imprisoned at twice the rate of White females. The number of Black females locked-up influences the need for extended research on further understanding of the phenomenon and the possibility of lessening this figure.

The premise of critical race theory aligns with information related to the increase of Black females in jail and why it is imperative to find the factors that are most likely to contribute to their educational success. According to Demo and Hughes (1990), if society wants to improve the current environment and the future, it must go back to where the breakdown begins, the penal system and society itself. Black females have stated that when in court they feel like they are guilty until proven innocent. They are not allowed to entirely explain their situations during trial and their psychological evaluations and caring for their children is not taken into consideration

for sentencing (Arnold, 1990). Additionally, the majority of the jury selections contain White males who immediately judge them by their gender and their race (Agozino, 1997). The positive and negative results from the studies explored in the literature review about prison education help close the gap of research in this field. There has been some research conducted on females in prison. However, Willingham (2011) acknowledged there is little to no research on Black females once they are inside the system. Next, investigations about prison rehabilitation services will detail how males and females prosper from prison educational program with the GED being the oldest and most used. These reports encourage and support the findings of the factors that influence Black female inmates to complete their GED or HEP.

Allen (1998) disclosed that correction facility education was created to give prisoners the tools to put them in better positions to legally take care of themselves and their families upon release. Inmates have the right to rehabilitation services inside the prison. Reese (2017) added that prison education includes, but is not limited to mental health, religion, self-help, recreation, medical treatment, career, and technical education.

Mental Health Services

According to Molina (2019), over a million people are sitting in jail with mental illnesses and, “In society, people with mental health issues are more likely to go to jail for their lack of mental health stability rather than receive mental health treatment” (Lamb & Weinberger, 1998). Allowing inmates to participate in mental health services has been known to assist them in never returning to jail (McNiel & Binder, 2007). The less access that inmates have to mental health care the more likely they are to return to jail (Steadman, Redlich, Callahan, Robbins, & Vesselinov, 2011). Some people with mental health illness do not have access to these services until they are thrown in jail.

Not all prisoners with mental health problems will accept treatment. They are afforded the right to refuse treatment and medications (McMurran, 2003). Although they have the option to decline mental help, they must be given fair treatment when in need of services. *Brown v. Plata* (2011) led to the Supreme Court's release of over 40,000 California inmates because services (one of the services being mental health) did not meet even the bare minimum requirements of the Eighth Amendment (Rejter & Pifer, 2015). The Eighth Amendment states, "Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted" (U. S. Const. Amend. VIII). The California prison system was so overcrowded that guards did not have anywhere to place some of the people with mental health issues. California's prisons are designed to house 85,000 prisoners, but during the *Brown v. Plata* decision, the prison system had twice that many (Newman & Scott, 2012). Because of the overcrowding inmates were locked in rooms with no beds, forced to urinate on themselves and those who needed mental health assistance could not get the help they needed (Simon, 2011). The court freed over 40,000 inmates to reduce the prison population and ensure it did not meet the capacity of the facility (Salins & Simpson, 2012). Prisons are supposed to aid in people reconnecting successfully with society, not housing them like animals waiting to be freed back into the world.

Studies conducted by Fisher et al. (2014), Ditton (1999) and Nurse, Woodcock, and Ormsby (2003) reviewed the effectiveness of the mental health programs behind bars. Fisher et al. (2014) surveyed male and female inmates upon their release from prison. Some of the participants in the study received some psychiatric treatments, medications, or no treatment at all while in prison. This study examined the rearrests of participants based on their gender, age, and mental health services (if) provided to them while incarcerated. The Fisher et al. (2014) study

showed that gender did play a role in recidivism more than the mental health conditions and age. The study also showed that more male participants re-entered prison than females. Fisher et al. (2014) determined that people with mental disorders were not more or less likely to be rearrested.

Ditton (1999) attested that White inmates in jail are more likely to admit they need mental health services while incarcerated. Over 10% of prisoners in state and federal prison have taken advantage of the mental health services provided in jail (Ditton, 1999). This study also correlated the number of probationers with those who have accessed mental health services in prison. Nurse et al. (2003) professed that prisoners' mental health decreased the more they were locked away from other prisoners and their families. Mental health is not perceived as an extreme illness in prison; it can come across as the way people think and feel about themselves and how their experiences have shaped them (Nurse et al., 2003). All three of these studies verified that mental health services make a difference in the lives of mental health prisoners inside and outside of prison.

Religious Programs

Religious programs are being praised for reducing recidivism (Clear, Hardyman, Lucken, & Dammer, 2000). Prison ministry is popular among many inmates and was established to promote the growth of better human beings. Religions provide inmates with the hope their life can become better and faith that there is a higher being that will lead them down the right path. Prisoners are allowed to belong to whatever religion they choose. Clear et al. (2000) claimed, "in the logic of fundamentalist religious thought, both Muslim and Christian, the cause of all unhappy life consequences, such as imprisonment, is the failure of the individual to live within the doctrines of the faith. The cure is fidelity to the teachings of faith" (p. 58). Most religions

allow inmates to repent for their wrongs and be forgiven so they can restart their life with a clean moral slate. Inmates who have a substantial amount of time in jail are more likely to join the prison ministry than those who have a shorter period until released.

For one year Johnson, Larson, and Pitts (1997) and Johnson (2004) measured the effect prison religious programs had on inmates. Johnson et al. (1997) analyzed prisoners who had attended at least three prison fellowship sessions with those prisoners who had not participated in any bible study or life planning seminar while in prison and compared their recidivism rates. The study proved that people who attended religious studies in jail were less likely to commit a crime. Johnson (2004) contributed to Johnson et al. by conducting an eight-year examination of recidivism rates among those who attended prison fellowship or life planning seminars and those who did not go while in prison. Using a quasi-experimental design, he discovered that more former inmates who did not attend prison fellowship or life planning were rearrested than those who did participate in religious or life planning while in jail (Johnson, 2004). These two studies make it evident that religious programs play a constructive part in inmates' lives inside and outside of prison.

Self-Help Services

A prison cannot expect prisoners to change their life if they are not given the resources to do so. Ferner (2015) admitted that life could be so tough for prisoners after release that they fail at being better and end up in prison again. Self-help is encouraged in jail as a way for inmates to make a life-long change that will promote positivity in their lives, their families, and the community. Maunder et al. (2009) and Wexler (1995) tested prisoners to see if self-help is effective among pre- and post-release inmates.

Maunder et al. (2009) used written self-help booklets to assist prisoners with anxiety and depression. Two groups were examined. One group was given the self-help booklets, and the other group was not given the written material (Maunder et al., 2009). The treatment group benefited from the self-help booklets by having lower recidivism rates than the other group. Wexler (1995) revealed that the students who completed the self-help program in prison were more successful (lower rate of recidivism) than those who did not participate or who dropped out. Some former inmates who did participate in the self-help program did get rearrested. Wexler's (1995) and Maunder et al. (2009) demonstrated that self-help is imperative to most inmates' re-entry into society.

Recreation

Recreation in prison is used to promote rehabilitation, mental, and physical health (Meek & Lewis, 2014). Sabo (2001) suspected one reason why inmates take part in recreation is to "create a healthy body in an unhealthy environment" (p. 64). Gallant, Sherry, and Nicholson (2015) orchestrated a study on male and female inmates' perception recreational activities had on rehabilitation. In the male facility, the participants agreed that the soccer program contributed to their mental and physical health (Gallant et al., 2015). Soccer was a stress outlet for them. Recreation helps pass the time and they feel as they continue their participation their body is getting healthier from the exercise. Gallant et al. (2015) indicated soccer helped them mentally by allowing them to learn how the game is played and how their teammates and opponents play the game. The female inmates also spoke highly of recreation's role in their mental and physical fitness (Gallant et al., 2015). The softball program gave them something to look forward to on Fridays. Inmates who do not socialize with others have teammates that they talk to on the team. Sports build a sense of camaraderie among prisoners.

The focus of a Pawelko and Anderson (2005) study was weightlifting and rehabilitation inside the prison. Like the previous study, weightlifting was described as helping prisoners to take care of their health. Weightlifting also cured boredom and some forms of depression (Pawelko & Anderson, 2005). Both studies prove that prison recreation aids in the mental and physical wellbeing of inmates while incarcerated and possibly upon release.

Not all prison recreation programs are effective. Programs must have adequate funding, leadership, and equipment to make an impact on convicts' lives. In 1984, Mathew McIntosh conducted a study on minority male inmates at an Oregon State Correctional Facility. He surveyed 75 random Black, Hispanic, and Native American inmates on their attitudes toward recreation and its effects on rehabilitation. All of the participants agreed that there was no effect in the recreational program to promote rehabilitation (McIntosh, 1984). However, the Black members of the study believed if the program was structured differently and the equipment readily available, it could prove useful (McIntosh, 1984).

Medical Treatment

Medical treatment is vital to prisoners and their livelihood. Some prisoners come to jail with medical problems like HIV and AIDS, or they contract the diseases while inside. In 2015, Moradi et al. performed a qualitative study on the management of methadone treatments (MMT). Methadone helps with the prevention of contracting HIV, AIDS, and hepatitis (Moradi et al., 2015, p. 584). Participants claimed the treatments reduced the number of shared needles, drug trade, and disease in prison (Moradi et al., 2015). Unlike other programs that inspire inmates to continue success upon release, a study by Palepu et al. (2004) unveiled the likelihood of parolees to continue the suppression of the disease was slim.

Career and Technical Education

In the '90s, career and technical education (CTE) was sought as the best way to prevent recidivism. It is still an approach used to discourage rearrests. The effort of CTE for prisoners is a better investment than taxpayers paying for criminals to stay in prison for longer terms (Weldon, 2002). Gordon and Weldon (2003), Ward (2009), Mace (1978), and Anderson, Anderson, and Schumacker (1988) engaged in studies to see if career and technical education programs reduce recidivism.

Each examination proved that parolees who completed either vocational or educational programs while in prison had lower rates of recidivism than those who did not participate. Those who had some education and vocational training upon release also had a higher percentage of employment (Anderson et al., 1988). Those without training had low rates of parole and experienced difficulty finding work in the community (Ward, 2009).

Adult Basic Education (ABE) is a program dedicated to adult literacy (Belzer, 2005). Completion of the ABE program allows students to hone their skills in language comprehension, oral language fluency, and reading comprehension (Barnes, Kim, Tighe, & Vorstius, 2017). A study by Cho and Tyler (2013) uncovered that the completion of ABE in prison indicated higher rates of employment and earnings post-release. Walsh's (1985) study showed ABE reduced recidivism. However, Anderson and Moore (1995) pronounced it is possible for ABE to reduce recidivism, but not alone. The combination of a prison sentence of four years or more and ABE together combat recidivism rates (Anderson, 1995).

Post-secondary education (PSE) is a higher education that is afforded to students after high school is completed (Erisman & Contardo, 2005). Post-secondary education was widely used in the prison system to assist prisoners with attaining degrees until the Pell Grant was

eliminated for state prison use (Welsh, 2002). Jenkins, Steurer, and Pendry (1995) found that the higher the level of education the prisoners possessed meant the better chances of employment for them after they were released. In 1995, Gerber and Frisch's research confirmed that PSE led to lower recidivism rates. The Violent Crime Control Act of 1994 barred offenders from receiving Pell Grants (Tewksbury, Erickson, & Taylor, 2000).

Harlow (2003) said, "of all correctional education programs, the GED is the most common, offered in approximately 84% of state prisons and 99% of federal prisons as of 2000" (p. 4). The Bureau of Prisons (2003) correlated the GED program provided in jail to the equivalent of a high school diploma. The GED program was developed in 1942. Its primary use was for military personnel to prove they knew material equivalent to a high school diploma. The GED test made it possible for returning World War II veterans to continue their education and qualify for jobs upon discharge from the service (Garvey & Grobe, 2011). Many of the soldiers had joined the military before they finished high school. Allowing these brave men to take the GED test proved to the people of the United States that education was essential and the government would do what was necessary to arm them with the tools to be successful outside of the military (Tyler, 2005). The GED test focused on reading and comprehending content. Conquering those two areas made it possible for veterans to gain employment after discharge. No one outside of the military members could take the test at that time.

In 1947, Tyler (2005) affirmed that the state of New York was the first to allow non-veteran dropouts to take the GED test. Soon after all fifty states were making use of the program. However, not many citizens chose to take the GED at its beginning stages. In 1964, former President Lyndon B. Johnson declared war on poverty. Tyler (2005) detailed the poverty rate in the United States was nineteen percent and growing. President Johnson created several

initiatives to aid in ending poverty and provide people with more economic opportunities. One of those opportunities to make a better life was the use of the General Equivalency Development (GED) program. In 2005, Tyler published that the participation in the GED program increased massively during this period also because of the use of it in prisons and jails.

In 1974 the state of California was the last to accept GED testing and its certification (Heckman, Humphries, & Mader, 2011). In 1978, the test was revamped. The new exam kept the test updated to match job skills and educational requirements. When the workforce and education system changes its standard, the exam must also alter to ensure students are gaining the knowledge necessary to adapt in society. An essay portion was added to the GED test in 1988 (Heckman et al., 2011). Now, more people were taking the GED test to continue their higher education and a smaller number of people were taking the test just for employment purposes.

In 2002, the GED test was no longer standard. The test focused more on business and adult oriented questions and test takers were allowed for the first time to use calculators (Tyler, 2005). Students were scored more heavily on the written portion than before. Also, all five sections of the test had to be passed to keep your score. If one part was failed, participants had to retake the entire exam. In 2014, a more rigorous GED test was designed to “continue to provide adults with access to the only nationally recognized high school equivalency credential, while having the capacity to signal career and college readiness” (Lockwood et al., 2013, p. 7). The test became computerized and students had not only to learn information on how to pass the test, but they would have to gain knowledge on how to take the test using a computer.

Today, the GED program is still used to give students who did not graduate from high school the opportunity to receive the equivalence to a high school diploma. The GED is a prison

resource inmates can use to promote quality citizenship upon release (Petersilia, 2003). A total of 240 credits represent the completion of the program in prison. Inmates receive either a satisfactory (SAT) or unsatisfactory (UNSAT) at the end of the program depending on how many credits were earned (BOP, 2003). The computer-based exam covers four topics. Lockwood et al. (2013) asserted the four topics are social studies, science, mathematics, and reasoning through language arts (RLA). Shukyn, Shuttleworth, and Krull (2015) report there are a total number of 161 questions on the GED test.

The Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC) was created in 2014 as an option to the GED test and the state of New York was the first to incorporate it in the education system (Zinth, 2015). Unlike the GED, the TASC can be taken online or with pencil and paper. The TASC test covers the areas of math, social studies, science, reading, and writing (Zinth, 2015). The TASC has two major scores that are imperative to the test taker's future. The first test score determines if the test taker has the proficiency of at least a high school graduate (Zinth, 2015). The other score decides if they are qualified to do college level work (Zinth, 2015). The TASC is not just for those trying to graduate with a high school diploma; the TASC is for those who are also inquiring about taking the step into higher education.

In 2014, the Educational Training Service (ETS) also created the HiSET test as an option to the GED (Tannenbaum, 2014) and the TASC. The HiSET test has replaced the GED test in some states. Although, the HiSET has been substituted for the GED test, they have minimal differences. The HiSET (like the TASC) can be taken online as well as, on paper. The HiSET has five different graded areas including reading and writing, language arts, science, mathematics, and social studies (Cage, 2019).

The State of North Carolina recognizes the GED, HiSET, and TASC as appropriate assessments for obtaining a high school equivalency (Zinth, 2015). In 2014, the Raleigh Women's Correctional Facility utilized the HiSET assessment to allow prisoners the opportunity to demonstrate the knowledge necessary to obtain their high-school equivalency diploma (HSE).

Investigations by Batiuk, Lahm, McKeever, Wilcox, and Wilcox (2005), and Anderson (1995) showed that males who receive their GED in jail are less likely to be re-arrested than those males who did not obtain a GED while imprisoned. There are no studies available on Black male inmates who receive their GED or their HSE. Also, the factors of age, length of sentence, type of crime, and family status have yet to be examined as indicators for inmates to receive their HSE in jail. Black female inmates and their quest for their HSE also have yet to be considered. Investigating Black female inmates and the factors that influence them to obtain their HSE will promote high self-esteem in inmates, possibly help them become respectable influences to their children, strengthen rehabilitation and lower the crime rate in females.

The external factors that influenced this study are race, society, and family. Black people enter prison without being educated at a higher rate than other ethnicities. If the tools provided in prison for education are not used, it is likely that they will add to the recidivism rate.

Baumrind (1972) brought to awareness that society labels Black homes as mostly broken because more than the normal one or both parents in the household have been or are currently incarcerated. Family issues can hinder inmates' ability to concentrate on their education. An inmate's family may also be the motivation behind the completion of the HEP.

The vast acceptance of educational programming in jails and prisons and the correlation of a lower recidivism rate after release supported the purpose of determining the factors that influenced the completion of the HEP by Black female inmates. The first factor examined was

the type of crime the Black female inmates were convicted of committing. In 2003, Harlow expressed that at least 47 percent of inmates who entered prison for illegal drugs did not have their high school equivalency. Less than half of the inmates who had committed violent crimes (homicide, sexual assault, robbery, and assault) possessed a high school diploma or equivalent (Harlow, 2003). Research supported the crimes that are committed by inmates can predict their recidivism rate. Aos, Miller, and Drake (2006) scrutinized recidivism rates by crime category throughout thirteen years. They found that sex offenders were less likely to have rearrests than other crime categories (Aos et al., 2006).

Studies manifested that the crimes committed while incarcerated have an effect on prisoners' completion of educational programs in prison. Harer's (1995) research made visible that prisoners who misbehaved in jail were stripped of their education access, but those who made getting their education the 'new normal' received their education and contributed to decreasing recidivism rates. On the contrary, Lahm (2009) found that prison education did not affect the misconduct of prisoners. Prisoners who participated in educational programs were as likely to commit crimes as those prisoners who did not participate in educational programs (Lahm, 2009). Although there are studies proving crimes committed while in jail can predict completion of education programs, there is no literature available to explain if the type of crime a person is convicted of affects their participation and completion of the HEP.

The second aspect investigated was age. Batiuk et al. (2005) surveyed inmates after release. From their study, sixty-three percent of the participants who participated in correctional education were over the age of thirty (Batiuk et al., 2005). Brosens et al. (2015) questioned the impact of inmates' age and their participation in educational programs. The age ranges Brosens et al. (2015) included in the study were young (18-25 years old), middle age (26-50 years old),

and older prisoners (50+ years old). The investigation determined that older inmates were less likely to participate in educational programs (Brosens et al., 2015).

The third feature of the study was the length of the sentence. Roth and Manger (2014) theorized that prisoners with longer prison sentences value their education more than prisoners with shorter sentences. Manger, Eikeland, and Asbjørnsen (2013) identified prisoners with shorter sentences did not see the value in getting an education while locked up. This study revealed if prisoners with longer sentences completed the HEP at a higher rate or if prisoners with shorter sentences were more likely to complete the program.

The final element considered was the inmates' family status. Over 1.5 million children once in their lives have experienced the incarceration of a parent (Martin, 2017). Out of all children, Black children are more likely to experience having a parent in prison (Foster & Hagan, 2009). Children with parents behind bars are impacted in various areas (Seymour, 2017); they struggle financially, mentally, and physically (Carter & McCarthy, 2015). A study performed by Muftić, Bouffard, and Armstrong (2016) claimed the incarceration of the maternal parent led to their children suffering from depression, bad behavior, and low educational attainment.

The present study's purpose of identifying which factors of age, length of sentence, type of crime, and family status influence Black female inmates to receive their HEP is to increase the almost existent body of knowledge in the field. Prison education is beneficial for inmates and society. Rodriguez (2017) proved there was a positive correlation between education, employment, and no new criminal behavior from inmates upon release. Siegel (2016) concurred that education encouraged employment and assisted with reducing recidivism rates. Cronin (2018) verified that former inmates who completed the GED in prison earned more than those inmates who did not complete the program. Completion of this study catapults the non-existent

body of knowledge into reality on the importance of educating Black female inmates for themselves, their family, and society.

Summary

CRT has played a role in the lives of Black people since conception and will continue to do so as long as racism exists. Black males and females were born into slavery and, generation after generation, some will still experience the underprivileged and unentitled effects of being Black. Guinier (1994) concluded that Black females not only have to be defensive about their race but often also about their gender. With Black families frequently consisting of a one-parent household, the mother has the weight of the family to carry. Having to be the provider of the family while not having an extensive education or a well-paying job leads many Black females to illegal activity to support their children (Jones & Seabrook, 2017). The number of Black uneducated females that are in prison highlights the demand for their completion of the GED program in prison (Snell & Morton, 1994).

According to Harlow (2003) what is currently known about the GED program is that it is one of the oldest prison-based rehabilitative services offered. Like the HEP, the GED has been put in place to aid in the fight against rearrests. The justice system believes that allowing inmates to complete the HEP will assist them in becoming better acclimated within society upon release. The HEP will also help graduates find employment and they will be better able to serve their families by being an example for their children. Although studies have been conducted on incarcerated males and the GED program, there still needs to be more studies examining females behind bars who have completed or are in the process of finishing the HEP. The study assists in closing the gap on the lack of literature supporting Black females in prison and providing information on their quest in earning an HSE.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The purpose of this predictive correlational study was to determine if a relationship exists between the predictor variables of age, length of sentence, type of crime, and family status and Black female inmates' completion of a High School Equivalency Program (HEP) while in state prison.

Chapter three includes a discussion of the design, research question, hypothesis, participants and setting, instrumentation, procedures and data analysis needed to explore the phenomenon of Black female inmates' and their quest for a High School Equivalency Diploma (HSE). Logistic regression was used to test the relationship between the predictor variables (age, type of crime, length of sentence, and family status) and the criterion variable, High School Equivalency Program (HEP).

Design

A predictive correlational design was utilized in this study to look at Black female inmates in state prison. A correlational design was appropriate because, "Correlational research designs are used for two major purposes: (1) to explore causal relationships between variables and (2) to predict scores on one variable from research participants' scores on other variables" (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007, p. 337). A correlational design will allow two or more variables to be compared to a dichotomous criterion variable (Gall et al., 2007). The predictor variables in this study are age, type of crime, how long they are sentenced in jail, and family status. Age is determined by the participants' birth records in years old (Schwall et al., 2012). Type of crime is distinguished by violent crime or non-violent crime. Fajnzylber et al. (2002) proclaimed violent

crimes consist of the intent to threaten or harm a person or force used in a criminal act. Durose and Mumola (2002) clarified non-violent crimes as crimes that do not consist of harming an individual physically. The judge that presided over the case interpreted length of the sentence which is measured by severity of the crime, the danger involved, and other individual factors (Jordan & Freiburger, 2015). Umberson (1987) identified family status as an inmate who possessed a parent to child relationship.

The criterion variable in this study is the High School Equivalency Program (HEP) completion. In 2014, the Educational Training Service (ETS) created the HiSET test as an option to the GED (Tannenbaum, 2014). The HiSET test has replaced the GED test in some states. The State of North Carolina recognizes the GED, HiSET, and TASC as appropriate assessments for obtaining a high school equivalency (Zinth, 2015). However, in 2014, the Raleigh Women's Correctional Facility utilized the HiSET assessment to allow prisoners the opportunity to demonstrate the knowledge necessary to obtain their high-school equivalency diploma (HSE). The HiSET can be taken online or on paper. The HiSET has five different graded areas including reading and writing, language arts, science, mathematics, and social studies (Cage, 2019).

Research Question

RQ1: Is there a relationship between age, length of sentence, type of crime, and family status of Black female inmates' while in a state prison and their completion of a High School Equivalency Program (HEP)?

Hypothesis

The null hypothesis for this study is:

H₀₁: There is no statistically significant relationship between the predictor variables (age, length of sentence, type of crime, and family status) and the criterion variable (completion of the High School Equivalency Program) among Black female inmates in a state prison.

Participants and Setting

Population

Archival records were used to select participants from a North Carolina Women's Correctional Facility. The Women's Correctional Facility is made up of around 2,000 female inmates. The Women's Correctional Facility is a public mixed custody institution. Minimum, medium, and closed custody levels are held there. The North Carolina Department of Safety (NCDPS, 2012) describes the minimum custody level as housing the female inmates with the lowest risk to the public. The female inmates live in dormitories and are allowed to participate in rehabilitative services.

Medium security level female inmates are housed in an area similar to a residence hall (NCDPS, 2012) that contains bunk beds for 70 inmates. The quarters are more restricted than the minimum custody level. The prison is enclosed in razor-wire fencing. Armed guards patrol the property at all times. The closed (maximum) security level holds the female inmates that require constant supervision and are more prone to misconduct and escaping (NCDPS, 2012). Closed security is the most restricted type of housing in correctional facilities. Inmates are housed in a single cell. NCDPS (2012) also deemed the higher the risks to the public; the more the female inmates are separated from the civilian community. Maximum custody facilities are also encased in wire fencing. The guards who are employed watch the inmates closely. The people imprisoned here are known to be a hazard to society if they ever escaped.

During their time in prison inmates are provided the opportunity to complete their High School Equivalency Diploma (HSE). The HSE can be obtained by completing the High School Equivalency Program (HEP). The High School Equivalency Test (HiSET) can be either a computer-based test or taken with pencil and paper. The HiSET covers five topics. The HiSET covers five topics: reading and writing, language arts, science, mathematics, and social studies (Cage, 2019).

Sample

Archival data was used consisting of a sample size of at least $50 + 8m$ where m is the number of predictor variables used when testing multiple correlations (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2012). In this study, there were four predictor variables (age, length of sentence, type of crime, and family status). According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2012) using the four predictor variables, the minimum number of cases is $50 + 8(4)$, or 82. The sample consists of 100 Black female inmates, which exceeds the minimum requirement of 82 cases (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2012). The average age of the sample was 43 years old. Thirty-one inmates were medium prison security level. Thirty inmates were closed security level. Lastly, 39 were in the minimum-security level custody.

Instrumentation

The purpose of this predictive correlational study was to determine if a relationship exists between the predictor variables of age, length of sentence, type of crime, and family status and Black female inmates' completion of a High School Equivalency Program (HEP) while in state prison.

Archival records were used for this research. Each variable is defined to ensure comprehension of the items being measured. Age was determined by the participants' birth

records in years old (Schwall et al., 2012). Type of crime was distinguished by violent crime or non-violent crime. Fajnzylber et al. (2002) proclaimed violent crimes consist of the intent to threaten or harm a person or force used in a criminal act. Durose and Mumola (2002) clarified non-violent crimes as crimes that do not consist of harming an individual physically. The judge that presided over the case interpreted the length of the sentence; this is measured by severity of the crime, the danger involved, and other individual factors (Jordan & Freiburger, 2015). Umberson (1987) identified family status as an inmate who possessed a parent to child relationship or not.

The HEP requires students to pass the High School Equivalency Test (HiSET) to receive their High School Equivalency Diploma (HSE). In 2014, the Educational Training Service (ETS) created the HiSET test as an option to the GED (Tannenbaum, 2014). The HiSET test has replaced the GED test in some states. Although, the HiSET has been substituted for the GED test, they have minimal differences. The GED program computer-based exam covers the four topics of social studies, science, mathematics, and reasoning through language arts (RLA) (Lockwood et al., 2013) and can only be taken online. The HiSET can be taken online as well as on paper and the HiSET has five different graded areas including reading and writing, language arts, science, mathematics, and social studies (Cage, 2019). The instrument used to measure HEP success is the HSE diploma that is granted once the HiSET test is passed.

In 2014, when the HiSET was established numerous workshops were held to set the minimum passing score and highest level of proficiency (Tannenbaum, 2014). Four panels of qualified experts came together to determine the standards that were to be set for the HiSET. Setting the standard for the HiSET contributes heavily to the validity and reliability of the exam (Tannenbaum, 2014). These panelists were all educators who either worked closely with

traditional students or adult learners who were working towards their high school equivalency diploma.

Variations of the Angoff method were used to justify the minimum and maximum passing scores for the HiSET. The Angoff method was created in 1971 by researcher William Angoff to figure out the percentage of passing scores needed to master or barely meet performance standards by grading every answer and determining the mean value (Tannenbaum & Kannan, 2015). These educators used a variation of a modified Angoff method to score the multiple-choice items for the test. Each question was rated 0-1 in increments of .5. If the question was deemed difficult it was assigned a 0. If the question was deemed intermediate it was given a .5. If the question was considered easy it was given a 1. The panelists self-scored themselves and immediately provided feedback (Ricker, 2006). After feedback the exam was taken again to prove the standard error of judgment. The score from each panelist in round two was recorded and used to produce the mean score. These areas determined the minimum passing percentage of all available points as 52 to 60 percent with a mean value of 89.5 percent overall (Tannenbaum, 2014).

The variation of the extended Angoff method was used to set the standard for the essay portion of the HiSET. Participants scored themselves after writing the essay using a six-point rubric. After each round the educators compared their scores and explained how they reached each score (Plake, Barbara, Gregory, Cizek, & Cizek, 2012). Finally, a consensus of three on the six-point rubric was reached. All educators who participated in this study believed that the scores they had agreed upon were reachable for even a minimally competent person to pass the exam (Tannenbaum, 2014) and be awarded a HSE.

Procedures

Temporary approval was granted from Liberty University dependent upon the approval from the North Carolina Department of Public Safety (NCDPS) Institutional Review Board. See Appendix (A). A letter of consideration was obtained from the North Carolina Department of Public Safety's (NCDPS) Institutional Review Board (IRB). See Appendix (B). Next, official approval from Liberty University's IRB was granted. After approval from Liberty IRB, the researcher requested and received access to records from NCDPS IRB before the research data were collected.

Excel spreadsheets were sent to the researcher from the NC Women's Correctional Facility Educational Services database. The excel spreadsheets contained the ages, type of crime committed, length of sentence, family status, and results of the HEP of 300 Black Inmates located at the North Carolina Women's Correctional Facility. Female inmates who participated or completed the HEP were assigned a dummy code of (1), and, female inmates who participated and dropped out before the completion of their HSE were assigned a dummy code of (0).

The researcher then recorded the candidate's age in years old. Type of crime was dummy coded as nonviolent (0) and violent was assigned a dummy code (1). Length of sentence was entered in years. Family status was dummy coded as children (1) and no children was assigned a dummy code of (0).

Age was determined by the birthday given and verified during the intake process. The type of crime, length of sentence, and family status were obtained from records at the correctional facility. Once all variables were gathered for each inmate, the information was added to the Statistical Analysis Software Package (SPSS) program to manage the statistical analysis.

Data Analysis

The null hypothesis was tested using logistic regression. The data was screened for inconsistencies, errors, and outliers. Descriptive statistics was calculated on the descriptive variables. The assumptions necessary when conducting a logistic regression are that the outcome variable is dichotomous, the scores on the outcome variable have to be independent of each other, the model should only include all relevant predictor models, and categories have to be exhaustive and exclusive (Warner, 2013). The logistic regression requires one assumption. The assumption is that the criterion variable has a 50/50 split (Steyerberg, & Harrell, 2016). Meaning fifty percent of black female inmates who participated completed the HEP and fifty percent of the participants did not successfully obtain an HSE. Logistic regression is used when the criterion variable is dichotomous (Gall et al., 2007). The logistic regression handled all categorical data. Wald statistics, at the 95% confidence interval was reported. Warner (2013) confirmed that Wald statistics may show if any of the predictor variables are significant. Wald statistic defined the null hypothesis. Cox and Snell's and Nagelkerke's statistics was used to measure the strength of the model. Odd ratios were also calculated between the predictor variables and the criterion variables.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this study was to see if students' age, length of sentence, type of crime, and family status could predict completion of the High School Equivalency Program (HEP) among Black female inmates in a state prison. The predictor variables were age, length of sentence, type of crime, and family status; however, family status was removed from the data set because of every participant claiming to be a parent of a child. The criterion variable was completion of the High School Equivalency Program. A logistic regression was used to test the hypothesis. The findings section includes the research question, null hypothesis, data screening, descriptive statistics, assumption testing, and results.

Research Question(s)

RQ1: Is there a relationship between age, length of sentence, type of crime, and family status of Black female inmates' while in a state prison and their completion of a High School Equivalency Program (HEP)?

Null Hypothesis

H₀1: There is no statistically significant relationship between the predictor variables (age, length of sentence, type of crime, and family status) and the criterion variable (completion of the High School Equivalency Program) among Black female inmates in a state prison.

Data Screening

The researcher sorted the data and scanned for inconsistencies on each variable. Data errors or inconsistencies were identified among the family status. The values were all "1's". Possessing a "1" in the family status category signified that the student has a parent to child

relationship. Every participant in the study claimed a “1” in the family status. For that reason, the variable was removed from the data set and the analysis was run without family status.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were obtained on each of the variables. The study consisted of 100 participants for a sample size of $N = 100$. From the group of participants ($N=100$), 50 (50.0%) students successfully completed the HEP and 50 (50.0%) students were unsuccessful in completing the HEP.

The mean total for the predictor variable age was 43.38 years old, the minimum age of the participants was 19 years old and the maximum age of participants was 64 years old. The standard deviation for the predictor variable age was 9.97. The mean total for the predictor variable type of crime (non-violent or violent) was .61, non-violent crimes (0) had the minimum amount of offenses and violent crimes (1) had the maximum number of offenses. The standard deviation for the predictor variable type of crime was .49. The mean total for the predictor variable length of sentence was 8.44, the minimum sentence was .74 months, and the maximum sentence was 32.82 months in jail. The standard deviation for the predictor variable length of sentence was 6.55. The descriptive statistics for the predictor variables age, type of crime, and length of sentence are available in Table 1.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age from Birth Date to Present	100	19	64	43.38	9.970
Non-violent or Violent	100	0	1	.61	.490
Prison Sentence (Months)	100	.74	32.82	8.4360	6.55031
Valid N (listwise)	100				

Assumption Testing

The logistic regression requires the following assumptions be met. The assumptions necessary when conducting a logistic regression are that the outcome variable are dichotomous, the scores on the outcome variable have to be independent of each other, the model should only include all relevant predictor models, and categories have to be exhaustive and exclusive (Warner, 2013). The logistic regression also requires that the criterion variable has a 50/50 split (Steyerberg & Harrell, 2016). The assumptions were all met.

Results

Hypothesis

A logistic regression was conducted to see if there was a significant relationship between the predictor variables (age, length of sentence, type of crime, and family status) and the criterion variable (completion of the High School Equivalency Program) among Black female inmates in a state prison. However, family status was removed from the data set because of every participant claiming to be a parent of a child. Therefore, the predictor variables were age, length of sentence, and type of crime. The criterion variable was completion of the High School Equivalency Program. The results of the binary logistic regression were statistically significant at the 95% confidence level where $X^2(3) = 26.81, p = .000$. See Table 2 for Omnibus Test results.

Table 2

Omnibus Test of Model Coefficients

		Chi-square	Df	Sig.
Step 1	Step	26.810	3	.000
	Block	26.810	3	.000
	Model	26.810	3	.000

The model was strong according to Cox and Snell's ($R^2 = .235$) and Nagelkerke's ($R^2 = .314$)

Table 3

Model Summary

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	111.820 ^a	.235	.314

a. Estimation terminated at iteration number 5 because parameter estimates changed by less than .001.

For the variable of age, the Wald ratio was statistically significant, $X^2(1) = 17.23$, $p = .000$. The odds ratio for age was .89 indicating that females were more likely to complete the High School Equivalency Program the older they were. However, though significant, because the ratio was close to 1.00 indicating a 50/50 split, the research concluded that age had little effect on completing the High School Equivalency Program. See table 4 for Variables in the Equation.

For the variable type of crime, the Wald ratio was not statistically significant, $X^2(1) = .483$, $p = .487$. Thus, type of crime was not an indicator of completion of the High School Equivalency Program. See table 4 for Variables in the Equation.

For the variable length of sentence, the Wald ratio was not statistically significant, $X^2(1) = 1.13$, $p = .288$. Thus, length of sentence was not an indicator of completion of the High School Equivalency Program. See table 4 for Variables in the Equation.

Table 4

Variables in the Equation

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
							Lower	Upper
Step 1 ^a Age from Birth Date to Present	-.119	.029	17.229	1	.000	.888	.839	.939
Non-violent or Violent(1)	-.435	.626	.483	1	.487	1.545	.453	5.270
Prison Sentence (Months)	-.052	.049	1.127	1	.288	.950	.863	1.045
Constant	5.487	1.450	14.326	1	.000	241.593		

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: Age, Type of Crime, and Length of Prison Sentence.

Summary

Chapter four provided a summary of the data collected and the procedures that were used for analyzing the data. The data consisted of the Black female inmates that participated in the High School Equivalency Program and the participants' age, length of sentence, type of crime, and family status. The descriptive statistics were reported as well as the results for the logistic regression analysis. The statistical analysis found that the predictor variable of age was statistically significant in predicting the completion of the HEP by Black female inmates. However, the predictor variables of length of sentence, type of crime and family status were not statistically significant predictors of Black female inmates completing the HEP and the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis. Chapter five will discuss these statistical findings in relation to the related research and the implications of these results.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

Overview

Chapter five will dive into the data analysis of Chapter four to connect it with the previous literature. Chapter five will also provide the discussion, implications, limitations, and recommendations for future research.

Discussion

The purpose of this predictive correlational study was to determine if a relationship exists between the predictor variables of age, length of sentence, type of crime, and family status and Black female inmates' completion of a High School Equivalency Program (HEP) while in state prison. The study consisted of one research question and one null hypothesis. **RQ1:** Is there a relationship between age, length of sentence, type of crime, and family status of Black female inmates' while in a state prison and their completion of the High School Equivalency program? **H₀1:** There is no statistically significant relationship between the predictor variables (age, length of sentence, type of crime, and family status) and the criterion variable (completion of the High School Equivalency program) among Black female inmates in a state prison.

The predictor variables were age, length of sentence, type of crime, and family status. Age was determined by the participants' time spent alive since being born and measured in years (Schwall, Hedge, & Borman, 2012). The judge that presided over the case interpreted the length of the sentence months; this was determined by severity of the crime, the danger involved, and other individual factors (Jordan & Freiburger, 2015). Type of crime was distinguished by violent crime or non-violent crime (Fajnzyblber, Lederman, and Loayza, 2002) proclaimed violent crimes consisted of the intent to threaten or harm a person or force used in a criminal act. Durose and Mumola (2002) clarified non-violent crimes as crimes that did not consist of harming an

individual physically. Umberson (1987) identified family status as an inmate who possessed a parent to child relationship.

The criterion variable in this study is the completion of the High School Equivalency Program (HEP). The HEP is a program that requires students to pass the High School Equivalency Test (HiSET) to receive their High School Equivalency Diploma (HSE). In 2014, the Educational Training Service (ETS) created the HiSET test as an option to the GED (Tannenbaum, 2014). The HiSET test has replaced the GED test in some states. Although the HiSET has been substituted for the GED test, they have minimal differences. The HiSET can be taken online as well as on paper. The GED test can only be taken online. The HiSET has five different graded areas including reading, writing, science, mathematics, and social studies (Cage, 2019). The GED has only four graded areas because it groups reading and writing into Language Arts.

The GED program is the most commonly used program in correctional education (Zinth, 2015). The State of North Carolina recognizes the GED, HiSET, and TASC as appropriate assessments for obtaining a high school equivalency (Zinth, 2015); however, in 2014, the Raleigh Women's Correctional Facility utilized the HiSET assessment to allow prisoners the opportunity to demonstrate the knowledge necessary to obtain their high-school equivalency diploma (HSE). Little to no research has been conducted on the HEP and Black female inmates.

The descriptive statistics were reported as well as the results for the logistic regression analysis. The statistical analysis found that the predictor variable of age was statistically significant in predicting the completion of the HEP by Black female inmates. However, the predictor variables of length of sentence, type of crime and family status were not statistically

significant predictors of Black female inmates completing the HEP and the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis.

In previous literature, Batiuk et al. (2005) revealed that over sixty-three percent of inmates in the study were over thirty years old. The average age of Black female inmates in the HEP was 43 years old. The researcher concluded that age had little effect on completing the High School Equivalency Program. This may be due to the fact that half of the inmates were older and saw little value in the program. Regarding length of sentence, this study found no relationship to High School Equivalency Program completion. Roth and Manger (2014) reported that the longer the sentence the inmate was given the more they valued education. With a smaller sentence, education was devalued. This current study was not able to prove that the length of sentence was conducive to inmates receiving their HSE. Finally, unlike Harlow (2003) the type of crime could not be used to determine what participants completed the High School Equivalency Program.

Implications

This study laid the initial groundwork to research the potential impact the variables age, type of crime, length of sentence, and family status might have on Black female inmates completing the high school equivalency program (HEP) in a state prison. Because no prior research had been completed in this area, the study added to the base knowledge related to the general equivalency development (GED) program and correctional education. The results of the study showed a weak positive correlation between age and Black female inmates completing the HEP. This may be due to the fact that half of the inmates were older and saw little value in the program. There was no other variable correlation with the predictor variables of length of

sentence, type of crime and family status. The result of a positive correlation of the variable age could be utilized for further research.

Limitations

There are several flaws in this quest to determine if a relationship exists between the predictor variables: age, length of sentence, type of crime, and family status and Black female inmates' completion of a High School Equivalency Program (HiSET) while in state prison. Family Status was excluded from the statistical analysis portion of the study. Every participant claimed to have an existing parent to child relationship; however, the Director of Administrative Analysis Reentry, Programs, and Services for the North Carolina Department of Public Safety (NCDPS) stated that inmates are allowed to have their children visit them during their stay. Some inmates put visitors on the list who are not their children to make sure they have contact with certain outsiders. This heavily impacted the study.

The preexisting educational level of some of the participants also presented a limitation in the study. Some female inmates begin the HiSET Program with previous educational experience. Already having some coursework completed could make them more motivated to complete the hours the program requires to be successful (Harlow, 2003). Other participants may be starting from scratch. These students have to work longer and may be more apt to drop out or receive a FAIL instead of a PASS in the program. Some students may have dropped out of school earlier than others and require more tutoring or the repetition of courses (Cai, Ruhil, & Gut, 2019). This limitation affected how many participants passed, failed, or are still in the process of completing the HEP.

Recommendations for Future Research

Because Black female inmates and their quest to complete the High School Equivalency Program (HEP) in a state prison have not been researched before this study, further research would be imperative to increase the body of knowledge for the field of education. Suggestions for further research include:

1. Different populations could have been studied. This study focused on Black female inmates, but further research could focus on women as a whole. Research has been conducted on males receiving their GED, but there is little to no research on males receiving their HSE. Juveniles can also be considered in future research.
2. The prison population that was used came from a state prison. Future studies could incorporate private prisons and their educational programs.
3. Different races could be examined to further this research. The Latino/Hispanic race could be an extensive expansion of knowledge in this field of study.
4. A larger sample size could be used for this study. This study only utilized 100 participants because a 50/50 split was required. There were only 50 Black inmates out of the 300 total inmates in the state prison that actually completed the high school equivalency program (HEP).
5. More predictor variables could be added to the study for more extensive research. These variables include, but are not limited to, siblings, substance abuse, mental health issues, and evaluation of additional demographic information.

Conclusion

After conducting research for this study, it was found that the predictor variable of age was statistically significant in predicting the completion of the HEP by Black female inmates. However, the predictor variables of length of sentence, type of crime and family status were not statistically significant predictors of Black female inmates completing the HEP. Although limitations were presented, the research was able to build a foundation for research related to HEP and fill a gap in the research related to Black female inmates and correctional education. It is vital to continue research in this area because only knowledge will address the shortcomings that lie between Black female inmates and their quest for an education for a better life. Bridging the gap will also assist correctional facilities and society in decreasing recidivism and producing law-abiding citizens.

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APPENDIX A

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

November 1, 2019

Erica L Yuille

IRB Approval 4039.110119: Factors Influencing the Completion of the GED Program by Black Female Inmates

Dear Erica L Yuille,

We are pleased to inform you that your study has been approved by the Liberty University IRB. This approval is extended to you for one year from the date provided above with your protocol number. If data collection proceeds past one year or if you make changes in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update form to the IRB. The forms for these cases were attached to your approval email.

Your study falls under the expedited review category (45 CFR 46.110), which is applicable to specific, minimal risk studies and minor changes to approved studies for the following reason(s):

5. Research involving materials (data, documents, records, or specimens) that have been collected, or will be collected solely for nonresearch purposes (such as medical treatment or diagnosis). (NOTE: Some research in this category may be exempt from the HHS regulations for the protection of human subjects. [45 CFR 46.101\(b\)\(4\)](#). This listing refers only to research that is not exempt.)

7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies. (NOTE: Some research in this category may be exempt from the HHS regulations for the protection of human subjects. [45 CFR 46.101\(b\)\(2\)](#) and (b)(3). This listing refers only to research that is not exempt.)

Please retain this letter for your records. Also, if you are conducting research as part of the requirements for a master's thesis or doctoral dissertation, this approval letter should be included as an appendix to your completed thesis or dissertation.

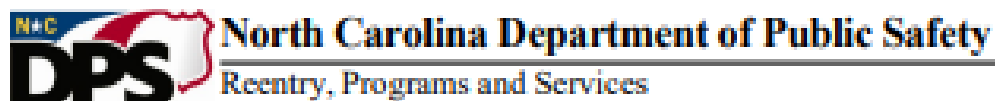
Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,

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APPENDIX B



North Carolina Department of Public Safety

Reentry, Programs and Services

Roy Cooper, Governor
Erik A. Hooks, Secretary

Tim Moore, Chief Deputy Secretary
Tracy Little, Deputy Secretary
Nicole E. Sullivan, Director

November 13, 2019

TO: Erica L. Yulle
Educational Specialist
Liberty University

FROM: Linda Mitterling, Chairperson
Human Subjects Review Committee

RE: Approval and Authorization of HSRC #1911-01

The Department of Public Safety has reviewed the proposal for the research project, "Factors Influencing the Completion of the GED Program by Black Female Inmates" (NCDPS HSRC #1911-01). We accept the approval from your Institutional Review Board (IRB), as the IRB of record, and grant permission for the research as described in the application; which includes adequate precautions to protect human subjects from coercion to participate, to minimize possible physical or mental harms, and has adequately provided safeguards to protect their confidentiality. This letter constitutes Departmental approval of the research proposal.

Since your research does not require contact with human subjects, this letter will also serve as the final authorization from the North Carolina Department of Public Safety (DPS) to conduct the project referenced above. This authorization is valid until 11/01/2020. If the project will continue after this date, you must seek renewal by 10/01/2020.

The Department of Public Safety must review all renewals and amendments to the approved proposal and all revisions to the project (e.g., additional testing, interviewing, or changes in instrumentation). Please direct these matters to the HSRC Chairperson.

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