A CASE STUDY EVALUATING THE EFFECTS OF POVERTY IN SECONDARY

EDUCATION

by

Rachel Jean Smarr

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this collective case study design was to understand how poverty impacts rural secondary education classrooms. Participants were a collection of educators and students that are involved in an impoverished area of West Virginia. The central phenomenon of poverty for educators working in the secondary school at a technical center was addressed. Student issues were also addressed through the circumstances educators face in the classroom. The theory guiding this study was Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which depicts how foundational physical needs must be met in order to excel to higher levels of success. A collective case study was utilized in order to conduct an in-depth investigation. Research questions investigating the effects of poverty in secondary education were asked to 12 participants to discover how each concept of Maslow's theory is involved in educational hardships. Interviews and focus groups were conducted to provide participants the opportunity to explain their experience with poverty's impact in rural secondary education. A collection of artifacts were analyzed and member checks were performed to assist in minimizing any form of bias within the study.

Keywords: poverty, secondary education, socio-economic status

Dedication

I dedicate this manuscript to my entire family. Without your love and support, this dissertation would still be a dream.

Acknowledgments

To my Mom and Dad, you deserve a doctorate for your years in the ministry along with all your hard work raising three children on a school bus driver's salary. Through your leadership, I can be the leader I am today. I love you both very much. To my husband Jimmy, I love you more than you could ever imagine. Thank you for supporting me while giving me the time and space to complete this journey. To my son, David, thank you for sacrificing some of your play time with Mommy to allow me to become a better leader for you in the future. I pray that I always can guide and direct you in the way that God would have you to go. I love you so much! God is transforming you into a wonderful young man! Reach for your dreams as I have and let nothing put a limit on God and His calling for you in your life!

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List of Abbreviations

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Poverty impacts everyone at some point in their life be it through a personal experience or association with someone that is struggling (Keeney, Hohman, & Bergman, 2019). Students struggle daily in the classroom due to insufficiencies at home that carry over to their academic environment (McKinney, 2014). A gap in literature exists regarding secondary educational poverty. Society is frequently focused upon urban areas impacted by poverty and how helping these areas will assist more people due to a higher population resulting in rural areas being shunned. Often, the focus is on elementary students or poverty in general. Secondary students are also neglected since focal points commonly reflect toward early childhood and elementary students. A deeper understanding of poverty at a secondary education level needs to be attained in order to assist students preparing for the real world and higher education.

The background of poverty in education was established to generate the problem and purpose statements. The Situation to Self section of this chapter describes how motivation was founded to conduct the study. The Significance of the Study section describes how the information and situations impact participants and their environments. Definitions are provided for clarity of the topic being discussed, along with a summary of the chapter.

Background

Hardships created by poverty have befallen many individuals during the existence of the world. Many have struggled with poverty throughout the decades because of ignorance regarding assistance and programs available to help them, while others simply ignored poverty thinking it would eventually go away. Numerous research articles, journals, and books confirm

the issues faced by people due to such shortages. Understanding the background of poverty

makes a clearer view of how others can cope and find a source of relief to these issues.

Historical

Poverty is the deficiencies prevalent in students' lives, homes, and school settings

including food, water, shelter, and supplies (McKinney, 2014). In 2017, 43.1 million individuals

were reported as living in poverty (Keeney et al., 2019). Almost 40% of the children in America

will experience living in poverty at some point in their life before turning age 18, including a $2

a day household income (Keeney et al., 2019). The issue of poverty even goes back to times

before Christ (Scofield, 1967). The Bible gives precise depictions of various individuals helping

one another by donating food and shelter to endure life (2 Kings 4:1–44 King James Version).

Fundamentals of poverty have not changed throughout thousands of years since issues remain

the same by people lacking necessities for daily functions.

Theorists such as Abraham Maslow (1943) have produced theories to explain ways needs

can be met to obtain a higher level of living. Maslow (1943) formed a theory depicting the five

levels of needs individuals face throughout their life and learning development: physiological,

security, social, esteem, and self- actualization. The hierarchy of needs shows the correlation

between various physical, emotional, and sociological needs that are required to achieve in life.

Procurement of food, shelter, water and warmth paired with love, safety, relationships,

belonging, and positive self-esteem creates the solid foundation for an individual to reach

personal fulfillment. This theory has been the foundation of many other theories and action

plans to help individuals all over the globe succeed.

Cascio and Reber (2013) provide awareness through their discussion regarding the

establishment of Title I in 1960 due to the poverty levels documented from the United States

census. This funding was founded to provide supplements and resources for academic

programming including secondary education to sustain academic attainment for all children, not

just those that can afford it. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 was later

established under Title I funding as well to provide enhancement to educational programs.

Likewise, the program assisted secondary students suffering in poverty to receive more resources

to achieve educational goals through government collaboration with education systems.

Collaborations involving individuals, schools, interest groups, and government

throughout generations have slowly increased the opportunities afforded to secondary students

through government funding and stakeholder involvement (Cascio & Reber, 2013). However,

such mediations have still fallen short of significant changes being made regarding the impacts

of poverty in secondary education. Teachers, stakeholders, and community members' acuities

toward impoverished situations have also retained some of the issues poverty imposes within the

classroom (Dell'Angelo, 2016). Such issues not only have impacted classrooms, but social

aspects as well (Goodman, 2019).

Social

According to Goodman (2019), children embedded in poverty struggle socially in their

personal live and school environment. Their lack of resources establishes a borderline between

their peers causing a lag in educational attainment and cognitive development. Individuals

classified in poverty are often cast aside in the classroom through exclusion of activities since

extra efforts and resources are necessary to fill various voids during instruction. The majority of

the students effected by exclusion come from a low socioeconomic status family.

Society establishes standards of poverty through the labeling of individuals based upon

their income. Income levels form boundaries among citizens by socioeconomic statuses. If

someone does not meet the proper guidelines in monetary values and assets, then they are considered poor (Jung, Cho, & Roberts, 2015). The opportunity for learning is diminished due to their inability to purchase supplies and resources needed to successfully accomplish curriculum.

Through such examples, Maslow's (1943) theory of needs remains a vital component of society. Fulfilling the needs one must acquire throughout development enables them to become more functional with social attributes to accomplish their dreams. By conquering hardships experienced through each level of the hierarchy, one acquires new social skills to utilize throughout their personal and academic life.

Theoretical

Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs establishes the basis of this research. Maslow has researched the shortages humans face, which are prevalent in poverty, and provides five tiers that build upon one another to excel to the next level of achievement. His research was even conducted before the government made efforts to improve educational environments in the 1960s, confirming the need for intervention to provide equal opportunity education for all children.

Cilesiz and Drotos (2016) propose an action plan theory that finding ways to lessen problems caused by poverty is vital to the success of secondary education pupils. Action plans and relief programs are to be created to motivate students toward completion of high school resulting in productive individuals and higher education attainment. Everyone has had interactions with someone that is affected by poverty making it a point of interest. Those that are not distressed by poverty personally are impacted through interactions with other individuals that are affected. Previous research offers evidence that poverty is an issue but does not often

propose solutions to ease the burden of poverty (Knight, 2017; Mannon, 2018; Mihai, Ţiţan, & Manea, 2015).

It was expected that this study would expose problems in the low socioeconomic status community and how relief is provided throughout the case study. Discussion of various scenarios provide insight for others in the same situation enlightening educators of ways to give support. Students will be knowledgeable about their circumstances and how assistance can be found. More recently published research adds substance to existing literature by displaying more knowledge and understanding about low income struggles in secondary education.

Situation to Self

As a child, I was raised in a low socioeconomic status home. I did not feel poor because God met our every need. However, society told us we were poor. My grandparents on both sides were raised during the Great Depression, so conservation was always well engrained. I did not wear name-brand clothing and shoes or go on expensive vacations. My father was a school bus driver and minister. My mother stayed at home to provide childcare for myself and my siblings. This also was planned to not only raise us instead of strangers, but to cut out expenses for a babysitter. The churches my father served only provided a per diem for gasoline since they are two small country churches, so that did not cover any of our household costs. He supported our family on one salary until we all graduated from high school. He then retired and continues in the ministry.

God always provided enough food, clothes, and shelter, but at times it was difficult to not go to school concerned for my parents. I despised the fact they had to count every penny because they wanted to make sure we had all our needs and honestly many of our wants. Often, they neglected their own wants and needs to assure we children had everything we needed and

some of our wants we could share. They always made sure we had much more than what they were raised on. I was determined to set my goals high so I could break the intergenerational poverty that had been bestowed on all generations before them and including them. I completed my Bachelor of Science in business administration degree and then my Bachelor of Arts in secondary education degree. I wanted to make sure I could provide well for my family and myself without being concerned where the next dollar would come from. I decided to complete my master's degree in educational leadership to utilize my skills to assist others along their own life journeys. The same motivation and calling have motivated me to pursue my doctoral degree. I pray that my educational accomplishments help many other children and educators dealing with poverty.

I have worked in a rural West Virginia school district for ten years. Every school that I have worked in has been a participant in the Title I program. During that period, I have witnessed firsthand how poverty imposes difficulties on students and educators. The biggest struggles I have witnessed have occurred in secondary education classrooms. Teachers are constantly challenged by seeking funding to properly equip their classrooms with stationary and technological resources every year so that students have assignment necessities available in the classroom (Djonko-Moore, 2016). Students agonize over being tired or hungry because their family does not have enough money, food, or supplies to sustain the student throughout the year (Drotos & Cilesiz, 2016). The child may also be working a job after school causing their sleepiness during class time making it difficult for them to focus on their education. Parents may work two jobs creating a lack of motivation for the child because they feel they are doomed to the same fate (Dermott & Pomati, 2016).

Students attend the local technical center as part of their school curriculum to obtain

certification in a trade, so they are prepared to have a steady, sufficiently paid job after graduation to support themselves and their families. My position as a career coach in the administration office provides me with constant observation of students trying to better themselves while pursuing higher education. I remain unbiased in my student interactions because I simply provide job information and recruitment for the school. I do not hand-select students for jobs, classes, or any other position. My student interaction is limited since I only distribute job information on a one-on-one basis with students as requested. A packet of information they request is given along with information about any scholarships available. Discussions are conducted with entire classrooms in each shop to answer questions about jobs and other classes students may wish to take at the technical center. The majority of my work is with teachers and administration by recruiting at other schools for students entering our programs the next school year.

An epistemological assumption inspires the research within this study (Patton, 2015). A knowability of reality supports the validity and generalization of the subject. The power of knowing more about poverty enables others to become more aware of the circumstances poverty creates around it. Hopefully, motivation, empathy, and encouragement are generated from the deeper understand resulting in more actions leading to positive results. Further knowledge must be gained to help students and teachers acquire resources and higher education. The more people are enlightened to the effects of poverty in rural secondary education, the more participation can be shaped to combat the educational disturbances.

The paradigm of constructivism guided the study to establish a constructive process toward attacking poverty (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). It provides a deeper understanding of how people advance their insights toward a topic. Connecting meaning to the understanding of

poverty in an individual's mind is an important step of constructivism (Patton, 2015). Students

and teachers benefited from a constructivism approach toward poverty to appreciate each other's

circumstances. New information portrays meaning and truth to everyone impacted by poverty

through the foundations of prior knowledge supplied through constructivism (Patton, 2015).

Perspectives are recognized and appreciated for all backgrounds.

Problem Statement

It is not known how teachers describe the student barriers related to poverty in rural West

Virginia school districts. Often, teachers do have not have adequate training or professional

development opportunities to teach students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Cilesiz &

Drotos, 2016). Likewise, students enter classrooms on a daily basis without proper resources

and materials to sustain sufficient learning environments (Cilesiz & Drotos, 2016). The problem

is there are a variety of socioeconomic barriers that impact secondary students within United

County District, which have a significant impact on achieving educational attainment.

Circumstances such poverty induced by a lack of daily necessities and classroom resources are

established by intergenerational issues or demographics, beyond the student's control (Wei,

Xiao, Simon, Liu, & Ni, 2018). When students and teachers are not supported financially and

academically to overcome poverty, educational attainment declines resulting in the continuance

of poverty's cycle (Kamanda, 2016). Communities are then hindered by the perpetuation of

poverty through a lack of development and enhancing school infrastructure reducing academic

achievements which further feeds the poverty cycle (Kamanda, 2016).

As generations continue to struggle with poverty, approaches and research of the issue

must be adaptable to meet everyone's needs (Hannum, Liu, & Alvarado-Urbina, 2017). Such

research mentioned discusses the barricades but falls short of providing solutions to offer some

type of relief. Few studies provide an in-depth understanding of the context for poverty impacting education. For these reasons, this case study must be conducted to provide substantial qualitative research regarding poverty.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this single subject case study design is to explore the phenomenon of poverty in a rural secondary school in alignment with barriers causing additional struggles in the classroom impacting teachers' and students' preparations to combat the effects of poverty. A phenomenon is a case or topic to investigate within a study (Yin, 2018). A larger awareness of the various socioeconomic barriers posed by poverty strives to promote ways teachers can be more prepared to cope with poverty issues in the classroom, while students grasp the hope that educational fulfillment is still possible.

Participants included a collection of educators and students that are involved in the poverty setting in United County, West Virginia. The central phenomenon of poverty for educators and students working in Future of Tomorrow Technical Center were addressed. The theory guiding this study is Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory as it depicts how foundational physical needs must be met in order to excel to higher levels of success (Maslow, 1943). Five tiers portray levels of needs: physical, safety, love and belonging, esteem needs, and self-actualization (Maslow, 1943).

Significance of the Study

Empirical, theoretical, and practical significances must be evaluated to examine each aspect of impoverishment during secondary education. Dissecting each section allowed the researcher to use collected data more substantially by creating a better understanding of each implication. Teachers, students, administrators, and other stakeholders benefit from each

significance by obtaining a clearer understanding of each section. This study can be utilized on a larger scale to improve educational attainment rates for students in other rural areas and schools.

Empirical Significance

This study fills in the literature gap regarding poverty in secondary education. Deficiencies left by previous studies regarding secondary education poverty need to be addressed. The understanding of secondary education challenges posed by poverty is lacking, which requires further research. Ignorance of the subject has caused a deficit in the responses to solve the issue (Knight, 2017). It is my hope this research provides knowledge to incorporate into 21st century classrooms to improve circumstances for students and teachers combatting poverty.

Theoretical Significance

This research reinforces Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs demonstrating students' motivation to excel to the next level of achievement if basic needs such as physical, safety, and social requirements are met. Cilesiz and Drotos's (2016) action plan theory portrays the power of enlightenment towards filling the poverty gap in rural secondary education. Once the circumstances are better understood, more ideas can be generated to alleviate the problem.

Practical Significance

Rural locations, such as West Virginia communities, greatly benefit from data collected and reported. Encouragement and motivation are created from the understanding that students are not alone in their struggles, and steps are being taken to assist them in their educational career. Information provided through this study's documented observations and interviews inspires other locations and demographics to break the intergenerational gap of poverty and strive for their life goals (Mayer, Blume, Black, & Stevens, 2019). It serves as another source of

knowledge to provide a deeper understanding of poverty in secondary education that hinders academic achievement. According to Wei et al. (2018), this type of research can be implemented across the board to help all areas of high poverty, not just those that are rural areas.

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Research Questions

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Participant questions provide interrogation regarding the effects of poverty in secondary education. Responses are established in a thorough manner providing clarification to what attributes impact secondary education. Provided answers also afford an opportunity of reflection toward the issue to consider what other steps can be taken by the participant to minimize the effects of poverty in secondary education.

Research Question One

The first research question asked, "In what ways does poverty impact learning in secondary education?" Deterding (2015) focuses on ways to achieve educational attainment to create fruitful members of society while promoting the completion of higher education. It is imperative to know what issues influence students during their secondary education. Teacher involvement is crucial to the victories that students encounter throughout their schooling (Wei et al., 2018). Modeling portrayed by teachers and other stakeholders and an ease of access to alleviation programs are key components to secondary educational attainment. Such resources can counteract some of the effects of poverty in the classroom (Deterding, 2015).

Research Question Two

The second research question asked, "How do educators and students perceive their roles in the classroom due to dealing with poverty?" (Djonko-Moore, 2016). Teacher face multiple roles and stressors in the classroom influencing the education that students in poverty locations receive and often results in high teacher attrition (Wei et al., 2018). Although they are there to

teach, many take on additional roles such as counselors and caregivers causing exasperation and disheartenment. Such disruptions intensify the effects of poverty toward the student causing more frustration and discouragement. Instead of students feeling the excitement of being a learner, learning becomes another undertaking to survive throughout the day.

Research Question Three

The third research question asked, "What steps are currently taken to minimize the effects of poverty in the classroom?" (Mannon, 2018). Communities, administrators, parents, business partners, and other stakeholders are responsible for working together to deliver quality and affordable educations to all students regardless of background and income (Cascio & Reber, 2013). Parents must also make the time to encourage their children to do the best they can in school despite challenges they may face (Dermott & Pomati, 2016). Government funding plays a critical role in lessening the effects of secondary educational poverty (Kainz, 2019). All three research questions have been created from the statement of the problem and purpose statement.

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Definitions

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1. *Action plan* – A set of strategies implemented academically, individually, and socially in order to obtain educational attainment (Cilesiz & Drotos, 2016).

2. *Learning communities* - Educational support provided to the child at home, in the classroom, and by the surrounding community (Mannon, 2018).

3. *Phenomenon* - A case or topic to investigate (Yin, 2018).

4. *Poverty* - Deficiencies prevalent in students' lives, homes, and school settings, including food, water, shelter, and supplies (McKinney, 2014).

5. *Secondary education* - High school students striving for educational attainment and graduation (Cilesiz & Drotos, 2016).

6. *Socioeconomic status* - Income levels established by the government through the United States Census (Cascio & Reber, 2013).

Summary

Poverty has a stronghold in life and education. Research questions must be shaped to answer the purpose of study while exploring the perspective of the participants dealing with the topic. A strong situation to self creates enthusiasm to conduct research which can be used in later studies to ease pressures caused by poverty. Grasping the definition of main points within research allows a deeper knowledge of the subject.

Poverty in secondary education hinders students from completing graduation, let alone obtaining higher education (Cilesiz & Drotos, 2016). Encounters with poverty in rural secondary education generates inspiration to find solutions for others going through the same complications. Circumstances can be caused by intergenerational issues or demographics, beyond the student's control (Wei et al., 2018). As generations continue to struggle with poverty, approaches and research of the issue must be flexible to meet everyone's needs (Hannum et al., 2017).

There are a variety of socioeconomic barriers that impact secondary students within United County District, which have a significant impact on achieving educational attainment. Often, teachers do have not have adequate training or professional development opportunities to teach students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Cilesiz & Drotos, 2016). Likewise, students enter classrooms on a daily basis without proper resources and materials to sustain sufficient learning environments (Cilesiz & Drotos, 2016). The purpose of this single-subject case study design is to explore the phenomenon of poverty in a rural secondary school in

alignment with barriers causing additional struggles in the classroom impacting teachers' and students' preparations to combat the effects of poverty.

Participants included a collection of educators and students that are involved in the poverty setting in United County, West Virginia. The central phenomenon of poverty for educators working in a secondary school at Future of Tomorrow Technical Center were addressed. Student issues were addressed through the circumstances educators face in the classroom. The theory guiding this study was Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory as it depicts how foundational physical needs must be met in order to excel to higher levels of success. Five tiers portray levels of needs: physical, safety, love and belonging, esteem needs, and self-actualization.

Evaluating data collected and compared to Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs along with Cilesiz and Drotos's (2016) action plan theory generates a deeper understanding of poverty in secondary education. The new level of understanding empowers others to work towards resolving secondary education poverty issues.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

This literature review provides a synthesis of research that was conducted to classify studies that inspect the development of students affected by poverty during secondary education. The content of knowledge throughout this review provides high points of concern relating to literature gaps regarding poverty's impact in education. A driving force toward this literature review is initiated by employing the theoretical framework of constructivism. It is expected that enlightenment pertaining to the effects of poverty in rural secondary education generates more stakeholder and parent support, while motivating more people to act in minimizing the effects of rural secondary education.

The objective for a deeper understanding concerning poverty's impact in secondary education is to clarify the needs educators and students encounter in secondary education in order to generate more response and support from other stakeholders and community members (Kamanda, 2016). Reviewing related literature gives more background information on the effects of poverty in secondary education (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The review of related literature also details key aspects of poverty impacting educational attainment.

The first section discusses the theoretical framework from Maslow's human motivational theory (1943) and how five basic levels of need are related: physical, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization. The framework provided by Maslow (1943) offers a deeper understanding of needs students often encounter while struggling with poverty, while encouraging educators, administrators, students, and stakeholders to collaborate and motivate one another to excel to the next level of achievement. Related literature connects existing knowledge of poverty in educational settings to the proposed study of poverty impacting rural

secondary education (Cilesiz & Drotos, 2016; Wei et al., 2018). Poverty struggles in secondary education are reviewed in educational specific areas including a lack of parental involvement, government aid, and professional development. Such gaps in the literature offer the main focus of study for this subject to minimize deficiencies created by poverty.

<center>**Theoretical Framework**</center>

Establishing a theoretical framework is vital to the construction of qualitative research since its findings impact investigation and studies (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). Theoretical framework establishes the assembly of the research and maintains the research throughout the study. The theory is introduced and illustrated as to why it is important regarding the subject being researched. It is then discussed why the research topic aligns with the designated theory molding the framework of the research.

Maslow (1943) founded the structure of the hierarchy of needs theory. Maslow (1943) proposed that five levels of personal needs must be obtained to succeed in life: physiological, safety, love and belonging, self-esteem, and self- actualization. A deeper understanding of each level within the hierarchy is necessary to understand what steps of accomplishment must be achieved before excelling to the next level. Physiological needs address human necessities such as food, water, clothing, and shelter (Maslow, 1943). Physiological needs are placed at the bottom of the pyramid and are the foundation upholding the ladder of personal growth. Without meeting all the proper physiological needs, personal growth and self-actualization cannot be obtained. Safety needs includes security of family, employment, property, property, and physical health (Maslow, 1943). Love and belonging allow the individual to be involved in relationships with friends, family, and physical partners. Self-esteem is generated through respect of self and others while having a sense of accomplishment, pride, and confidence. Self-

actualization is the success of meeting the individual's full potential in life through creativity, acceptance, problem solving, and morality. Self- actualization can only be attained by achieving all the other previous levels of needs within the hierarchy (Maslow, 1943). The hierarchy of needs portrays that personal needs must be met to build upon one another in order to create growth physically, mentally, and socially (Maslow, 1943). Each of these five areas is vital to the success of a child individually but also intellectually to obtain education. Worries constructed from a lack of personal resources in the classroom or at home create more barriers to break down in order to complete education.

Abraham Maslow's research has provided a foundation for many other studies, including Bloom's taxonomy, related to the hierarchy of needs one must achieve in order to flourish (Cilesiz & Drotos, 2016; Ginn, Mughal, Syed, Storteboom, & Benzies, 2017; Hannum et al., 2017). Motivation and an understanding of how people excel to the next level of accomplishment is demonstrated throughout Maslow's (1943) theory through the breakdown of each level. The triangle of hierarchy illustrates the sequence of needs that must be achieved in order to reach self-actualization (Maslow, 1943). All five levels of this theory of motivation is crucial to the success of students affected by poverty to meet all needs in every aspect of their personal and educational lives to achieve higher education (Maslow, 1943; Cilesiz & Drotos, 2016). Since 1943, numerous articles, literature reviews, and research have been created supporting the theory (Cilesiz & Drotos, 2016; Fishman, 2015; Hannum et al., 2017; Wei et al., 2018). Wei et al. (2018) illustrated students' needs not being met academically in urban areas due to high populations resulting in low test scores. Cilesiz and Drotos (2016) focused on both personal and social aspects that cause distractions interfering with academic attainment. Many of those resources specify that individuals obstructed by a low socioeconomic status struggle to

excel into higher levels of self-attainment (Kainz, 2019; Mannon, 2018). This study hopes to provide a deeper understanding of issues proposed by poverty in order to initiate further research to be conducted addressing and resolving problems posed by poverty.

While Maslow's theory of human motivation is indispensable toward educational attainment, Cilesiz and Drotos (2016) proposed generating an action plan to maintain educational attainment. Furthermore, Cilesiz and Drotos (2016) encouraged students and educators to work together assisting the students to succeed both personally and academically. Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs theory is the underlying source that inspires students to move forward in all aspects of life, while teachers are motivated to assist students that struggle through poverty's hardships. This theory supports the study by portraying motivation and self-actualization being obtained in any socioeconomic status, implying the benefits for those placed in rural secondary education. Those that do not agree with Maslow entirely use fundamentals from his theory to create their own or propose a brand-new theory entirely.

Such encouragement creates a sense of comfort, purpose, and reassurance for students that they can be fruitful regardless of their background (Cilesiz & Drotos, 2016). An action plan is essential for students desiring to graduate high school and even pursue higher education, while embedded in poverty by creating a strategy to implement toward obtaining higher education (Cilesiz and Drotos, 2016). Such an action plan allows students to feel empowered and capable to achieve any academic goal they desire. Creating an action plan regarding poverty and rural secondary education should involve students, teachers, administrators, business partners, and community members collaborating together to design a strategy of success for the students (Cilesiz & Drotos, 2016). Each action plan should be customized to fit the needs and circumstances of each individual student by collaborating with support staff to generate the best

plans and goals for the student's needs (Cilesiz & Drotos, 2016; Deterding, 2015; Hunter, 2018). As a result, the student is more involved in the process of their learning and becomes more motivated in achieving set goals (Cilesiz & Drotos, 2016).

Teachers should monitor steps students are taking toward educational attainment so when hardships arise, proper assistance can be provided to relieve the student's current stressful situation, so they are able to press on towards educational attainment (Kainz, 2019; Parker, 2017). Students must also do their part in being aware of their personal situations to approach teachers for assistance, other than waiting until damages have accrued before being noticed by educators (Plucker & Peters, 2018). However, this is difficult when depression and discouragement set into the student's mindset due to their impoverished situation (Fishman, 2015). Confidentiality needs to be maintained and ensured to allow the student to feel safe in confiding with an educator about their personal and academic needs (Plucker & Peters, 2018). In cases of existing circumstances, support staff and other stakeholders should be utilized to resolve as many issues outside of the classroom as possible, which minimizes instructional disruptions which further widens the educational gap (Deterding, 2015).

Students should also become accustomed to periodically working with support staff to stay on pace and ensure educational attainment (Deterding, 2015). Responsibility should be assumed to the student for checking with their assigned support staff, but monitoring by the appropriate staff member needs to be continued to ensure the student is accessing all the proper resources and strategies to succeed (Deterding, 2015). Documentation should be composed to recognize the frequency of the interactions among students, support staff, and stakeholders. Progress can also be monitored through proper documentation and proper action steps can be executed if the student is lagging in an any area. If communications and collaboration is lacking,

then support staff can reach out to the students to keep them on course for graduation (Deterding, 2015).

This type of action planned paired with Maslow's (1943) theory creates an ideal system for academic accomplishment established through a deeper understanding of knowing more about poverty's impact in rural secondary education. This study strengthens Maslow's (1943) theory by demonstrating how individuals overcoming endeavors throughout rural secondary education can eventually prevail in the real-world through educational attainment and self-actualization. The theory provides a guideline for progression in poverty while informing the researcher of what steps need to be attained for success in rural secondary education.

Related Literature

Arguments presented regarding poverty's impact in rural secondary education is portrayed throughout various literature (Cilesiz & Drotos, 2016; Fishman, 2015; Hannum et al., 2017; Kamanda, 2016; Parker, 2017). Many articles emphasize poverty influencing secondary education in other countries or locations such as urban areas (Cilesiz & Drotos, 2016; Wei et al., 2018; Shi et al., 2015). Unfortunately, most schools struggle academically and financially due to some type of complication caused by poverty such as lack of funding, resources, and volunteers (Cilesiz & Drotos, 2016; Wei et al., 2018). It is worth noting to enlighten others that much of the literature addressing poverty's effects on education refers to inadequacies in academic achievement but shuns the personal hurdles that must be overcome by the individual during the educational journey (Burn & Child, 2016; Kamanda, 2016; Keeney et al., 2019). In a review of the literature on poverty, an established strong parallel is depicted between poverty and secondary education attainment (Keeney et al., 2019; McKinney, 2014; Parker, 2017; Plucker & Peters, 2018). Rural areas have not been thoroughly examined to provide a stronger knowledge

of the situations poverty imposes in secondary education, resulting in a lack of understanding of the past and current situation for those residing in rural areas.

Professional Development Activities

Maslow's (1943) theory not only applies to students, but educators as well. Teachers have needs that must be met in the classroom in order to appropriately manage the class and deliver superior curriculum and instruction (Wei et al., 2018). Approaches to education must progress over time to adequately meet the needs of students suffering in poverty (Hannum et al., 2017). Educators must participate in continuing education in order to better serve the students and their individual needs (Hannum et al., 2017; Parker, 2017). Academic testing and educational surveys allow teachers to access what deficiencies have developed and then establish a plan of action to combat the issues (Wei et al., 2018). Without professional development, differentiated instruction leading to educational attainment would not be possible putting students in a stagnant state instead of prospering (Scholes et al., 2017).

At times, dropping out of school is chosen by students that feel their needs are not met by educators (Cilesiz & Drotos, 2016; Shi et al., 2015; Wei et al., 2018). Feelings of incompetency, underachievement, and a lack of self-worth impact a student's decision to remain in school or drop out (Burnette, Russell, Hoyt, Orvidas, & Widman, 2018; Shi et al., 2015). A safe plan of action is not always created to keep students motivated and on track resulting in a lack of higher education attainment (Cilesiz & Drotos, 2016). According to Fishman (2015), one in four children are impacted by poverty. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2019), 2.1 million students drop out of school between the ages of 16 and 24 and the overall status dropout rate was 5.4 percent in the nation. In West Virginia, statistics are increasing with nearly 90 percent of students graduating, yet leaving ten percent of students struggling to achieve

academic and personal success (West Virginia Department of Education, 2019). Other socioeconomic barriers such as a lack of classroom funding to provide education essentials and a lack of time are also factors that influence students into feeling dropping out of school is the only way out (Shi et al., 2015).

Teachers must learn various teaching skills to implement into their curriculum to keep students engaged that are impacted by poverty in order to promote motivation and self-confidence (Burn & Childs, 2016). The creation and presentation of the curriculum is important to the success of the students, especially since various students have different needs. Flexibility on time and instruction is crucial to adapt to the needs the students may have for their current circumstances and time period (Burns & Child, 2016). Students need to be able to relate to the information being presented and feel motivated by the deliverance of the content to generate productivity (Burns & Child, 2016). Individual student interactions, hands-on participation, online curriculum offerings and good citizenship education are great skills to utilize for keeping students interested and engaged (Fishman, 2015; Goodman, 2019). Engagement evolves into motivation for the student elevating rates for academic completion which in turn narrowed the academic achievement gap (Burns & Child, 2016).

Shadowing teachers in other school districts for a day provides a deeper understanding of the poverty issues teachers and students face in different demographics (Chiang, Clark, & McConnell, 2017; Keeney et al., 2019; McNamara & McNicholl, 2016). For example, if a teacher from a rural district visits an urban district for the day, strategies utilized in the shadowed school districted could be used in the rural district. Likewise, a teacher from an urban district can learn strategies to incorporate into their urban districts. Clarification received from these

observations provides a sharper perspective to others school district's unique situations (McNamara & McNicholl, 2016).

Conferences attended with other educators provides a forum for teachers to share experiences and strategies in combatting poverty in the classroom (Parker, 2017). A list of contacts and programs provided at conferences offer assistance to teachers and students working in impoverished secondary education classrooms. Such a network of teachers and administrators accumulated by conferences creates a strong alliance of individuals that can communicate different experiences which can result in resolving other educators' difficulties (Parker, 2017). Specially focused areas, such as rural secondary education, can be designated for teachers to receive optimal tactics for performance. Sharing experiences also provides a source of decompressing stresses that have accumulated through interactions caused by poverty in the classroom and allows educators to refocus on the problem to understand it better (Parker, 2017). Poverty simulations produced at conferences and meetings provide role play to raise awareness for teachers dealing with students residing in poverty and generates empathy for those employed by low-income districts (Keeney et al., 2019).

An important focus of this study is for professional development to expand toward social issues, like poverty, to minimize the educational and literacy gaps that remain open (Plucker & Peters, 2018). A lack of research regarding rural secondary education and poverty is widespread since most studies focus on preschool and elementary level students. Duarte, Ferrando-Latorre, and Molina (2018) depicted the effects that poverty has on secondary education and how it is not only a country issue, but a global problem. Much of the research regarding impoverishment in secondary education is focused on other world countries or urban areas in the United States (Burn & Childs, 2016; Cilesiz & Drotos, 2016; Kamanda, 2016; Shi et al., 2015; Wei et al.,

2018). Little research is shown of how poverty disturbs educational attainment in rural America's secondary education system, which this study provides.

      Characteristics of effectiveness. Understanding the connection between strong educators and low socio-economic status students is imperative (Scholes et al., 2017). Heightened success among low socioeconomic students is provided by quality teachers and curriculum being prevalent in the learning environment (Scholes et al., 2017). It is imperative for teachers to be prepared and dedicated to such circumstances in order for their students to achieve educational attainment (Parker, 2017). Out of school programs after school hours are a great example of how teachers can become involved and provide additional support for the students and school. These type of after school programs and extracurricular activities are great opportunities for professional relationships and trust to be established to motivate and support students (Parker, 2017). For students to thrive, teachers must portray and maintain characteristics to strengthen the student academically, mentally, and socially (Burn & Childs, 2016).

      A strong connection is shown between salary and productivity of teachers, which drives their motivation and productivity influencing the motivation and productivity of the students (Lotter, Yow, Lee, Zeis, & Irvin, 2020; Mihai et al., 2015;). However, impoverished school districts cannot afford such lavish salaries for their employees, let alone essential school supplies (Djonko-Moore, 2016; Lotter et al., 2020). Consequently, many teachers decide to leave school districts with such hardships in search of better teaching conditions (Wei et al., 2018). Those that approached poverty with a positive attitude was able to increase overall grades and test scores (Keeney et al., 2019).

Locations in the United States do impact the effects of teaching and curriculum due to a lack of financial support, classroom resources, and students living in impoverished circumstances (Wei et al., 2018). Different demographics requires different responses to each scenario as each is unique in its own way (Cilesiz & Drotos, 2016). However, teachers that lead by example and model specifically desired behaviors develop more successful students in the end regardless of poverty and location (Parker, 2017). Self-motivation is generated by teachers', parents', and peers' interactions with the student, but the final decision to accomplish personal and academic goals is chosen by the student (Parker, 2017). Effective students are formed in an educational environment that is derived from encouragement and continuing education (Hannum et al., 2017).

Professional learning communities. Learning communities to benefit students and teachers are formed at home and in the classroom to promote educational and personal success (Mannon, 2018). Benefits of learning communities include academic, financial, and counseling support to motivate, encourage, equip and enlighten students. Early intervention is important part of maintaining educational attainment in low socio-economic areas (Mannon, 2018). Support must be accessible in every location the student spends a substantial amount of time in (Mannon, 2018). The greatest risk of failure in development potential is in low socio-economic communities (Tran, Luchters, & Fisher, 2017). It is vital that educational leaders create long-term strategies to strengthen leadership capacities and produce substantial yields in improved student results (Fusarelli, Fusarelli, & Riddick, 2018). Rural teachers declare social and geographic isolation within rural communities make it difficult to maintain professional learning communities (Lotter et al., 2020). Without help from educators, peers, and parents, a student has a difficult time obtaining an education (Ginn et al., 2017).

Secondary educational attainment is questionable without the provisions of professional

learning communities (Cilesiz & Drotos, 2016). Resources such as tutors, youth centers, and

take-home supplements are vital in educational victory for both rural and urban students (Mayer

et al., 2019). However, finding time to utilize appropriate resources is difficult for many since

the deprivations poverty imposes drains time allotted for education to be spent meeting needs in

other areas of life including work and supporting the family (Drotos & Cilesiz, 2016).

Secondary education students need to take advantage of these resources to complete graduation

(Cilesiz & Drotos, 2016). Those struggling from poverty can use these resources as free

assistance to meet their educational goals (Cilesiz & Drotos, 2016).

Online. Teachers benefit from online courses and resourcing (Blanchard et al., 2016).

Anytime available online professional development courses are provided, teachers should take

advantage of these opportunities to obtain the necessary knowledge to offset struggles of poverty

(Blanchard et al., 2016). Courses promoting continued education for teachers and administrators

must be pursued to enhance the opportunities afforded to students in impoverished areas

(Blanchard et al., 2016). Strategies and education methods gained to enrich curriculum are

important in fighting social and economic deficiencies (Deterding, 2015). Group emails give

information to several educators at one time keeping everyone together. Communication is key

to professional development (Mannon, 2018). When ideas and thoughts are shared, then

development and progress can occur (Blanchard et al., 2016).

Students benefit from websites and online courses providing college information,

tutoring, and content enrichment and are great ways to motivate students embedded in secondary

educational poverty (Blanchard et al., 2016). Online communications cannot only strengthen

educators but provide further academic development and support to students that notify their

instructors online (Blanchard et al., 2016; Fishman, 2015). These tools are provided for free and teachers promote learning and education by exposing the students to these resources. Links to websites listed on school webpages allow teachers to provide students with the necessary references for the year to succeed (Blanchard et al., 2016). This is an important tool for academic success since many students rely on parent assistance with schoolwork. Unfortunately, not every child has computer access at home causing further hardships instigated by poverty and retarding educational progress in rural secondary education (Blanchard et al., 2016). However, utilizing online courses during school hours while the child has access to the Internet provides more course offerings for students in recompense of a deficient staff within the school (Fishman, 2015).

An employee link on the website allows administrators to provide the same format for teachers to access important professional development websites throughout the year (Blanchard et al., 2016). However, many rural areas struggle with Internet connectivity resulting in a lag of technological advances in curriculum and communication (Shi et al., 2015). Online professional development allows educators to collaborate in problem solving at any time and location while sharing positive tactics to implement in the classroom (Blanchard et al., 2016). Continuing professional development over time provides solutions to some of the problems caused by poverty (Blanchard et al., 2016). Data collected during the conduction of this study establish further investigation to the extents of online benefits in overcoming poverty issues during rural secondary education.

Instructional coaching. Administrative staff such as guidance counselors, career coaches, and financial aid advisors are wonderful sources for academic coaching (Deterding, 2015). It is important that ample support staff is available to assist students in outlining goals and

expectations that lead to post-secondary education, which is significant toward success (Deterding, 2015). Benefits of instructional coaching include students having access to school staff for additional academic and personal support to motivate them toward educational attainment and additional sources of information for parents needing assistance with their child's education (Deterding, 2015). Students in rural areas often combat depression due to the impoverished environment they struggle with daily resulting in the risk of that child being twice as likely to commit suicide along with turning to drug usage (Fishman, 2015). Such risks increase the chances of impoverished rural students dropping out of school, especially since additional obstacles are created in these types of circumstances (Fishman, 2015). Support staff members are also a valuable asset to educators since they provide services to assist students with personal concerns along with academic problems the teacher does not have to assume additional responsibility for resulting in more time and focus on curriculum (Deterding, 2015). Teachers also benefit from support staff receiving resources, websites, and strategies to implement into the classroom (Deterding, 2015).

Social support systems involving all stakeholders is important to provide collaboration opportunities and emotional sustenance during hard times presented by rural secondary educational impoverishment (Yavuz, Parzych, & Generali, 2019). Professional development acquired by teachers, administrators, and support staff ensures that the most current policies are being utilized to construct a post-secondary education plan (Hannum et al., 2017). Students stressed by poverty find it almost impossible to produce a plan for the future if they have a hard time surviving in the present (Mannon, 2018). Instructional coaching presented by support staff and teachers motivate students to thrive from their current status in poverty to excel to a prosperous future (Deterding, 2015).

Professionalism

Teachers must maintain a high level of professionalism at all times to model motivation and leadership to fellow colleagues and students (Djonko-Moore, 2016). Low socioeconomic locations cannot deter teachers from the main goal of serving students (Djonko-Moore, 2016). Such a deterrence causes a lack of motivation in the students when they continuously see teachers giving up through high attrition rates (Djonko-Moore, 2016). Sustaining high quality among educators within impoverished secondary schools promotes motivation and productivity among secondary students (Chiang et al., 2017). However, this task is difficult to execute when many rural school districts find it problematic to even find one certified candidate to fill each subject (Fishman, 2015). A lack of funding to provide an adequate salary for the position makes it even more difficult to retain proper professional certified teachers (Fishman, 2015). Administrators must establish such high levels of professionalism among instructors and students by creating and maintaining a positive and professional school culture and climate that allows the educators to maintain a desire to stay in the teaching environment (Djonko-Moore, 2016).

Poorly funded classrooms filled with low socioeconomic status students can be discouraging to teachers since the circumstances feel doomed before instruction ever starts, but motivation and professionalism must remain to influence students in such a negative environment (Djonko-Moore, 2016). High teacher attrition sends the wrong message to the students by modeling defeat when things become difficult, resulting in students responding to their own education in the same manner (Djonko-Moore, 2016). Professionalism portrayed by educators and administrators in distressing situations provide students a sense of hope in a bleak moment to persevere toward higher education to better their own circumstances impacted by poverty (Djonko-Moore, 2016). More students are suffering from poverty going into secondary

education, posing an even larger challenge to educators (Bellani & Bia, 2019). Stress caused by trying to remain professional while attempting to meet the needs of impoverished students deters focus away from curriculum resulting in students receiving a lower quality education (Djonko-Moore, 2016). A lack of proper resources and funding makes it more difficult to provide the level of professionalism needed within the classroom to be taken seriously by the students (Chiang et al., 2017). Educators must strive harder than ever before in these types of situations to access classroom resources and funding to sustain classrooms and educational opportunities (Chiang et al., 2017).

The study affords educators a glimpse into teacher and student encounters through interviews and field notes to provide a deeper understanding of challenges caused by poverty in rural secondary classrooms. Interviews and field notes provide learning opportunities for educators to perceive barriers created by poverty and generate ideas to reduce the educational gap (Chiang et al., 2017). Previous research focuses on earlier levels of education and different demographics and countries leaving rural secondary education neglected and misunderstood (Chiang et al., 2017; Djonko-Moore, 2016; Kamanda, 2016; Shi et al., 2015; Wei et al., 2018). Professionalism is lost in the translation of struggle and frustration established by impoverished school districts and homes causing students to suffer intellectually and emotionally in the classroom (Djonko-Moore, 2016).

Barriers formed by inequality due to poverty must be addressed to afford proficient students academic opportunities regardless of financial status (Chiang et al., 2017; Cross, Frazier, Kim, & Cross, 2018). Barriers are founded socially, intellectually, emotionally, and financially separating students into unequal groups within the school and classroom producing discouragement, a lack of motivation, and frustration (Cross et al., 2018; Fishman, 2015).

Teacher and student relationships are also obstructed by negligence of providing professionalism to everyone involved in a low-income school system (Djonko-Moore, 2016). Teachers must remain vigilant in monitoring the school and classroom for any inequality, but especially that which is created by poverty barriers (Cross et al., 2018).

The staff's modeling also sets school climates (Cross et al., 2018). Students begin to practice teachers' behaviors and educational beliefs to prepare for higher education (Keeney et al., 2019). If educators do not depict a positive school climate, students model the same behaviors since they feel it is acceptable if their superiors participate in such negativity (Wei et al., 2018). Discouragement is also prevalent among educators when a negative school climate is portrayed increasing the risk for teacher motility (Wei et al., 2018). Teachers stressed in secondary education by poverty may not always perform at advanced or proficient levels (Wei et al., 2018). It is imperative that teachers maintain professionalism at all times through modeling to encourage students that things get better with educational attainment and sustain momentum among their colleagues (Djonko-Moore, 2016).

Empowering Poverty Inflicted Secondary Schools

For secondary education to be more attainable, primary education must first be solidly established (Petrilli & Wright, 2016). Early education intervention allows students to thrive academically, mentally, physically, and socially by producing an interest in education early in life. Basic schooling and social fundamentals are taught and engrained in students' lives in order for those skills to carry through to secondary education (Petrilli & Wright, 2016). Students without a strong general knowledge early in their academic career, struggled later in secondary schooling (Petrilli & Wright, 2016). Many are afraid to even consider college preparation courses in high school being overwhelmed with problems of their current life situations, let alone

the thought that they are often first-generation college students within their family (Carrico, Matusovich, & Paretti, 2019).

Also, students in rural locations receive less secondary schooling than those located in urban areas (Shi et al., 2015). Chances of advancing to postsecondary education are diminished due to financial and emotional hardships caused by poverty and a lack of motivation, resources and education (Deterding, 2015). Such hardships generate discouragement, low self-esteem, and a feeling of hopelessness due to a lack of positive personal results consequentially deterring the advancement of obtaining further education (Deterding, 2015). Keeping students engaged at school that are anguished by poverty at home provides a sense of hope by creating a sense of personal importance and allowing them to feel they are a part of something (Arnett-Hartwick & Walters, 2016). Providing other alternatives to learning such as blended instruction generates more opportunities for the student's success and learning exploration in order to motivate and increase academic achievement (Fishman, 2015).

Locations that have high teacher attrition and low family incomes struggle to keep students involved in education (Djonko-Moore, 2016). Students feel they are working relentlessly through coursework that will not support them in the future (Wei et al., 2018). Often, students in this type of atmosphere drop out of high school to find paying jobs to support their family and immediate personal needs instead of wasting their time in school where they do not feel successful (Djonko-Moore, 2016). Instead, educators should explore self-reflection and identification with their students to provide a sense of worth and build toward self-actualization (Glewwe, Ross, & Wydick, 2018). Motivation is generated through this tactic and create empowerment individually and as a school body resulting in higher educational attainment (Glewwe et al., 2018).

Teachers must emphasize how the power of education and knowledge can break the boundaries set by poverty and release the individual into their own freedom to achieve their personal goals (Hunter, 2018). Such inspiration spreads throughout the school culture and climate resulting in more productive citizens improving communities for the current and future generations (Hunter, 2018). Teachers and students become closer in professional relationships evolving the school family into a tighter unit. Once the cycle is established, it minimizes the intergenerational poverty gap prevalent in secondary education (Hunter, 2018).

School leadership. Administrators and teachers must work together to create strong leadership in school districts that empowers students to continue their education after secondary schooling (Cilesiz & Drotos, 2016). Rural educators must often take on multiple roles within the school and even district to accommodate for shortages in various academic responsibilities (Lotter et al., 2020). Completing secondary education is a hardship alone when students suffer from various issues inflicted by poverty (Cilesiz & Drotos, 2016). Leaders must be vigilant to the needs of students in the classroom and personally so that such issues can be addressed in order to motivate the child (Parker, 2017). Rural teachers need to emphasize sharing professional development with colleagues in order to enhance educational opportunities for their students (Lotter et al., 2020). Colleague and school support through such efforts increases teacher retention for the school providing a more positive school climate and culture to motivate students (Lotter et al., 2020).

Students may not have access to resources required for assignments at home or even in the classroom (Wei et al., 2018). However, efforts made by educators on behalf of their students including grant writing, seeking donations, and utilizing differentiated instruction allow adversities to be minimized during the academic year (Lotter et al., 2020; Wei et al., 2018).

Teachers must make efforts to create professional relationships with students to build trust, motivation, and communication so they can achieve educational attainment (Lotter et al., 2020). Such relationships allow the student to feel more comfortable in consulting with their instructor as to what resources and procedures should be utilized to succeed during the school year (Lotter et al., 2020). Teachers knowing what the needs of their impoverished students are through professional relationships provides the prospect of collaboration with other educators to fulfill the deficiencies students may have academically by connecting the student to another teacher for additional resources and instruction (Lotter et al., 2020).

Educational leaders must also reach out to stakeholders within the community. Awareness is an important tool in combatting poverty (Mannon, 2018). If stakeholders including business partners, parents, and board of education members are enlightened to the distressing situations presented at the school, more aid is likely to be generated to support school districts in need (Mannon, 2018). Constant communication allows everyone involved to stay informed of the current situation regarding secondary education and poverty. Communication often generates concern and interest among stakeholders which in turn provides additional resources, volunteers, and funding for the school district. Information is vital to create the next step of action and understand the needs of the students better. All stakeholders need to be involved in the process of creating the next action steps to enhance the school system, even if it is simply through attending board meetings and providing feedback (Mannon, 2018).

Leaders must be aware of the challenges that poverty poses not only locally, but nationally (Cilesiz & Drotos, 2016). National decisions including funding and curriculum can alter decisions state and local administrators can make for their districts (Cilesiz & Drotos, 2016). Administrators and team leaders need to provide information regarding poverty's

challenges and deliver conferences, professional development, and literature regarding the issues and how to combat their effects (Hunter, 2018). Utilizing as many forms of communication to stay connected with educators, students, and stakeholders is vital to the academic success of the students (Blanchard et al., 2016). Encounters with poverty impact classroom conduct, student academic outcome, and community involvement (Mayer et al., 2019). Schools must work together for the good of the district and its' students to succeed (Hunter, 2018).

It is imperative that leadership creates a diverse action plan to boost student performance (Cilesiz & Drotos, 2016). Collaboration with other professional educators and administrators within the school district and even those outside of the district can work together to establish a plan of action (Hunter, 2018). Stakeholders such as business partners and community members can provide another perspective to the issue and offer resources and services that can be utilized into an action plan (Mayer et al., 2019). Just as everyone does not learn the same, they do not function in life the same resulting in the need for differentiated approaches toward poverty (Hunter, 2018). Everyone has diverse needs specific to their living situation that must be addressed accordingly (Hunter, 2018).

Administrators can discuss poverty in rural secondary education to their local officials, which may create a new sense of awareness for the community. All stakeholders including students, instructors, faculty, business partners, and community members need to be notified as well so a strong alliance can be initiated (Mayer et al., 2019). Writing letters and making phone calls to United States senators and representatives may make them mindful of young teenagers trying to complete an education to join the workforce and contribute in a positive manner toward society (Mayer et al., 2019). These students are the next generation of works to boost the economy, making them an important focus to national bills and funding (Cascio & Reber, 2013).

It is also important to reach out to local government officials that could implement assistance programming for the students on a personal level (Mayer et al., 2019).

Need for academic rigor. Students lag due to financial, emotional, health, social, and resource inconsistencies during their schooling while combatting poverty (Küçüker, 2018; Petrilli & Wright, 2016). The number of students living in rural districts and attending rural high schools is over nine million nationwide (Morton, Ramirez, Meece, Demetriou, & Panter, 2018). Students living in these areas communicate they have worry, anxiety, fear, and apprehensions during their secondary education (Morton et al., 2018). The consolidation of rural schools with elementary and middle grades or middle and high school grades often have negative impacts socially and economically for the school district (Mette, Biddle, Mackenzie, & Harris-Smedberg, 2016). Test scores throughout the country show evidence of low socioeconomic status effects in education (Petrilli & Wright, 2016).

Teachers must work on leadership skills to motivate students in their academic progress while promoting positive self-esteem. Many educators become overwhelmed and fallout of pursuing the steps of advocacy for the students and school because they simply do not know what else to do (Mette et al., 2016). Professional development and leadership collaboration reduce the effects of poverty and increase academic rigor (Petrilli & Wright, 2016). Precision and quality are issues when dealing with students impacted by poverty.

It is hard for students to focus on meeting everyday functions and necessities, let alone education (Knight, 2017). Many students must become employed to support their families creating additional stress and distractions toward academics (Drotos & Cilesiz, 2016). Countries across the globe dealing with poverty have the same issues but have fewer resources than

America (Shi et al., 2015). Yet, students in the United States are trying to succeed in poverty struggles competing academically with third-world countries (Petrilli & Wright, 2016).

The impoverished often experience a unique form of discrimination (Kotok, Frankenberg, Schafft, Mann, & Fuller, 2017). Students feel singled out and even segregated at times due to their low-socio economic status (Kotok et al., 2017). Academic rigor can produce equality and motivation for all secondary students if teachers, parents, and other stakeholders become more thoroughly involved. The extension of information provided through the study's investigation delivers a deeper understanding of the impacts of poverty in rural secondary education.

Kamanda (2016) discusses the effects of poverty having a bearing on attendance. Students that feel discriminated and ashamed are more apt to avoid school and other learning opportunities such as after school programs. Students lacking personal necessities evade school since embarrassment and negative attention is brought upon them due to their impoverished circumstances (Kamanda, 2016). A shortage of school infrastructure not only frustrates students, but teachers as well that must attempt to purchase all the provisions still required for their lesson plans and classroom (Djonko-Moore, 2016). Financial burden shifts the focus from education to financial survival minimizing concentration on curriculum (Kainz, 2019). Distractions such as scarcity of finances and supplies causes academic rigor to continually diminish among students due to the stress presented from teachers and a lack of resources (Kainz, 2019).

Parents' involvement in low income schools. Parents allocating ample time with their children everyday produce more successful students (Dermott & Pomati, 2016). Time must be delicately balanced between family, work, and social life in order to encourage students to succeed in life (Hannum et al., 2017). Any insecurities displayed by the parent is transferred to the child creating more difficulties in the impoverished circumstances (Küçüker, 2018). It is not

necessary that parents come from an ideal educational and personal background. It is essential the parents encourage their children on a daily basis while staying academically and personally involved (Hannum et al., 2017). Parents' expectations and support levels help determine the child's ambitions toward secondary education (Morton et al., 2018). Parents allowing their child to stay home from school due to insecurities or bullying caused by the effects of poverty must become engaged in helping their child find a resolution to such problems before they become more intense (Küçüker, 2018). Simply being there in any means possible to support the child is the start of breaking the intergenerational poverty gap that underlies secondary education (Arnett-Hartwick & Walters, 2016).

Parents must also work together if the student's home life presents an unstable situation through inadequate living quarters or single parent living arrangements (Ginn et al., 2017). Homelessness frequently falls into this category (Hunter, 2018). Security of a safe, constant, and proper living arrangement needs to be established at both parents' locations where the child is staying (Ginn et al., 2017). If the parents are still living together, collaboration is required to offer the best atmosphere for their child to learn and grow. Parents' pride displayed through their efforts to support the child's home life provides motivation for the child to excel in school (Ginn et al., 2017).

Those struggling in poverty have more difficulty designating time with their children due to work constraints to provide for their family (Hannum et al., 2017). Often, fathers and mothers both work deducting time away from their children (Dermott & Pomati, 2016). Rural employment is harder to come by, especially positions paying adequate wages to sustain a household and family (Rude & Miller, 2018). Some parents work two jobs, making it even more difficult to squeeze in time to support their child's education (Dermott & Pomati, 2016). Despite

such hardships, parents making time and showing efforts to break the intergenerational bondage of poverty for their children yield more productive adolescents going into the real world (Dermott & Pomati, 2016).

Manpower is an important school resource to execute school functions that requires no financial requirements on behalf of the parents (Dermott & Pomati, 2016). Parents do not always have the money to provide all the supplies necessary for their child's school year, but time can be designated to attend school functions and volunteer. However, the school that parents work with may change due to frequent relocations for economic situations (Drotos & Cilesiz, 2016). Parent presence at secondary education functions shows investment in students' future goals (Dermott & Pomati, 2016). It is also imperative for parents to provide time, counseling, and encouragement at home to motivate students toward educational attainment (Dermott & Pomati, 2016). The parents' smallest efforts put forth toward a child's secondary education can make all the difference of the final academic outcome (Dermott & Pomati, 2016).

Schools located in poverty districts cannot always afford to pay staff (Djonko-Moore, 2016). Volunteers keep libraries running, concession stands selling refreshments at school functions, and trim costs to keep school budgets balanced (Cascio & Reber, 2013). Through this study, parents and other stakeholders hope to receive enlightenment to the extenuating needs that students, staff, and schools have due to the adversities caused by poverty.

Professional Development for Teachers to Combat Poverty

Stereotyping school districts can be detrimental to professional development (Parker, 2017). Predetermined notions of a school often set the mind frame of the students and teachers before instruction ever begins (Wei et al., 2018). Positive growth mindsets must be established early on to nurture educational growth for students (Burnette et al., 2018). A level playing field

must be maintained to allow students across the board to succeed (Knight, 2017). Any prelabeled or predetermined notions towards students impacted by poverty can be detrimental to their academic and personal successes (Burnette et al., 2018). Professional development can be used to reverse the damage of stereotyping students in the classroom and approaching them as different individuals (Burn & Childs, 2016).

Individual instruction is an important component of academic success to meet the individual needs of all children involved in the classroom (Burn & Childs, 2016). Each student has special circumstances that must be catered to as an individual rather than teaching in a one size fits all perspective (Burn & Childs, 2016). A lack of preparation in professional development and curriculum often results in academic failure (Mihai et al., 2015). Professional development conferences and meetings are vital to the proper execution of curriculum and instruction in impoverished school districts (Burn & Childs, 2016). Of 1,400 participants in Burn and Childs's study (2016) only 22% engaged in professional development. Those that attend professional development opportunities need to collaborate with administrators and fellow instructors to share the information obtained from the sessions (Ciuffetelli Parker, 2017).

Students can benefit emotionally, economically, and individually from school communities pulling together through collaboration and continuing education (Mayer et al., 2019). More opportunities can be afforded to students attending high poverty school districts by implementing strategies obtained from professional development sessions (Mayer et al., 2019). Professional development workshops and conferences are available nationwide. Any type of information that can be retrieved from other school districts is valuable and essential for teachers to implement into their district school programming (Hunter, 2018). Sharing information

obtained from professional development with colleagues is imperative to the success of school, curriculum, and the educators (Hunter, 2018).

Teachers' professional development. It is imperative that teachers understand how an individual's perception regarding poverty can influence approaches of teaching in the classroom (McNamara & McNicholl, 2016). Such an understanding needs to be shared with colleagues through professional development. Deliverance of the professional development for teachers and classroom instruction for students must remain unbiased and provide equal opportunity learning for all students, including those impacted by poverty (McNamara & McNicholl, 2016). Teachers need to be supported by strong leaders including educational pre-services and social justice awareness programs to instruct teachers how to provide the most opportunities for all students within the classroom and community (McNamara & McNicholl, 2016).

Action plans form a safe path for students to follow into their postsecondary education (Cilesiz & Drotos, 2016). Student views towards higher education are more positive when teachers use their educational training and professional development to promote more careful, strategic plans that allow the student to feel secure about pursuing higher education (Cilesiz & Drotos, 2016). Teachers must provide a positive perspective of higher education so that students feel that it is a rewarding goal to obtain (Hannum et al., 2017). Risks posed by poverty to press on in education are counteracted by victories that can be gained through hard work and fortitude in schooling, which creates a safe haven for students doubting their educational capacities due to poverty (Cilesiz & Drotos, 2016).

Administrators also benefit from professional development regarding teacher and student retainment (Parker, 2017). Administrators can pass down knowledge obtained from professional development to teachers to provide a deeper understanding of how to handle secondary

educational poverty issues (Lotter et al., 2020; Parker, 2017). Awareness and knowledge among the staff of how to handle poverty in secondary education minimizes the disruptions that occur within the school (Burn & Childs, 2016). Designating time for teachers to hold conferences to share information and strategies is important in combatting poverty (Parker, 2017). The opportunity for administrators to share ideas is vital to better secondary education circumstances of students struggling in poverty (Parker, 2017).

Effects of educational leadership against poverty. Engaging students located in poverty is a major component of how success is generated (Wei et al., 2018). Support staff and groups must be implemented in schools and the district to help students while challenging them academically, mentally, and socially (Wei et al., 2018). Administrators must plan carefully when delegating individuals for this task since they can make the difference between graduates and drop-outs (Lotter et al., 2020). However, negative repercussions can be formed by the overwhelming load of responsibilities teachers endure due to situations created by poverty's effects (Lotter et al., 2020). Creative thinking tests students' and teachers' capabilities to enhance problem solving regarding poverty. Teacher modeling portrays determination is transferred to the pupils to continue education despite poverty's hardships (Mayer et al., 2019). Educator attitudes conveyed to the students greatly impact the incline or decline of students that drop out of school (Küçüker, 2018).

Expected student outcomes. Students with low socio-economic status correlate with low academic performance resulting in low educational attainment and increased dropouts (Shi et al., 2015). Social integration is more difficult due to the barriers poverty imposes in addition to academic demands established by schools and curriculum (Morton et al., 2018). Nevertheless, pupils that build upon prior knowledge and skills strive to become prolific students and citizens

with secondary education through the support of teachers' professional developments (Burnette et al., 2018; Shi et al., 2015). Pupils often have to decide if pursuing graduation outweighs their present negative situations of poverty in the long run (Shi et al., 2015). Burnette et al. (2018) present a growth mindset theory that students who are can be taught that intellect is improved over time and that obstacles in education are opportunities to learn and strengthen academic skills. More positive outlooks toward educational attainment are created through growth mindsets which in return produce productive and motivated students (Burnette et al., 2018).

Many of these students rise to the challenge poverty has raised and still complete a higher education program (Cilesiz & Drotos, 2016). Motivation is generated for students through the establishment of professional relationships with teachers and support staff (Cilesiz & Drotos, 2016). Students involved in environments sponsoring academic and support programs thrive in education and the real world (Knight, 2017). Eventually, they can contribute back to the programs that assisted them through such adversities to encourage future generations. In turn, their contributions motivate other stakeholders and the community (Hannum et al., 2017; Lotter et al., 2020).

Skills acquired from teacher's leadership through professional development provide the practices necessary to excel students into higher education (Parker, 2017). Exploration of issues within the school sustained by poverty is vital to student success (Parker, 2017). Stories of accomplishments shared by students that obtained victories through higher education despite poverty's adversities are a motivational tool for students continuing in school (Wei et al., 2018). Data documented among educators to use as reference along with monitoring student achievement is imperative to the education system (Parker, 2017). Mentorship programs can be created to provide support to students that lag in secondary education due to poverty struggles

(Cilesiz & Drotos, 2016). Mentors that can serve can be previous students that overcame poverty in secondary education to be victorious in their adult life to portray the successes that can still be obtained in school or assigned teachers to encourage students along their journey in secondary education (Cilesiz & Drotos, 2016).

Government funding. The war on poverty as a country originated with Lyndon B. Johnson in 1964. Education and healthcare received immense amounts of money to supply Americans with necessities to endure daily life (Mannon, 2018). Funding supplied to the education sector have created a financial dependability with the school systems (Mannon, 2018). Programs such as Title I and No Child Left Behind provide funding for schools that would not be able to function otherwise, especially in rural areas (Arnett-Hartwick & Walters, 2016; Cascio & Reber, 2013). Federal grant money, including Title I, continues to pour into secondary education poverty areas, yet is insufficient in the grand scheme of things (Cascio & Reber, 2013). "Given that higher-poverty states were, on average, lower spending, this feature of the formula reduced the program's progressivity relative to what it would have been with a single, national grant per eligible child" (Cascio & Reber, 2013, p. 424). Further funding is sought after through grants and donations even after the funding of Title I.

More recently, the Carl D. Perkins Act of 2006 and 2012, No Child Left Behind Act, 21st Century Skills Sets, and the Every Student Succeeds Act have all been added political contributions to improve the quality of education for all, especially students residing in low-income households (Arnett-Hartwick & Walters, 2016). No Child Left Behind especially focuses on closing the educational gap for students in subcategories including low socio-economic status by evaluating science and math test scores to analyze academic growth for each group (Arnett-Hartwick & Walters, 2016; Hunter, 2018). "The continuation of such legislation

that focuses on low-income populations signifies that financial efforts are in place to fund programs and activities that will help individuals break the poverty cycle and live as self-sufficient adults" (Arnett-Hartwick & Walters, 2016, p. 18). Unrelenting efforts by the government to improve financial circumstances for all students in the classroom permits lessons and learning to be the prime focus, not hardships presented by poverty (Cascio & Reber, 2013). Likewise, political leaders involved in creating local, state, and federal levels of government funding promote inspiration and motivation toward to educators and students achieving educational goals (Kouzes & Posner, 2006). Each student and teacher's individualized circumstances in secondary education are enhanced through the government's efforts to combat poverty through programming such as Title I (Kainz, 2019). However, further funding is still necessary to make the proper supplies, programs, and technology available to sustain teachers and students throughout the academic day.

According to Kainz (2019), school disadvantages combined with student disadvantages result in failure to meet proficiency ratings in benchmark testing and performance grades. Low rates result in deficiencies regarding student educational ability (Kainz, 2019). A total of 40 percent or more of the students enrolled must be classified in poverty due to a low economic status in order to receive Title I funding for the school (Kainz, 2019). Government aid is essential to deliver crucial program needs to offer equal opportunity learning for all pupils in the school (Kainz, 2019). However, schools located in a rural area are mostly considered Title I participants, yet students still struggle due to other inadequacies not fully supported by Title I programming. On average, only $92 per student is distributed to rural school districts to enhance school curriculum and programming (Fishman, 2015). Much of the funding received goes to larger metropolitan areas with high population to reach more needs of the larger areas as opposed

to rural school districts (Wei et al., 2018). The study can expand understanding of what needs are still prevalent in rural education despite government funding, providing educators with a different perspective on the impacts of poverty in rural secondary education.

Ideas and funding sources have evolved over the years through various administrations, but one issue remains: poverty. Funds designated for education reduced poverty rates within counties and districts (Knight, 2017). Financial aid provided by the government relieved stress on students not capable of securing appropriate school supplies and technologies (Hunter, 2018). "Poverty is one of the main causes of inequality in the United States and one of these inequalities prevail in the education system: child poverty" (Hunter, 2018, p.). Other government funding concerning healthcare and welfare also relieved pressure on families and the children in order to encourage more focus on education attainment (Ginn et al., 2017). Better overall mental and physical health also increases student achievement and productivity (Hunter, 2018).

Teaching certification requirements have been lowered to reduce government funding in student loans and grants, which reduce the quality of teachers in the classroom (BenDavid-Hadar, 2014). Students suffer from these deficiencies by not working with educators properly trained in instruction and leadership. "Students in poor communities are not being taught to be successful in life and not afforded the necessary skills needed to succeed which makes them disadvantaged and not exposed to a quality education" (Hunter, 2018, p.). Professional development courses and workshops are taught to enhance the education of the teacher throughout their career, while that is not soon enough for many students that are impacted by the lack of knowledge now (Chiang et al., 2017). Discouragement is then formed, which plummets motivation, leading to deficits in educational attainment (Chiang et al., 2017).

Poverty's effects in the classroom are diminished when government funding for technology, resources, and materials are provided (Knight, 2017). Burdens of additional financial contributions for education are reduced through government funding and programming (Kainz, 2019). School finance policies and budgets are formed upon government funding and are a necessity for the optimal function (BenDavid-Hadar, 2014). Financial burdens are reduced for parents that cannot afford all educational resources for their children by schools receiving government funding including levies (BenDavid-Hadar, 2014). Students' resource deficiencies are minimized at least within the classroom due to government funding, giving them a sense of hope to strive for their goals. Hope begins to grow for students when demonstrated efforts to apply toward success in their education are made (BenDavid-Hadar, 2014).

A trickledown effect is fashioned through such efforts and enthusiasm is generated in other areas of the student's life (Ginn et al., 2017). Parents are also benefactors of such funding since some of the financial pressure to supply resources is removed from their responsibilities (Ginn et al., 2017). The parent is more apt to support secondary education when they do not feel the child's achievements are reliant on the ability for them to pay for everything. Scholarships, grants, and work study programs encourage parents to coax their child to complete secondary education to obtain higher education thereafter. Sources of government funding establish a stronger confidence and foundation for students to pursue their secondary education goals (Ginn et al., 2017).

Summary

Poverty effects schools of all grades, sizes, and demographics (Wei et al., 2018). Raising awareness of this issue allows teachers, parents, and students to work together to resolve issues regarding funding, resources, and a lack of motivation derived from poverty (BenDavid-Hadar,

2014; Hannum et al., 2017). Establishing a growth mindset can create a positive perception within secondary educational leading to higher student academic achievement (Burnette et al., 2018). Professional development for staff allows training and strategies to be obtained to meet the needs portrayed by students in the classroom (Parker, 2017). In addition, teachers must be aware of continuing changes in funding and policies to support school functions (Mannon, 2018). Accountability for the student grows as the needs can be met by minimizing excuses for academic deficiencies (Ginn et al., 2017).

Parents expect their children to succeed in school, but do not always have the physical resources available at home nor the time to attain such goals (Dermott & Pomati, 2016). Government programs help parents in acquiring resources to encourage their child to succeed (Knight, 2017). After school programs and other extracurricular activities provided by the school support parents by providing additional assistance for their children when extra help would not be available otherwise (Burnette et al., 2018; Knight, 2017; Lotter et al., 2020). However, emotional support and motivation can be provided by teachers to encourage parents and their children that success can be gained despite resource insufficiencies (Dermott & Pomati, 2016; Fishman, 2015). Personal interactions through volunteering at their child's school is a way to encourage continuation in education (Hannum et al., 2017). Those that do not have the time due to work scheduling can offer their services at home by assisting their child with homework or discussing the school day.

Maslow's (1943) theory provides a structure for educators and parents to focus on to assist children in successful educational attainment. All five levels of the needs hierarchy must be met in order for a student to flourish personally and academically to achieve educational attainment (Maslow, 1943). A gap in education exists due to the needs that are not met for

students displayed in Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs theory. Teachers are impacted

professionally and personally through a lack of finances and resources for the classroom

resulting in their needs not being met as well (Maslow, 1943). Minute research has been

conducted in how to combat rural secondary educational poverty. Focus is often given to young

children to provide a foundational start, but an action plan needs to be produced for students who

have not received help at a lower level of learning (Cilesiz & Drotos, 2016). A lack of resources

and guidance causes a lack of motivation and an incomplete education (Mayer et al., 2019). This

research hopes to be an asset to current empirical sources to instruct educators and administrators

toward the proper steps to alleviate problems caused by poverty.

Although there is an increasing amount of research and information focused on the

effects of poverty in education, many concentrations of education remain neglected such as rural

secondary education requiring further investigation (Fishman, 2015; Shi et al., 2015). Numerous

research investigations have been conducted to understand secondary educational poverty and

remains inconclusive as far as providing permanent solutions to the problems (Cilesiz & Drotos,

2016; Hannum et al., 2017; Shi et al., 2015; Wei et al., 2018). Empirical research concludes that

the consequences of poverty impact secondary educational attainment (McKinney, 2014). Such

consequences include: intergenerational poverty, a lack of parental involvement, deficiencies in

government aid, deficiencies in technology, and shortages in professional development

(Fishman, 2015; McKinney, 2014). These socioeconomic barriers result in hindering

educational attainment. Research does not suggest strategies to incorporate in school systems to

combat poverty.

The purpose of this single subject case study design is to explore the phenomenon of

poverty in a rural secondary school in alignment with barriers causing additional struggles in the

classroom impacting teachers' and students' preparations to combat the effects of poverty. Current research discusses what poverty has caused in the past but does not address the issues of today's rural society. Most articles pertain to urban areas or other countries. The proposed study hopes to address the gap in literature by showing the impact that poverty has in rural secondary education.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The impacts of poverty in rural secondary education is investigated utilizing a qualitative research design including a case study design. A qualitative research design is utilized with a case study design in order to investigate the impacts of poverty in secondary education classrooms. A synthesis of this chapter includes an analysis of the research, research design, and procedures employed throughout the study. During the conduction of the research, twelve participants from Future of Tomorrow Technical Center were interviewed individually and in focus groups utilizing research questions. Procedures include obtaining Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval and participation acceptance from the school setting and participants. The researcher's role must remain professional and unbiased at all times throughout the study. Data collection was accomplished using interviews, focus groups, and document analysis. Five steps were followed to accomplish the data analysis and member checks confirmed trustworthiness, credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. Ethical considerations were implemented throughout the research to provide safety, respect, and confidentiality to the participants and school.

Poverty in secondary education hinders students from completing graduation, let alone obtaining higher education (Cilesiz & Drotos, 2016). Teachers are not always prepared to deal with additional struggles in the classrooms caused by poverty, causing high attrition rates leaving students academically stranded (Djonko-Moore, 2016). Circumstances can be caused by intergenerational issues or demographics, beyond the student's control (Wei et al., 2018). Approaches and research of poverty in rural secondary education must be flexible to meet everyone's educational and personal needs including current and upcoming generations

(Hannum et al., 2017).

The purpose of this single case study is to explore the phenomenon of poverty in rural secondary schools in alignment with the additional struggles posed in the classroom to teachers and students caused by the effects of poverty. The central phenomenon of poverty impacting students, teachers, administrators, parents, and all other stakeholders must be addressed (Hannum et al., 2017). For this study, poverty is defined as deficiencies involved with a low socio-economic status including monetary, food, clothing, and personal resources prevalent in students' lives, homes, and school settings (Cilesiz & Drotos, 2016). This study provides educators with the comprehension of how poverty impacts the daily lives of secondary students and what steps can be taken to relieve some of the related academic pressures to reach the final goal of student achievement. Students benefit from positive educator interactions to obtain secondary educational attainment.

Design

A qualitative method research study was performed with a case study research design. The nature of qualitative research and case study design is appropriate for this research since a deeper knowledge is acquired through the inquisitive steps of data collection and analysis throughout the research. The nature of the qualitative method is to discover patterns and interests regarding the research topic and enlighten others through data collection and analysis (Patton, 2015). Ample fieldwork must be included throughout the qualitative method to provide accurate perceptions and experiences obtained by the participants (Patton, 2015). The study is best served by a qualitative method due to the nature of the research searching for a deeper understanding of poverty in rural secondary schools while providing an in-depth explanation of the topic (Creswell & Poth, 2018). A qualitative case study provides an explanation or

description for a deeper understanding, as if the reader is engaged in reading a good story (Patton, 2015). The case study's research design is appropriate since examining student and teacher interactions are vital to the understanding of the issues posed by poverty.

Studies completed in the participants' natural settings reveals the clearest realization of the phenomenon in order to bring attention to the problem (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Conducting research in the natural habitat also reduces the risk of the events changing due to different surroundings and situations other than the norm the participants are exposed to on a daily basis. A collective case study was applied to understand various perspectives and scenarios of participants. This correlates with the qualitative study and investigates the levels of difficulty that poverty presents in secondary education.

Research Questions

Research questions regarding the phenomenon of poverty in rural secondary education have been created to understand the perception of participants undergoing the hardships of such poverty. Research questions must be generated in preparation to later obtain vital information for the case study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The following research questions were used during the study:

RQ1: In what ways does poverty impact student learning in rural secondary education?

RQ2: How do teachers perceive the impact of poverty in rural secondary education?

RQ3: What steps are taken by teachers, students, and administrators to mitigate the effects of poverty in rural secondary education?

Setting

Future of Tomorrow Technical Center is located in rural West Virginia within the United County school district. The school serves a tri-county area in a rural school district within West

Virginia. Approximately 95 percent of the students served at the school are Caucasian. The remainder of students are African American. Students are split down the middle by gender averaging around fifty percent female and fifty percent male (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2019). Future of Tomorrow Technical Center was selected because students struggling on a daily basis resulting from poverty enroll for courses at the trade center to attempt to improve their circumstances.

An ample supply of leadership provided by the director, assistant director, office staff, and career coach provide students resources to obtain employment, academic, and personal guidance in order to complete academic attainment and career education. An administrative council also meets periodically throughout the year to evaluate the progress and results of school's functions throughout the year. Strategies are constantly being created, monitored and revised to assist secondary students through the challenges they face throughout the academic year.

Organizational structure is adequate through academic resources in the office, instructor leadership in the classroom, and curriculum that includes embedded credits for high school degree courses. For example, an automotive mechanics class includes math credits by containing instruction on conversions such as gallons to quarts for oil changes. Students taking health occupation courses receive an English credit for learning medical terminology and how to write medical reports. An options program is also available for students continuing to struggle in their core classes. This program provides courses such as math, reading, and English half of the day; then, students may take their trade courses the other half of the day.

Allowing students to strive for their career goals along with obtaining higher education allows them to break the bondage of poverty. However, poverty remains visible in the

classroom, as students often cannot afford uniforms or refreshments. The school provides school uniforms and safety materials such as eye goggles for each shop classroom to ensure students have the proper work gear.

Participants

Twelve participants were included in the case study composed of teachers, students, and administrators from Future of Tomorrow Technical Center. Fifteen interviews were conducted. Individual interviews were conducted with four administrators, four teachers, and four students. Then, participants were divided into groups of administrators, teachers, and students for focus group interviews. Invitations were distributed to participants through an emailed letter which included a consent form for acceptance of the invitation. Informed consent forms were retrieved via an emailed response including the consent form included in the emailed letter. The sample was purposive in order to gain the most insight for the issue of poverty (Patton, 2015).

Purposeful sampling procedures were incorporated in order to find the most enriched resources of information for the study (Patton, 2015). Demographic information was listed in narrative detail to understand the background and situations of each participant. Validity and reliability were enforced through member checks and analyzing the participant's responses to interviews and field notes. Once the cases had been established, preparations were made to collect information. Assimilating real-world actions into the requirements of the case study was substantial to the results of the research.

Purposeful sampling was important in the single case study within this specific research design (Patton, 2015). Purposeful sampling was appropriate for a case study since specific criteria is being focused upon (Yin, 2018). The participants were narrowed down to the best selection by the conditions required for the topic and circumstances presented by the purposive

sampling. The specific criteria for participants in this single case study were students receiving free or reduced lunches and teachers and administrators that benefit from Title I funding. Participants were intentionally invited through purposive sampling to participate in the single case study. Letters of invitation were distributed via e-mail to the perspective individuals with an attached consent form. Upon their acceptance to participate in the study, e-mail contact was made to schedule an interview. Selecting the best candidates meeting the criteria of the topic and study was imperative to the quality and accuracy of the research.

Procedures

First, approval from the IRB was obtained in order to complete the study. A letter of application was submitted and approved before potential participants were contacted. No data were collected until the IRB granted approval for the research. Once approval had been given, invitations utilizing purposive sampling criteria established by Title I funding for teachers and administrator along with free and reduced lunches for students were sent out by the school through an emailed invitation. Those that were selected to receive an invitation have demonstrated physical, emotional, or mental attributes of poverty in rural secondary education along with meeting the purposive sampling criteria regarding Title I and free or reduced lunches. Acceptance responses from the purposive sampling were recognized and documented in order to create a list of participants. It was crucial to obtain permission from all participants before conducting research or asking any research questions (Yin, 2018).

A letter requesting permission to conduct observations in United County Schools was sent out to acquire acceptance for the study. United County Schools granted permission for the researcher to conduct research within the school district. A letter was also submitted to Future of Tomorrow Technical Center to receive approval to conduct the study. Interviews and focus

groups were conducted after permission is attained using audio recording and video recording. Once all documents and data were collected, the review process began. Interviews and focus groups were conducted asking open ended research questions to the participants. Interviews and focus groups were conducted in the researcher's personal home office via phone due to the coronavirus pandemic. The room is secluded on the back side of the researcher's home, providing privacy for those involved in the research study. The room also has a door lock to ensure no interruptions or privacy issues. All information was organized, analyzed, and evaluated for validity, transferability, and credibility. Member checks were included to confirm the accuracy of the documented information and to ensure no bias was prevalent. Results recorded and evaluated from the data were then documented as in dissertation form (Yin, 2018).

The Researcher's Role

Relationships between the researcher and the participants must be nothing less than professional and confidential. Bias must be removed before starting the research and a clear and open mind must take the forefront of the study. Personal relationships to the participants are strictly professional. As the career coach, interactions are minimal with the teachers and instructors since the position mainly requires recruitment for the school's courses. Job openings that are presented to the career coach at any time during the year are forwarded to the proper department for the instructor to distribute at their discretion. The career coach does not have any influence on position placements or class enrollment. Information is simply distributed by the career coach to various departments throughout the year causing no bias in the information or analysis of the data since decisions are not made within the position regarding employment or enrollment.

Roles played in Future of Tomorrow Technical Center includes interacting with teachers, administrators, and students in order to minimize issues in the classroom caused by poverty. Data collection and analysis procedures are addressed in professionalism and without bias. Reviewing information collected is thorough and time consuming, but in the end provides critical information for the betterment of the educational environment. The position of career coach has no influence of bias or assumption in analyzing the data since no personal connections have been created before the interviews or observations.

Biases were addressed personally through reviewing questions before asking them and staying open minded during interviews and focus groups. No bias had been initially established, but taking these precautions maintained that bias was eliminated. Strictly journaling reflective thoughts allowed review after the focus groups and interviews in order to remove any bias from the study that might have occurred subconsciously.

Data Collection

A vital component of qualitative research is utilizing various data collection methods. Invitations were distributed via mail to purposefully selected individuals. Upon acceptance of the participants, interviews were scheduled to begin data collection. Data were collected via interviews, focus groups, and document analysis within my personal home office via phone. Interviews began the data collection process so the researcher could become acquainted with participants and learn more information about them and their backgrounds (Yin, 2018). Interviews were audio recorded while memoing was conducted to completely collect all comments and thoughts given throughout the meeting. Focus groups were then brought together via phone so the participants could discuss personal experiences with other participants in order to learn and understand other techniques utilized by others during interviews and observations

(Creswell & Poth, 2018). Document analysis procedures were conducted to retrieve additional data from supporting documents.

Interviews

Participants were willing to speak openly about a topic during the interview process (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Informed consent was obtained before the conduction of any interviews via a signed permission form that was emailed back to me. Probing was used to maximize the amount of data collected. Fifteen participants were invited, but the target number of successful participants was 12. Questions asked during the interviews are cataloged in Appendix E. Interviews were conducted in 60-minute intervals. This method is appropriate due to the discussions and experiences providing a deeper understanding of the subject. Meetings with participants were held within my locked personal home office via phone. Any time that was convenient for participants to be interviewed was acceptable and was scheduled accordingly. Audio recording was used during individual interviews and focus groups. Data regarding physical and emotional responses were then recorded by hand while the participant spoke. After all interviews, focus groups, and document analysis were finished, the information was transcribed for accuracy of the accounts. Member checking was provided by the interviewee by reading over the transcripts to ensure accuracy of the interviews. All three research questions were addressed through the interview process. Standard open-ended interview questions were asked to the participants for their personal response (Appendix E).

Standardized Open-Ended Interview Questions

1. Please introduce yourself to me including your educational background.

2. Of the formative educational experiences you have obtained regarding poverty, what has made them significant contributions to your classroom and school?

3. Of your contributions, which do you feel worked and why?

4. How do your students' parents become involved in the fight against educational poverty?

5. Does a Biblical worldview influence your approach to students suffering from poverty? If so, how?

6. What formative experiences do you want to tell me about?

7. Tell me about the struggles you've experienced outside of the classroom due to poverty.

8. Reflecting on your educational career, what advice would you give to incoming educators as they develop curriculum in poverty locations?

9. This next question is unique in that it will invite you to look ahead. How do you expect your approach towards poverty to change or develop over the next several years?

10. We have covered a lot of ground in our conversation, and I so appreciate the time you've given to this. One final question. What else do you think would be important for me to know about the development of your classroom and students regarding poverty in secondary education?

Cilesiz and Drotos (2016) suggested that poverty creates hardships for students trying to obtain higher education including graduating high school. Teachers must be aware of such hardships to assist students in completing their goals toward higher education. According to Hannum et al. (2017), approaches must continually evolve in order to combat poverty issues in secondary education such as a lack of resources, food, provisions, motivation, and educational attainment. Interviews provided vital information in how educators and students dealt with such hardships. Sharing these experiences provides new techniques to implement and a deeper understanding of secondary educational poverty.

Questions 1 through 3 are personal reflection questions intended to generate awareness for both students and educators in order to understand secondary education poverty, its effects, and why it may occur. Understanding different perceptions posed by the participants creates a better understanding of poverty's barriers that are generated in the classroom hindering secondary education (Cilesez & Drotos, 2016). Participants' responses provided feedback to understand where poverty originates, what impoverished people endure, and how they attempted to overcome poverty's barriers (Hannum et al., 2017). Thoughts and ideas shared through answers provided by participants for Questions 1 through 3 created a reference of resources for other educators and students to utilize in their battle against poverty (Parker, 2017). This resulted in the minimization of the literature gap regarding poverty in secondary education.

Questions 4 through 7 focus on outside components that can affect poverty in secondary educational settings. Parental involvement is imperative to the motivation and success of a student striving for educational attainment (Hannum et al., 2017). Understanding the foundation of established curriculum provided by teachers, including biblical worldview influences, is important when socially, historically, and theoretically considering how to approach barriers conceived by poverty (Goodman, 2019). Self-awareness is important to obtain by reflecting on one's challenges while learning from other peer experiences (Maslow, 1943).

Questions 8 through 10 are closing thoughts for reflection from the educator (Patton, 2015). Many educators struggle from being employed in impoverished areas, yet do not collaborate frequently enough to resolve any of the issues (Wei et al., 2018). Cilesiz and Drotos (2016) proposed creating an action plan to look toward the future and perceive what strategies may be utilized to develop curriculum, monetary funding, and stakeholder involvement over the course of time. Encouragement and motivation through the enlightenment of exchanging

thoughts, ideas, and information is crucial to the growth of understanding regarding secondary educational poverty (Cilesiz & Drotos, 2016). In correlation with such an approach, issues of poverty originating at home may be minimized or resolved as well throughout the process (Deterding, 2015).

Deterding (2015) encouraged looking for ways to assist students struggling due to poverty in secondary education. Being mindful of the role teachers play in the student's success is a great way to combat poverty. Mannon (2018) discusses how poverty impacts everyone within the school system and that secondary education students may have a more difficult time obtaining higher education due to poverty complications. Teachers with a deeper understanding of the problem may result in more ways to approach and alleviate such issues. Newfound knowledge can then be shared through professional development and staff meetings to assist students struggling in other school districts.

Document Analysis

Documents were acquired to support the themes within the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The researcher obtained memos, job postings, photographs, and letters to support the themes within the study as attainable. Coding using various colors were utilized to sort and analyze data within the documents. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, a minimal amount of supporting documents were acquired since all schools in West Virginia were closed at this time.

Focus Groups

Multiple participants interrelated during focus groups conducted via phone in my locked personal home office via phone. Three focus groups were conducted involving four administrators, four students, and four teachers that were successful participants during the individual interview process. Informed consent was obtained before the conduction of any focus

groups via an emailed signed permission form. The focus group samples were generated by successful participants of the individual interviews. Questions asked during focus group interviews are cataloged in Appendix F. Focus group interviews were conducted for 60 minutes. Discussions of approaches and understandings of concepts in secondary educational poverty provide further exploration of the topic (Patton, 2015). Standard open-ended interview questions were asked once again, as in the interview section, in order for educators to understand one another, their backgrounds, and share thoughts and experiences pertaining to secondary educational poverty (Appendix F).

Focus Group Standardized Open-Ended Interview Questions

1. How do you feel administrators and teachers work together to reduce some of the impact of poverty in rural secondary education as opposed to urban secondary education?

2. What contributions by teachers, administrators, and students do you feel work the best to combat secondary educational poverty and why?

3. Of your contributions, which do you feel worked and why?

4. How do all stakeholders become involved in the fight against educational poverty?

5. How do educators strive to be more attentive to the needs of the students suffering from poverty, while meeting teachers' needs in the classroom?

6. How is parental support for secondary education demonstrated in your school toward students and staff?

7. What measures are being taken to obtain additional federal, state, and local funding to sustain rural secondary education needs?

8. Do you feel federal funding seems to be sufficient in supplying your academic necessities? Why or why not?

9. What closing thoughts do you think would be important for me to know about poverty in rural secondary education?

After all data were collected via interviews and focus groups, transcribing began. Once transcriptions were completed, member checks were conducted to ensure accuracy in the transferring of data from audio and video to typed documents. All data remained confidential at all times. Electronic sources such as audio and video data are locked up in a key-lock filing cabinet at the researcher's home to ensure no one has access to any of the confidential information. Hard copy data are also locked within the same filing cabinet. The key will remain with the researcher at all times.

Data Analysis

Five steps are followed to analyze data (Yin, 2018): pattern matching, explanation building, time-series analysis, cross case synthesis, and logic models. Creating an analysis strategy to follow is the first important step of analyzing data. Designs and perceptions are to be sought after throughout the collected data. Conflicting explanations, views, and ideas should be examined to verify validity (Yin, 2018). Review, classify, and assess all information during analysis to remove any prejudice or misrepresentation included in the data. Integrate all parts of the research to cross examine data in order to look at parallel situations. Logic models are a series of events happening over a period of time relating to the cross-case synthesis (Yin, 2018).

Interviews were audio recorded while memoing was conducted. Transcriptions of the interviews were created to use for coding and review. Review of the recording and memoing documentation occurred via coding highlighting key thoughts, words, and ideas after all

interviews are completed (Yin, 2018). Extensive color coding was added upon further review to distinct various themes, lack of support, or opinion. Member checks ensured validity of their responses which were critical to the trustworthiness of the study (Creswell, 2018).

Focus groups were recorded and memoing was conducted. After speaking with all focus groups, data analysis began (Patton, 2015). Transcriptions were created to provide documentation of the focus group interviews and begin the coding process. Coding was conducted after transcriptions are documented highlighting key thoughts, ideas, and words mentioned during the focus group interviews (Yin, 2018). Extensive color coding was utilized to show various themes and interactions between participants. Member checks were conducted with the participants to ensure validity throughout the transcription.

Document analysis was conducted last. Coding the document's information highlighting key thoughts, concepts, and ideas is important for generating the results of the study. Extensive color coding depicted variation in data throughout the study. A thorough review of the materials obtained using coding were conducted after all documents are obtained for analysis (Patton, 2015). Any lack of information was documented due to the schools being closed during the Coronavirus pandemic causing hardship to retrieve additional information.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is substantial for the credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability of the research. The interpretation of the study was dependent upon its trustworthiness (Patton, 2015). Transparency throughout the study between the researcher and participants while maintaining confidentiality confirms trustworthiness was evident throughout the study.

Credibility

A thorough and enriched data collection and analysis provides credibility on behalf of the researcher and participants. In the study, extensive information was provided through interviews, focus groups, and collected documents (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Member checks throughout the study assured the credibility of information being documented and the resources it came from. Interpretations of the documented information verified by participants to ensure data was recorded appropriately. An alignment of the participants' views and the researcher's depiction of the information was prevalent to establish credibility (Patton, 2015).

Dependability and Confirmability

Information was consistent with previous research and teacher interactions with students. Data collection, analysis, and documentation displayed the dependability and confirmability of the research and results (Patton, 2015). Documentation and citation of resources portrayed the dependability and confirmability of this study. Data were discerned as factual and not the figment of the researcher's own thoughts (Patton, 2015). Auditing and member checks are useful tools to approve dependability and confirmability. Collaboration between the participants and the researcher is vital to the foundation of dependability and confirmability.

Transferability

Data collected from this study's participants through interviews and observations were transferable to concepts that have been found in previous research by generalization (Patton, 2015). Previous research analyzed also was transferable to the situations and thoughts presented through interviews, focus groups, and document analysis to provide a richer understanding of secondary educational poverty (Patton, 2015). Scenarios provided by the research allowed case by case transfers of data to be utilized in other circumstances outside of the case study. Other demographics and populations can apply the research's frameworks into their own environments.

Ethical Considerations

Confidentiality was crucial to protect the participants of the study and their students. Data recorded and obtained was locked in a key lock filing cabinet for hard copy documents in which the researcher is the only one with access to the key at all times, while electronic documentation is saved on a computer with password protection. The only person allowed usage for the research is the researcher, until reviewed by the participant for their portion. No influence or bias was demonstrated to participants in any manner. Pseudonyms were incorporated to protect the identity and confidentiality of the participants (Creswell, 2018). Informed consent was obtained from each participant to enter the study. Full awareness of the circumstances of the study being explained to the participants was vital to the participant's rights being maintained along with validity and confidentiality.

Summary

Poverty impacting secondary education was researched through confidential, valid, and dependable approaches in order to deliver a clearer perspective and understanding of the issues faced in the classrooms. Interviews and focus groups involving 12 participants offered invaluable evidence and conception of the problems that poverty presents in the classroom. Teachers and administrators discussed how the issues are dealt with daily, while students discussed their own daily issues at home and in the classroom impacting their educational journey. Participants were selected using purposeful sampling strategies. Each person was invited via e-mail and accepted with the attached consent form.

Data collection and analysis procedures are instrumental in exposing poverty in education and were handled ethically and responsibly. Audio recording and memoing was utilized to document the collected data. The information was transcribed to use for data collecting and

coding. The researcher took their role even more seriously than the participant in order to keep information confidential, valid, organized, and credible. Design selection, settings for the study, and research questions were all significant foundations to the establishment of a solid research study.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

Chapter Four presents the results of the data analysis. A chapter overview, participant listing and description, and results including theme development and research questions responses is included in this chapter. The purpose of this single subject case study design is to explore the phenomenon of poverty in a rural secondary school in alignment with barriers causing additional struggles in the classroom impacting teachers' and students' preparations to combat the effects of poverty. The theory guiding this study is Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, which depicts how foundational physical needs must be met in order to excel to higher levels of success (Maslow, 1943). Research questions were used as a guide for the researcher to identify themes and organize data to report results of the study in narrative form. Instruments including interviews, a focus group, and data analysis were used to collect data. A thorough data analysis performed on collected data projected the emergence of themes resulting the concrete results discussed within this chapter.

Participants

I inquired with Future of Tomorrow Technical Center's office staff to retrieve contact information for students that receive free or reduced lunches listed by their home high school. I also asked for a list of instructors to invite for the qualitative study. The school sent out emails regarding the study to potential student candidates meeting the purposefully selected criteria to participate, and I emailed potential faculty participants based upon the purposefully selected criteria to participate. A total of 15 potential participants were purposefully contacted by the technical center and me. Of those contacted, 80% accepted to participate in the study. I sent out emails to purposefully selected teachers and administrators discussing the essential measures of

participants being 18 or older, being a recipient of free or reduced lunches, and teaching in a

Title I county. The technical center sent out emails to purposefully selected students by the

office staff meeting the purposefully selected criteria to participate. I received 14 initial

responses signifying an interest in participating in the study and I proceeded to contact them, but

only a total of 12 candidates were successfully acquired. All 14 initially responding candidates

met the criteria, but two decided to be removed from the study. The study included four

administrators, four teachers, and four students, all attending or working at Future of Tomorrow

Technical Center. Participants included eleven females and one male.

Molly

Molly has over 25 years of education experience in United County. She has served as a

teacher, licensed counselor, principal, and now school superintendent including serving on the

administrative council for the Future of Tomorrow Technical Center. She has also obtained her

doctorate in educational leadership. Right from the start of the interview, it was apparent that

Molly is passionate about lifelong learning and helping others reach their educational goals. She

spends much of her time after school hours still dedicated to the students and families of United

County. She expressed being involved in poverty during her secondary education experience

since she comes from a large family, but says she worked hard physically, mentally, emotionally,

and spiritually to overcome the barriers of poverty. Molly feels confident students and families

working together to expand their education and become lifelong learners will help them break

the barriers of poverty as well. She collaborates frequently with the community, educators, and

students to establish new programs in the school system to improve circumstances for all

students suffering from poverty, especially secondary students working toward graduation.

Programs she mentioned that were some of her favorite contributions to the students and families

of United County include: food backpacks, food boxes, Period of Positivity, and clothing closets. When asked about her largest contributions toward impacting secondary educational poverty in a positive way, Molly stated,

> No income guidelines are enforced to take things from the closet. Everyone experiences a moment of need. Poverty indicates there is a need. Everyone needs something at some point. It also removes the screening process making students feel embarrassed or treated differently because of their poverty situation.

Molly encourages parents and educators to use their "adult voices" based upon Eric Berne's transactional awareness theory. She stresses it helps parents motivate their children even in impoverished circumstances and can also keep educators and administrators being a professional yet motivating role model for impoverished secondary education students. Molly offered this advice when asked what incoming educators should consider developing curriculum in poverty locations: "We must be willing to do the hard work we ask our students to do to press onward, and part of that is grant writing, shaping curriculum that is engaging and exciting including personal success skills."

Molly is determined to make technology accessible to every student in United County with a new technology grant through Apple. She is seeking out other ways to provide equal opportunity to secondary education students as fast and efficiently as her and the county educators can acquire it. She believes that changes in technology and flexible learning options like trade school and online courses will help students find the "right fit" for their situation and allow them to feel more hopeful. Her closing thoughts expressed that development and progress should never stop in the fight again secondary educational poverty.

Leah

Leah has been an educator over 20 years and has acquired a master's degree along with 45 additional college credit hours in educational leadership. She has served as a teacher, principal, and currently as a director of career and technical education at Future of Tomorrow Technical Center. Her formative experiences have widely varied since she has worked in both secondary education and elementary education. Regarding her return to secondary education, Leah stated,

> Moving from elementary school back to secondary education has given me the opportunity to see the same students at both levels. I can see what poverty looks like at the secondary level, because I knew those children at the elementary level when they were struggling with poverty as well.

Leah's community involvement with teaching along with serving with her church family has provided her additional insight and perspective toward assisting others through her biblical worldview approaches to minimize the impact of poverty in secondary education. She strives to provide everyone in the school an equal opportunity without any barriers to maximize the chance that those blockaded by poverty will have the same opportunities all the other students have. This includes funding for school functions, competitions, and updating classroom technology. Leah converses that local business partners, community outreach, and professional relationships are vital to the success of the students and the school in a poverty demographic so there is a larger and stronger support system established to provide help for the students, educators, and school system. When asked about what advice she would give to incoming educators as they develop curriculum in poverty locations, Leah stated, "No matter how hard we try to bring them to where we are, we will always be held responsible with meeting them where they are and they

are all different." She stresses to teachers must remain vigilant at all times in the school and when interacting with students to watch for signs of poverty so they can try and help that student reduce their problems to succeed and graduate.

Stacey

Stacey is a fifth-year educator at Future of Tomorrow Technical Center. She comes from a home that was fortunate enough to not deal with poverty but has had several interactions with poverty due to her classmates' and students' circumstances. She mentions she thought things had gotten better in the school system since her own graduation but coming back to school as a teacher gave her an awakening that poverty is still a very real issue. She tries to be a part of the solution by her approaches in the classroom and interactions with the students. Stacey stated, "While there regrettably isn't much that I can do to change my students' living situations, I try to always adapt my approach to teaching to be a positive support for all of my students, especially those who are at-risk."

Stacey utilizes flexibility in her classroom along with her assignments to give impoverished students more opportunities to succeed to fit their needs. The teachers she works with through providing embedded credit education at the technical center collaborate with her as well to create a strategy for the students to be able to achieve high school graduation along with completing their career skill courses. Her excitement for teaching was generated by her desire to help others and her inspiration was her parents that were also involved in the education system. Since her career started, she has been able to encourage all types of teenagers including, but not limited to: students that are parents, working while going to school, and come from single income homes. She claims her positive attitude in the classroom is her strongest characteristic to combat poverty in secondary education. Her students and parents are constantly contacted via

Schoology and email since those are the tools she uses to try and stir up additional motivation, encouragement, and resources for the student to succeed when they are outside of the classroom. Stacey stated, "I try to reach out any way I possibly can to give these students a fighting chance at breaking the cycle." Stacey discussed technology is how she can contact her students after school hours and send information to parents to ensure they have the information to make decisions toward receiving help to attain their education. She did express concern about using technology with impoverished students because many do not have access to technology after school hours.

Gary

Gary is a newer teacher with a degree in adult education specializing in information technology starting his fourth school year teaching in August. He is a high school graduate from United County and also a graduate of Future of Tomorrow Technical Center. He mentioned this helps him focus on the students' positions in the classroom and what they need to succeed since he has been in their place before and tries to have everything they will need prepared in the classroom and curriculum in advance before they get to the point of having deficiencies. Gary credits his formal education regarding poverty with the Safeschools training programming which provides him with awareness of the signs of poverty from the insight of a teacher to help his students even if it's referring them to counselors or county programming. His largest concern expressed regarding secondary educational poverty is mental health. He has personally struggled with mental health issues like depression and anxiety in the past while trying to complete his own education and tries to keep things as calm and stress free as possible to reduce mental health issues in the classroom. He supports professional relationships in the classroom through group work and partners that will build confidence and communication skills among the students which

can carry over into their personal lives. When questioned about parental involvement from students' families in secondary education struggling with poverty, Gary stated, "Parents can call the school at any time and volunteer or even just come in to observe their child learning and their instruction." He discusses classroom disruption issues due to the distractions of poverty in secondary education like wanting attention and restlessness due to fatigue and hunger. He remains aware of the economic situation of the demographic area to attempt to better suit the needs of his students.

Rita

Rita teaches the certified nursing assistant program the therapeutic services and health professions department at Future of Tomorrow Technical Center. Her educational background includes a degree in registered nursing and adult education. She worked in a supervising nurse position before transitioning to teaching nursing. She has over 25 years of nursing experience combined. When asked about her formative educational experiences, Rita stated, "My formative assessments have given me the enlightenment that poverty level students may be labeled." She continued to discuss how students are labeled with learning issues and they may not. Problems may just be issues at home impacting their performance, not their intelligence. Her establishment of a supply cabinet in the nursing department has helped many students throughout the school year and a few other departments in the school have implemented supply cabinets as well. She keeps frequent communication with parents by having evening skill sessions with her students and parents to keep them both involved in the learning process and grades along with messages are posted on Schoology for those that cannot attend the sessions. A majority of her instruction is hands-on to keep students engaged in classroom curriculum while sidetracking them from their problems created by poverty. Rita believes "communication will go down" with

the development of increasing technology in education. She confers that students are detached enough from people and family due to the barriers in secondary education and technology will increase their effects. She explains her experience teaching during the Coronavirus pandemic shutdown has confirmed students are more secluded and detached from others even in technological communication during this time. Students were more difficult to get in contact with despite all the online tools and resources the school used because not every student had access to computers, cell phones, or even the Internet. Instead, more tangible and social resources should be available to help students overcome their poverty issues instead of adding more technology to future curriculum since a rural demographic does not have access to give every student equal access.

Brooke

Brooke is a graduate of United County Schools and the Future of Tomorrow Technical Center's computer repair program. She resides in a home engulfed by poverty and struggles to even keep meals on the table. Her mother has had kidney issues for some time now resulting in her and her father being the primary care providers. Her father also works increasing Brooke's stress and responsibilities. Formal educational experiences she has endured throughout her secondary education have included but are not limited to: exhaustion making it hard to focus on curriculum, excessive absences, hunger, depression and embarrassment. Her parents stayed active in her education despite their impoverished circumstances by inquiring about her schooling and encouraging her to stay driven to graduate and get a good job. Brooke stated, "They've always supported me and whatever I was doing. I try to support them as much as I can too making a little money and checking on them and trying to help take care of them." She is interested in going back to Future of Tomorrow Technical Center to participate in the networking

program while working. She worked all through her secondary education to provide enough money for their family to keep transportation, household items, and extra funding for her mother's doctor visit leading up to her kidney transplant and extended hospital stay. She tried to build a support group for herself in school by making friends, but many bullied her for her poverty conditions and ignored her instead. She wants to continue her education because she is "tired of living like this." Her feelings of depression for her family and academic situation are her motivation to make a better life for herself post-graduation. She hopes that teachers and administrators will consider students that have additional stress and poverty circumstances when they create their curriculum and make lessons that are achievable both at home and school with access to the proper supplies. She wants developing curriculum, school programs and policies, and technology moving forward to be focused on helping every student complete school without worrying about having the supplies and resources to flourish.

Judie

Judie is now a graduate from Lucky County, which participates in the tricounty program with Future of Tomorrow Technical Center. She attended the nursing program at Future of Tomorrow Technical Center. She has had several formal experiences regarding secondary educational poverty since she lacked proper school supplies, technology, and food. She worked during her time as a student as well to help her mother provide for her two other siblings living at home, as her mother is a single mother with a single income. Judie volunteered with her friends and clubs from high school to help in a money free way to contribute back to programs she benefited from and help fellow students impacted by poverty during secondary education along the way. Parental involvement at the school was impossible for her mother due to work and taking care of her siblings but at home she still inquired about how things were progressing. Due

to the lack of parental support beyond her mother's control, Judie tried to fill the void with having study times with her friends coming over to study as a motivation to each other. Judie noted the mental and social strain that the Coronavirus caused her intensifying the effects of secondary educational poverty. Judie stated, "If anything goes wrong like this virus shutdown, then it messes everything up we already have planned out and we have to start all over with our planning." She continued to note disruptions due to the virus that made it more difficult to obtain graduation included a majority of schoolwork begin required online with minimal access to the internet and other resources to complete assignments. She is relieved "it's finally over" and is still indecisive on what she would like to do with her life and education progressing forward. Judie's comments regarding development in the future for classrooms and students in secondary educational poverty were indecisive as well as she pointed out, "You have goals and dreams and without money to make that all happen it's hard to develop anything."

Jeanie

Jeanie is a high school graduate of United County and a completer of the nursing program at Future of Tomorrow Technical Center. She commented that weekend backpacks, the clothing closet, and food boxes distributed during the Coronavirus pandemic shutdown were the most significant contributions the school had made during her secondary education experience to reduce the effects of poverty. She decided not to work during school so she could help her family more financially in the long run by providing childcare after they got home from school instead of her parents trying to raise additional funds to pay a babysitter. She also did not work because she was able to spend more time focusing on her studies so she would have a better chance at graduating her nursing class to start a job in nursing immediately after graduation. Her approach toward her classes was to make the best of them since her trade school and high school

training were free. She has learned to be frugal with money and supplies both at home and at school to help save resources and money that can be used later and make items last longer without being replaced as frequently. When asked about her formal education experiences, Judie began to express her frustration by stating,

> They have the extra money to throw around for expensive shoes, uniforms, instruments for band, things like that. That's fine, but it's not fair for the kids that want to play or perform because we don't have the means to. We get shortchanged because we don't have enough to join things like that.

Judie discusses the embarrassment that poverty has brought her and her classmates by not having enough funding for field trips and extracurricular activities. She mentioned parental involvement helps with areas like fundraising but then it is embarrassing and stressful for the parents as well to attempt to raise enough money for their child to participate in events and activities, if their lives will even allow them the time to advocate for their child. At home her needs are met, but it is very work driven including gardening and helping her family with other chores to relieve some of her parents' workloads at home. Her approach toward the future is focused on her own needs to better her own life, but she is still interested in helping out what she can at home.

Amy

Amy is superintendent of Lucky County holding a doctorate in educational leadership. As a first-generation graduate in her family, she expresses she lived in poverty during her education, but has overcome the poverty cycle by continuing her education. She desires to help others overcome their impoverished situations by implementing new programs for her school district. She credits much success of assisting her students to the Community in School program that involves a program established in the school similar to having social workers that intervene

and follow-up with students to make sure their needs are being met in all areas of life and education. Parents are more involved in their child's education and school district by having a Community in School coordinator assigned to them and they keep in touch with that parent over the school year to provide a support system for the adults as well. Academic coaches are available to help students retrieve resources and supplies they need to complete graduation. When asked about how incoming educators should approach curriculum to improve poverty situations, Amy stated,

> Identify the children and personally touch their lives. That is what will make the difference between failure and success. If enough people become involved in supporting the student through their secondary education both in and out of school, they will be strengthened to finish their education.

Amy feels her approach toward poverty in the future will continue to focus on the increase of Community in School services, including personal, social, emotional, and academic support services. She discusses the development of her classroom and students will be constantly monitored through the Community in School staff, administrators, and teachers. Constant communication will be key in keeping everyone's guard up and fighting against poverty in secondary education to increase and maintain graduation rates while making things better in general for the lives of the students.

Karen

Karen holds a bachelor's degree in secondary education fifth grade through adult and currently is a teacher of Options Pathway instruction at Future of Tomorrow Technical Center. She works with at risk students that are in danger of not graduating to help them with credit recovery and testing to receive a diploma or graduation equivalent certificate. Part of the

program stipulation is that they must also complete a trade skill program at Future of Tomorrow Technical Center. Her formal experiences with poverty in secondary education involve anxiety, regret, and a lack of funding and resources. Karen stated,

> My current teaching position gives me the most difficult interactions involving poverty I've ever had in my entire life. My students are always hungry, discouraged, anxious, depressed, short on supplies and money and it's very hard to see them in that shape. I am around it so much I become anxious and depressed for them and regret that I can't help them any more than what I already am at this point.

Parental involvement in Karen's classroom is almost obsolete because the parents are not involved in their children's lives or education. Her job makes her continuously anxious because she worries and wonders if her students will be able to complete their education and graduate. It also reminds her of her personal background involving poverty and the abuse and neglect which drives her even harder to try to protect her students and create better situations for them. She expresses she only understands a portion of how they feel because they have it worse in general than her generation. Her approach toward her curriculum and students is provide the most knowledge and resources to become a successful citizen in the community. Karen doesn't feel her approach toward poverty and her classroom will change much over the next few years because she is doing everything she possibly can now at this point so each student will have "a fighting chance." She continues to take as many trainings as possible and attend conferences and meetings that will provide her with other strategies to incorporate into her classroom to support her students academically and personally.

Carol

Carol is a graduate from Lucky County High School and a completer of the certified nursing program at Future of Tomorrow Technical Center. She comes from a large family including four siblings and moved here from out of state during middle school. The move to a rural West Virginia community caused her and her family to have problems transitioning economically, socially, and academically. She had a difficult time adjusting to a new school, trying to make friends, and keep up with schoolwork while her family lived on a single income. She began to fall behind in school since she was not interested in the new demographic area and felt she was treated differently due to her poverty. She became depressed and disconnected from her family. Her family generally supported her, but communication was not strong between them and it resulted in a lack of parental involvement academically. She maintained passing grades, but often waited until the last minute to complete assignments or completed extra credit assignments later to make up for bypassed opportunities. Finally, high school piqued her interest as she realized she wanted to enter the nursing profession. Carol worked hard to meet the grade and attendance requirements to join the trade school and "one good decision lead to another." She still dealt with poverty during her secondary education, including hunger, depression, and anxiety. Her family receives EBT benefits to help with some of the financial strain and she participated in the county food box distributions. Her dad dealt with a temporary addiction to pain killers which caused issues in her family adding further anxiety and depression to her life. She encourages teachers and schools to develop more programming to keep students involved not just academically but socially because that is where she began to fall behind. Carol stated,

Falling behind is so easy to do when you are already lost in everything you do. You have

to find yourself, learn about yourself, learn in school. It is all a lot to do at one time and

you don't realize that you are having that much trouble until it's almost too late.

She has decided to approach poverty in a positive way over the next several years by attending

college to be a registered nurse in order to better her life and future and hopefully inspire her

siblings to make a "plan for success."

Rhonda

Rhonda has over 35 years in education and bachelor's degrees in elementary education

and special education, a master's degree in special education, and a doctorate in educational

leadership. She worked out of state in a more urban are that also struggled with poverty in

secondary education before moving back to rural West Virginia to partake in secondary and

postsecondary education including being a dean and provost before assuming her current

position as assistant superintendent for United County. She was motivated to pursue education

so she could enter "a different world" away from the poverty she encountered throughout her

education experience. She accredits Ruby Payne training with providing awareness to educators

developing curriculum and approaches toward students impacted by poverty to reduce poverty's

barriers. Her formal educational experiences including Ruby Payne and trauma responsive

trainings, school and county wide resource programming, and strong communication among

educators, students, and community members. When asked about her greatest contributions to

formal education experiences and combatting poverty, Rhonda stated,

One-on-one relationships and experiences are crucial to connect with students and

parents to gain their trust and help them believe in themselves as educators believe in

them. Opening their eyes to their situation and realizing they have a caring adult to

confide in to help them through their education is key.

Her involvement with students' parents consists of building relationships throughout the year to

gain their trust and confidence is important since they want a team effort to be established

between the parents, teachers, and board of education so that everyone works toward "the best

interest" of the student. She stresses the importance of mindfulness when incoming educators

are developing curriculum in poverty locations so they are conscious of the issues, choices, and

realities that many students must face to attain academic achievement. Her approach towards

poverty will be to focus on increasing the likelihood that students will all have an equal

opportunity in education across the board by acquiring technology, resources, and supplies

needed to reduce the barriers of poverty in secondary education to increase graduation rates. She

credits God for giving her wisdom and guidance to take appropriate actions in moving forward to

help students and their families to fulfill their education goals despite poverty circumstances and

wishes to continue seeking his wisdom in developing curriculum and programs to help students

fulfill their education and calling.

Administrator Focus Group

Amy, Leah, Molly, and Rhonda comprised the administrator focus group which discussed

all questions listed in Appendix F. Each expressed contentment in the collaboration of teachers

and administrators working together to decrease the impacts of poverty in secondary education.

All stakeholders become more involved through administrator efforts to gain additional teacher

and student volunteers for poverty supplement programs while reaching out to the community

and business partners to volunteer and donate supplies and money as well. Leah stated,

"Professional development at all levels is constantly encouraged and presented, especially to

administrators so we are able to provide additional guidance and leadership throughout the school year." Administrators providing information and transparency to the community allows everyone in the school district to collaborate and remain informed. All administrators explained how they have strong communication with their teachers to stay up to date on the needs of the teachers for themselves and their classroom while working to build relationships with students and their families to establish intervention strategies to help them succeed. They credit communication as the most valuable tool to fight poverty since that is how they find out what the needs of the students are at home and in the classroom which shares insight with administrators how to assist teachers in impoverished school districts as well to enhance curriculum, motivation, and engagement. Grant writing is an ongoing process, especially by Molly and Rhonda in United County, to benefit students by providing a more equal approach to secondary education for impoverished students. Everyone agreed government funding is insufficient as classroom equipment still needs updated to provide enhanced learning experiences while students do not always have access to essential school supplies even with a levy in place. When asked about any additional important thoughts about poverty in rural secondary education, Amy stated, "Rural counties are shunned in financial aid. Often it is based upon population which hurts us severely. Although our numbers are fewer, our students are just as great and deserve the same opportunities as students in richer demographics." Overall, all questions were answered in unanimous agreement.

Teacher Focus Group

Gary, Stacey, Karen, and Rita create the teacher focus group. They discussed that teachers and administrators are in contact frequently to update each other about student and classroom progress to allow changes and improvements to be made to enrich students'

educational opportunities. Stacey explained that any information of complications outside of the classroom that teachers are aware of must be brought to their administrator's attention to ensure abuse and neglect is not a factor. Karen stated, "Awareness is a priority among the teachers and educators." Teachers volunteering to package and distribute food box and backpack program supplies is the most important contribution to United County, according to Rita and Stacey. Gary praises administrators for receiving the new technology grant that will permit every student to have access to a tablet or laptop to complete their coursework. Karen credits the students for creating their own success by empowering one another through volunteering for school functions, fundraisers, and programs to better their own impoverished circumstances. Rita, Karen, Gary and Stacey all feel their greatest personal contributions is being available to talk with the students at any time to help them and try to work out an individual plan of action for their current issues. Gary commented that business partners donate classroom supplies periodically throughout the school year. Rita praises parents for being involved in her evening classroom workshops and thanks administrators for supporting her afterschool program. Stacey explains that the community as a whole including teachers, administrators, parents, students, and business partners collaborates to do what they can to improve the education system for their poverty demographic. Karen tries to remain sensitive to the needs of the students on a daily basis which in turn helps the classroom climate gear toward motivation and success. Karen stated,

> Current students are exposed to even more than I was, and many of them have less mentorship and stability than I had. This impacts my classroom because I try to be someone who is consistent and stable for all of my students, even when they show very little consistency.

Gary attempts to be vigilant at all times to the students' behaviors in and out of the classroom to detect what deficiencies need addressed. Rita and Stacey cooperate in their collaboration classes twice a week to take turns listening to the students' concerns and try to plan their curriculum around that striving to increase student involvement and academic achievement. All teachers commented they write letters and emails to local businesses to obtain financial support and donations from the community while letters are sent out at the beginning of the year with a list of items that can always be used throughout the year to keep classrooms stocked for students. All the focus group teachers discussed that they are also encouraged by administrators to write grants in efforts to collect additional funds for their classrooms and school since teachers do not feel they receive sufficient funding for their classrooms from state, federal, and local government funding.

Student Focus Group

Brooke, Carol, Judie, and Jeanie established the student focus group. When asked about how teachers and administrators work together to reduce the impacts of poverty in secondary education, Jeanie stated, "I don't think they do all that much. It seems like teachers do whatever they are told to do by the principals and superintendent or they volunteer to help around the school however they can to help the students." Brooke disagreed and expressed she thought that teachers and administrators are doing all they can to help the students and schools. Carol agreed with Brooke, and Judie added "teachers have a lot of meetings to talk about things and then go to board meetings." All the students agreed the food programs are the best contributions by teachers and administrators since it keeps students from going hungry on weekends and especially during the coronavirus pandemic shutdown. Brooke explained student contributions are slim because many of the students in the district are unable to donate anything to assistance

programs. Carol strives to be more attentive to students' needs through the Youth Alive program while Brooke and Judie try to encourage other classmates. Jeanie feels she is "too busy taking care of things at home" to contribute much of her time to anything else. All students except Jeanie feel that all stakeholders are doing what they can to provide an equal opportunity for secondary education. Jeanie explained,

> "The school should have a way to make it possible for everyone to have a chance. Ones that can pay for it should. Then they complain it's not fair for them to pay. No one can agree on it and then it makes people have hard feelings. I do. I wanted to do well and not worry about the things I have to have to do my work and even wanted to play sports and it is not fair. I don't blame my parents; they can't help it."

Brooke discussed how local organizations and government is interested in assisting the school district while Judie pointed out that taxpayers help on a state and federal level to provide funding to schools through taxpayer funding. Carol and Jeanie acknowledged federal and state funding like Title I help for the schools to receive additional help, but have not seen much contribution from the local government. The students agreed unanimously that federal funding is not sufficient to meet students' academic needs since school functions, extracurricular activities and organizations, are not of equal access to those fighting secondary educational poverty.

Results

The results of this qualitative case study about the impacts of poverty in secondary education is provided in the theme development section of this project. This theme development includes precise quotes from participants and reports data from individual interviews, focus groups and data analysis. Extensive color coding provided key thoughts, ideas, and concepts and

portray variations in data throughout the research study. The data were analyzed by using thematic analysis seeking implied information within the data along with developing themes

Theme Development

I established my data analysis for this project on the theoretical framework of Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs theory and Cilesiz and Drotos's (2016) encouragement to educators and students to work together to assist students in succeeding personally and academically. I conducted data analysis for all data retrieved seeking positive perceptions and ideas (Yin, 2018). A thematic analysis approached was utilized to examine collected data. Coding was utilized by highlighting key thoughts and ideas to organize and analyze data retrieved from the individual interviews, focus groups, and data analysis in order to produce emerging themes (see Appendix G). I relentlessly reviewed the participants' transcripts from the individual interviews and the focus groups to allow me to be submerged in the data in order to categorize themes (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Memoing was conducted during the data collection and also for data analyzation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Findings were utilized to categorize and decipher data into theme developments in order to provide a deeper understanding of the effects of poverty in secondary education (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Each theme development allowed me the chance to provide details in narrative for my qualitative case study research.

Hunger. The data revealed all student participants battle hunger throughout secondary education, three out of four administrators had experienced hunger in their own secondary education, and three out of four teachers also experienced hunger during their personal secondary education. Amy and Molly discussed how their impoverished childhoods motivated them to continue their education in order to break the poverty cycle for their future. Karen declared, "My students are always hungry." Those that expressed they were affected by hunger try to

contribute to food programs within the school and district. Focus groups all indicated that providing meals for students was one less stress for students and families to deal with. However, it added additional stress to teachers and administrators attempting to keep up with their normal workload plus volunteer to distribute food at the designated times and places. In addition to interviews and focus groups, photographs of the county employees including administrators, teachers, school bus drivers, cooks, and teacher aides were analyzed to reveal several of the employees worked on a daily basis during school shutdown due to the coronavirus. Those that had already been involved with preparing and distribution of the food backpack program previous to the pandemic remained involved while helping recruit other staff members to help. Very limited documentation was available for analysis from the board office and school due to the schools shutting down.

  Bullying. Brooke expressed she had been bullied due to her participation in school programs that helped her address her hunger issues during secondary education. Brooke commented, "I've been picked on for the way I dress or taking home food." Brooke talked about how students would treat others differently if they participated in food distribution and how those participants would feel judged by their peers. This discouraged her and other students from asking for help publicly at school. As a result, they avoided other students to escape bullying. The student focus group also provided a consensus that avoidance was an approach used to evade bullying. This in turn reduced their participation at times in the food distribution programs while school was still in session. They did increase participation during the Coronavirus shutdown since provisions were being brought to their bus stop and judgement would be alleviated since peer viewing of their participation would be diminished. Data analysis of documents revealed that new positions have been created across the county after a board meeting

including the middle school and high school to combat poverty at the secondary education level.

Positions were posted on the county website. These positions include school interventionalists

that work similar to a social worker on behalf of the student. Academic coaches were also hired

to collaborate with guidance counselors and students to help students achieve their secondary

education. These newly hired staff members will also be able to monitor and address bullying

situations within the school to help protect the students and allow them to refocus on their

education. An additional Pro Officer has also been added to the force to patrol the schools and

address any bullying issues including peer pressure and harassment that may occur throughout

the school day. A new PALS program has also been developed to work individually with at risk

students suffering from poverty causing behavioral issues, excessive absences, and credit

recovery to catch students up before they have to enter the Options Pathway program. New

PALS instructor positions have also been posted and hired to accommodate secondary students

in need.

Parent involvement. All participants mentioned that parental involvement was an

important factor in obtaining secondary education while dealing with poverty. However, none of

them had a parent actively working in their education communicating with the school or

attending school functions. The only parent involvement they had at times was questions about

how school was going. Those that were interested in providing support at home for their child

was not able to due to inabilities to assist them with assignments constrained by knowledge and

time. Karen briefly mentioned her lack of parental involvement complicated by child neglect

and abuse she endured. Teacher and administrative focus groups conceded that parent

involvement is vital to the success of the student academically, especially in impoverished

conditions. Motivation, love, support, and encouragement from the parents are underlying

factors that often make the difference toward academic achievement. Parents that are not

involved are encouraged to do so by the educators and administrators through open door policies,

strong communication, building relationships, and gaining their trust. Molly stated, "We as

educators simply encourage our students' parents to start off their educational contributions by

being proactive in their child's life." Future of Tomorrow Technical Center students may also

join the other students of the county in picking up a hot meal on Friday afternoons to take home

to not only provide a hot meal to their home, but to take one more burden from their parents so

they can enjoy a meal together as a family. Any family that arrives at the school can receive a

meal for every person in their family for free without any income requirements to reduce the

opportunity of embarrassment to the participant.

Mental health. Gary, Karen, Brooke, and Carol mentioned mental health as a significant

part of their battle with secondary educational poverty. Due to a lack of guidance and leadership

that could have been offered by their parents under different circumstances, depression and

anxiety arose in their academic and personal lives. Additional resources and programs such as

counseling for example were needed for the students and teachers to improve their mental health

to proceed forward with their secondary educational journey. Rhonda stated, "It ultimately goes

back to a quality education and having a caring adult to overcome the mental games along with

the physical shortages students face." Gary and Karen expressed as teachers it still impacts how

they shape their curriculum and approach their students to assist them as much as possible.

Community in School programming provided by the state being merged into the rural school

systems is essential to provide additional mental health support for students combatting

secondary educational poverty in order to obtain educational advancement. All focus groups

confirmed that mental health is a core issue of poverty in secondary education and more

individual interactions and involvements must be established and sustained to empower those struggling with mental health in order to attain secondary education. Data analysis shows in a job posting document that empowerment academy teachers have been hired and put in place for secondary schools to empower students to invest in life and their secondary education.

Hygiene. Students that have issues with getting parents involved in their education also have a difficult time getting them engaged in their personal lives resulting in depression which impacts personal hygiene. Students may not take the time to groom and clean themselves properly or have access to the proper supplies to maintain good hygiene. Jeanie explained, "We try to wear clothes that are still clean more than one day, not in a row to school though, to save on laundry detergent, electric, and water for the washer and dryer." The clothing closet program established by United County also allows students of Future of Tomorrow Technical Center to partake of supplies in the closet that include clothing, shoes, toothpaste, toothbrushes, deodorant, and feminine products. The program provides supplies for deficiencies in neglect both intentional and not intentional by the parent so that the students' needs are met to relieve one more issue for their instructional day. Pictures provided of the clothing closet show a fully stocked closet that is accessible in locations that are easily accessible by students. Teachers and students volunteer to keep the closet stocked by bringing items in and volunteering time before and after school to replenish the shelves.

Government funding. All administrator, teacher, and student participants expressed government funding is critical to the success of impoverished students and their school districts. Students discussed how there is not enough government funding to help them personally to have access to the supplies and resources needed to complete their coursework. Judie stated, "Sometimes teachers have to send someone to the office to get more pencils, paper or whatever

if you're lucky they have it. Then if we have group assignments we have to take turns on the computer in the room." Teachers explained that a shortage of classroom funding disables them to supply their students with the provisions needed to learn curriculum at a deeper level resulting in disengagement, frustration, and a lack of motivation. Gary stated, "My faculty senate funding doesn't go far in the classroom and we don't get enough from the state or federal to cover all classroom expenses. Hopefully we can get a grant or something to upgrade the computer lab equipment." Administrators agreed they are not able to provide enough funding to teachers due to other billing obligations that must be budgeted with classroom supplies and equipment such as utilities and building maintenance.

Research Question Responses

Three research questions directed this qualitative case study to provide a deeper understanding of the effects of poverty in secondary education. The responses established by all participants via interviews and focus groups along with data and documents analyzed compile the research question responses. I deliver a narrative answer for each research question based upon the data I received and analyzed.

Research Question One. Research question one asked, "In what ways does poverty impact learning in secondary education?" (Deterding, 2015). Coding was utilized to carefully organize and analyze interview, focus group, and data analysis information and responses to answer question one. Hunger, parental involvement, government funding, bullying, mental health, and hygiene are the themes that emerged from participant responses and data analysis in response to question one. No subthemes were detected throughout the study.

Hunger was the prominent theme throughout the entire study. United County is focused on furnishing meals for all their students including those attending Future of Tomorrow

Technical Center to help them fight hunger, especially during the coronavirus shutdown and

summer break. All United County students including those attending Future of Tomorrow

Technical Center will receive an electronic benefits transfer card to spend on groceries

throughout the summer. This will help them focus on correcting other problems posed by

poverty to prepare for the upcoming school year. Bullying emerged as a theme when Brooke

mentioned, "I finally made it, but when people are bullying you or you feel like you could use

more help, then it's hard to keep going." Several pictures collected for artifacts to analyze depict

the necessity of food box distribution to keep students fed. This necessity due to hunger does

cause additional work and stress on educators and county staff that volunteer to distribute the

food.

Parental involvement was the other theme that correlated with research question one. All

participants specified that there was a lack of parental involvement in some form or another. A

lack of parental involvement snowballed into other issues creating the themes of mental health

and hygiene. Students found it difficult to function and suffered from anxiety and depression

due to the inconsistencies existing at home which carried over into their education. Mental

health also created a form of emotional or mental abuse even leading to neglect for some. Karen

expressed the effects of her poverty during her secondary education still impact her current

performance in the classroom. Molly and Rhonda work persistently with parents and educators

to increase the level of parent involvement in secondary education. Rhonda stated, "Parents are

very involved in elementary education, but it slacks off as students transition to higher grade

levels." Educators like Gary try to motivate their students with simulated workplace experience

to take pride in their performance and appearance. Pictures collected as artifacts regarding the

clothing closet program clearly portray the mass of items required for personal hygiene to meet

the students' needs where parental involvement lags in both supplying and enforcing hygiene materials.

Government funding was mentioned in regard to poverty impacting secondary education due to insufficient funding. A lack of federal, state, and local government funding takes away from the time educators can spend planning additional lessons and activities to keep students engaged. Board of education minutes collected as artifacts discuss budget proposals which are constantly changing to meet the essential needs of the county at the time to keep the impoverished school district functioning, which in turn creates various deficiencies in secondary education. Instead, according to Molly, teachers and administrators spend a great deal of time seeking and writing grants and other financial support to fund classrooms and schools.

Research Question Two. Research question two asked, "How do educators and students perceive their roles in the classroom due to dealing with poverty?" (Djonko-Moore, 2016). Coding was utilized to carefully organize and analyze interview, focus group, and data analysis information and responses to answer question two. Karen expressed during the individual interviews and focus groups that a teacher's role is not only to educate, but to "provide guidance and leadership due to a lack of parental involvement." Stacey remarked, "We have many jobs other than just teaching. It depends on the day and the needs of the students what exactly our role is." Data analysis of documents collected as artifacts regarding job postings portrayed the increased workforce needed to tackle the issues students face in the classroom. Amy explained, "Teachers and other support staff now have to not only educate but perform the duties of a social worker to make sure students' needs are being met." In regard to student roles in the classroom, Brooke mentioned that they are encouragers and motivators. Judie echoed Brooke's remarks concerning encouragement and motivation since she tries to assume the same role in the

classroom. All students in the focus group discussed attributes of students in the classroom that were non-traditional roles like coming in class to just learn. They try to help each other along, especially students struggling with mental health issues like anxiety and depression, to complete their secondary education.

Research Question Three. Research question three asked, "What steps are currently taken to minimize the effects of poverty in the classroom?" (Mannon, 2018). Coding was utilized to carefully organize and analyze interview, focus group, and data analysis information and responses to answer question three. Molly explained the largest step being taken currently to minimize the effects of poverty is utilizing the Community in School program which is conducted throughout the county and the rest of the state. Amy agreed Community in School is the best program currently being used. Rhonda attested that establishing relationships with students, parents, community members, and other stakeholders is what makes Community in School, food distribution, and any other steps to reduce poverty effective. During the focus group, all student participants voiced that food programs, Period of Positivity, and the clothing closet are great resources for students to help reduce the effects of poverty. They like the Community in School programming because it covers physical, social, academic, and emotional aspects they must face throughout secondary education. Leah expressed that teachers and administrators are contacting business partners, local business owners, and writing grants to help secure more supplies and funding to assist teachers and students in impoverished classrooms. Data analysis of artifacts collected show documents that confirm additional support staff including empowerment teachers, PALS teachers, a Pro Officer, academic coaches, and interventionalists that will be put in place to minimize the effects of poverty in the classroom.

Summary

This qualitative case study design was conducted to provide a deeper understanding of the effects of poverty in secondary education. Individual interviews, focus groups, and data analysis were used to retrieve information to be organized into themes and subthemes to be analyzed for a deeper understanding of the subject. Three research questions directed the data collection procedures. Coding was utilized to organize and analyze data retrieved from the individual interviews, focus groups, and data analysis. Coding using extensive color coding while highlighting key thoughts, words, and ideas gave distinction to various themes. The data were analyzed by using thematic analysis seeking implied information within the data along with developing themes. Themes that emerged were: hunger, bullying, parental involvement, mental health, hygiene, and government funding. Findings were reported to provide a response to the three research questions that guided the research for the qualitative case study. When students, teachers, and administrators feel a sense of hopeless due to their impoverished circumstances at home and in the classroom, their motivation to be productive in secondary education diminishes and work efficiency decreases. Fortunately, several feel that developed community and school programming have helped reduce the effects of poverty in secondary education.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

With students more students struggling with poverty in rural secondary education, it is vital to provide a deeper understanding of poverty in rural secondary education (Cilesiz & Drotos, 2016). The purpose of this single-subject case study design is to explore the phenomenon of poverty in a rural secondary school in alignment with barriers causing additional struggles in the classroom impacting teachers' and students' preparations to combat the effects of poverty. The theory guiding this study is Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory as it depicts how foundational physical needs must be met in order to excel to higher levels of success (Maslow, 1943). Research questions were used as a guide to identify themes and organize data to report results of the study in narrative form.

This chapter contains six sections: (a) an overview of the chapter, (b) a summary of the findings, (c) a discussion of the findings and the implications in light of the relevant literature and theory, (d) an implications section (methodological and practical), (e) an outline of the study delimitations and limitations, and (f) recommendations for future research. A summary of findings provides a general description of the research results. The discussion section delivers an overall view of the results in connection to the empirical and theoretical literature evaluated in Chapter Two. The implications section identifies the conclusions of the research and the delimitations and limitations of the research are discussed. Recommendations for future research are suggested and in conclusion, a summary of the chapter is given.

Summary of Findings

This qualitative case study was inspired by three research questions regarding poverty in rural secondary education and the impacts it imposes on the students involved. The first research

question asked, "In what ways does poverty impact learning in secondary education?" All 12 participants conceded that poverty impacted learning in secondary education by creating issues with hunger, parental involvement, and government funding. Teachers focused upon the barriers in the classroom and between students and teachers while students remained focused on the shortages in supplies, mental, and emotional support vital to their academic success. Themes emerged as research progressed with interviews and focus groups resulting in the accumulation of mental health, hygiene, and bullying being added to the list of problems by some of the participants that poverty causes for rural secondary education. Bullying was the most mentioned emerging theme as almost every one of the participants had struggled with being bullied in some fashion during their lifetime, especially during secondary education. Mental health seemed to develop from the stresses of being bullied along with the daily stresses that accumulated from being stuck within the poverty cycle.

Research question two asked, "How do educators and students perceive their roles in the classroom due to dealing with poverty?" Teachers and administrators expressed their roles not only involve being the educator for the student, but they are the leader and counselor for many of their students. In some cases, teachers and administrators take the lead as a parental figure when there is abuse and instability in a student's home. Students responded that they are mainly the student, but some include the role of motivator and encourager as they try to use their position to influence other students to do well and establish teamwork among their classmates. Nontraditional roles are assumed by all the participants of the study along with their traditional roles in order to adapt to the situations that poverty causes in the classroom to deal with each scenario accordingly. Roles for students, teachers, and administrators change differently for

each person as individual circumstances change which require them to adapt to their new environment and situations.

Research question three asked, "What steps are currently taken to minimize the effects of poverty in the classroom?" Teachers and administrators have collaborated to create programs that are supported by students, business partners, and parents that are able to do so by financially and donating items. Food distribution programs have been established to combat hunger including bus stop deliveries of food during the coronavirus pandemic and providing drive-thru pick-up stops at designated school locations. Clothing closets have been established to provide clothing and hygienic supplies to students that do not always have access to these types of items due to financial constraints. These items are can also be gently used so students that can contribute such items can help the cause, while business partners and other stakeholders donate money or purchased items to place in the clothing closet. Teachers and administrators have worked together to implement the Community in School program that allows them to create one on one relationships with students and parents to give them a way to communicate their needs and concerns with school officials in order to reduce those issues with the goal of increasing educational attainment. Additional support staff including PALS teachers, interventionalists, a Pro Officer, empowerment teachers, and academic coaches have been hired to assist teachers with handling as many roles in the classroom while providing more professionals for students to collaborate with to continuously work together until academic achievement is reached.

Discussion

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to provide a deeper understanding of the effects of poverty in secondary education utilizing individual interviews, focus groups, and data analysis. Audio files were transcribed, and extensive coding was conducted to analyze data.

Three themes and three subthemes developed after careful examination of the data and my report of the results is reflected in narrative form in Chapter Four. This discussion section transmits the results from my research to the theoretical and empirical literature evaluated within Chapter Two. The findings of this study confirmed theoretical and empirical literature correlating the effects of poverty in secondary education. The results from this study illustrate that participants struggled with poverty in secondary education in more than one aspect of their lives impacting their approach and achievement in secondary education. Personal encounters, experiences, and approaches both in the classroom and at home have an impact on secondary educational poverty. Various levels of support obtained from students, teachers, parents, and administrators influenced the intensity of students' involvements and motivations during secondary education. Teachers and administrators were inspired to continue encouraging, motivating, and educating their students after receiving support in their classroom and viewing the effects of poverty in secondary education firsthand with their students.

Theoretical Literature

The findings of my current research support associating theoretical literature. Maslow's (1943) theory regarding hierarchical needs proves to be correct in relations to my research. Student participants confirmed they were not able to succeed on another level of life and educational attainment until core elements such as food and shelter were provided (Maslow, 1943). Once they were able to obtain these essential needs, then they could pursue parental involvement providing love and support which helped them excel throughout the hierarchy until they reached the top with self-actualization resulting in academic achievement. Teacher and administrator participants also established that a hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943) must be met in the classroom for both the student and teacher to collaborate in a constructive manner for both

to succeed in their battle with secondary educational poverty. Cilesiz and Drotos (2016) also

proved their theory of creating an action plan correct in this study. Teachers that generated an

action plan in the classroom to remove the barriers of poverty and provide an equal opportunity

education for all had more academic success overall from their students. Students also verified a

plan of action is crucial to the outcome of their secondary education by having a strategy and

executing it with the support of both parents and teachers during their schooling.

Empirical Literature

According to Kamanda (2016), a thorough explanation of the effects of poverty must be

provided in order to produce more support from school and community stakeholders. Each

participant provided a detailed description of their impoverished circumstances in secondary

education while continuing to go further and discuss their home situations that also impacted

their secondary education. Maslow's human motivational theory (1943) lists levels of

achievement that students should obtain in their lives to excel into a successful life and education

throughout secondary education. Any deficiencies recognized should be addressed immediately

to assist the child in attaining the next level of life and motivation (Maslow, 1943). Burn and

Childs showed a relationship between student motivation in secondary education and teacher and

parent involvement. Associated literature attaches the current understanding of poverty in

secondary educational settings to the current study of poverty impacting rural secondary

education (Cilesiz & Drotos, 2016; Wei et al., 2018). This study also mirrors these literature

sources that all participants had different needs that needed to be addressed in order to obtain

academic success.

Cilesiz and Drotos's (2016) action plan theory correlates with Maslow's hierarchy of

needs (1943) so that strategies may be created to reach the individual's fullest potential

personally and academically. Mannon (2018) and Kainz (2019) also confirm individuals struggling with a low socioeconomic status have a harder time excelling into higher levels of self-attainment. An action plan is necessary for students to feel empowered while yearning to graduate high school while being embedded in poverty (Cilesiz & Drotos, 2016). Teacher awareness in the classroom regarding their classroom climate, curriculum, and student engagement is imperative for the success of the students in impoverished classrooms and home situations (Kainz, 2019; Parker, 2017). However, Plucker and Peters (2018) and Deterding (2015) affirms that it is equally important that students remain aware of the barriers and impacts poverty poses in their lives and classrooms and utilize support staff whenever possible to keep them motivated and engaged.

Parker (2017) and Hannum et al. (2017) discussed the importance of teachers and administrators continuing their professional development and procurement of resources including technology and classroom supplies to sustain students' motivation and engagement in the classroom. According to Wei et al. (2018), students are at higher risk of dropping out of school during secondary education due to the barriers posed in the classroom. The students that do drop out feel that was their only means of alleviating the problems they were struggling with at the time (Shi et al., 2015). This current research correlates motivation, engagement and intervention in rural secondary education with Cilesiz and Drotos's (2016) findings that students and teachers must have a strategy in place of how to proceed in impoverished rural secondary education in order to attain academic achievement. No student participants dropped out of school, but a few had considered the possibility of doing so. This study extends a new contribution upon Maslow's (1943) theory and provides a new viewpoint for others through all

student, teacher, and administrator responses to inform readers with a more in depth and personal perception about the effects of poverty in rural secondary education.

Overall, students, teachers, and administrators at Future of Tomorrow Technical Center are all impacted by the hardships poverty causes in rural secondary education. All of the participants have dealt with poverty in one form or another within their lifetime and one-third of them still continue to struggle with poverty, which is normal (Parker, 2017). This increases the feelings of frustration and discouragement that students, teachers, and administrators experience during secondary education (Wei et al., 2018).

Implications

This qualitative case study has implications that are of theoretical, empirical, and practical significance to enrich existing research. The results from this study reveal areas of poverty regarding rural secondary education experienced by students, teachers, and administrators involved with Future of Tomorrow Technical Center in United County. Implications from this study provide awareness to other school districts to identify barriers in their own educational environments and be alert to respond accordingly to the issues presented.

Theoretical Implications

The theoretical background for this study was founded around Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs. Maslow's (1943) human motivational theory explained struggles that students face creates barriers that must be broken before the next level of needs can be accomplished. The current study exposed the majority of students, teachers, and administrators have dealt with the effects of poverty in education within some point of their education and life. This implies that an even larger amount of the total school and school district population struggle with the same issues. This information magnifies the understanding of poverty during secondary

education which fortifies approaches toward students and classrooms in how to combat the issues.

Empirical Implications

The empirical implication of this study delivered awareness to the effects of poverty in secondary education. The research was focused on students, teachers, and administrators at a local technical center in an attempt to provide a deeper understanding of the impacts and barriers poverty creates in rural secondary education. This study augments Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943) and Cilesiz and Drotos's action plan theory (2016) with the found research results. Needs and barriers described from each participant cooperate with Maslow's (1943) and Cilesiz and Drotos's (2016) research. This study contributes a deeper understanding and awareness regarding the effects of poverty in secondary education while enhancing the respective theories utilized to study the topic.

Practical Implications

Educators are now prepared with a stronger understanding of how to perceive poverty in rural secondary education, which benefits all stakeholders. Teachers and administrators would benefit from professional development regarding poverty in the classroom and more training to assist their students. Students would benefit from continuously increasing programs and resources that are established to minimize the effects of poverty during their secondary education. Administrators can use this information to recognize signs of poverty among their students, teachers, and classrooms to create policies and programs to support a more nurturing learning environment. Teachers are encouraged to be more aware of their students' actions, appearance, and behaviors while administrators are encouraged to do the same regarding their teachers. Students are encouraged to be more aware of their school environment along with

programs and resources being offered by the school and school district they can take advantage of.

Delimitations and Limitations

Definite purposeful delimitations exist in this study. I selected a qualitative case study because I was seeking enriched information to investigate the effects of poverty in rural secondary education. A technical center is different from a high school since students attending the technical center are seeking additional education to be prepared for the workforce after high school versus high school being more focused on college preparation. Technical centers also do not receive much research efforts, especially in rural demographics. The intentional decisions of limiting participants to over the age of 18, being involved in a Title I county school district, and being participants of free or reduced school lunch programs established an understanding that achieving secondary education was going to be more difficult already due to time constraints and economic circumstances.

The limitations of this study include sample size, age, gender, ethnicity, and geographical region. It was impossible to have any participants of another ethnicity since no students other than Caucasian attend the technical center. A few participants were apprehensive in the beginning to participate in the study due to privacy anxieties. I assured them everything would remain confidential, they would have access to their transcripts to confirm their collected data, and pseudonyms would be used to protect their privacy and identity. I also reminded them they had the option to withdraw from the study at any time. As a result, two participants withdrew from the study, but fortunately twelve remained for the study reaching my target number. Surprisingly, the two participants that dropped out were teachers, since I had anticipated student participants would be the ones to withdraw from the study. Sample sizes are smaller since it is

rural area as opposed to an urban school or district. Future of Tomorrow Technical Center is located in the mid-Eastern part of the United States, which changes the course of the study to some extent as cultural differences are not as prominent as other sections of the country. Gender also was a limitation as all, but one participant was female. Age participation was limited due to the age 18 and over criteria that was purposefully set.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research regarding the effects of poverty in secondary education should include extended sample sizes, ethnicities, races, genders, demographic areas, and quantitative method. Incentives would be feasible for larger sample sizes to entice participation. Different demographics and school types would provide more organizational enriched data to understand other aspects of poverty in secondary education. A different region other than the East should be selected to provide more various ethnicity and race information. A quantitative method research study would provide additional data and figures to provide more numerical statistics of those impacted by poverty in rural secondary education.

Summary

Understanding poverty in rural secondary education is important to educational research since all stakeholders including teachers, students, and administrators must work together to overcome the effects of poverty for students to obtain their education. Poverty is constantly evolving, and the signs of its' effects continuously change. One of the most significant result from this study is that Maslow's (1943) theory of human motivation is enforced due to the students' motivations being diminished as they struggle with poverty during secondary education resulting in a more difficult time obtaining self-actualization and educational attainment. Teachers and administrators have an incredibly large responsibility to address poverty issues to

assist their students when help is not always available in one form or another at home. The second most significant result from the study is that teachers and administrators need to make an action plan to help students struggling in the classrooms and at home in order to obtain academic achievement (Cilesiz & Drotos, 2016). In turn, this increases the chance that students will obtain their education and reduce or break the poverty cycle they are caught in.

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APPENDIX A: IRB Approval Letter

Dear Rachel Smarr, Michael Patrick:

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under the following exemption category, which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46: 101(b):

Category 2.(iii). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:
The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by §46.111(a)(7).

Your stamped consent form can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. This form should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document should be made available without alteration.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,
G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
Research Ethics Office

APPENDIX B: Site Approval Letter

September 3, 2019

Rachel Smarr

████████████   ████████

Dear Mrs. Smarr

After careful review of your research proposal entitled A Case Study Evaluating the Effects of Poverty in Rural Secondary Education, I have decided to grant you permission to conduct your study at ████████████████████ for your research study.

Sincerely,

████████████

Superintendent

██████████████████████████

APPENDIX C: Invitation for Participants

Study Title: A CASE STUDY EVALUATING THE EFFECTS OF POVERTY IN RURAL SECONDARY EDUCATION

Dear Participant,

My name is Rachel Smarr and I am a doctoral candidate in the Department of Education at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia. I would like to invite you to participate in my research toward the completion of my Ed.D. in Leadership program. I am studying poverty's impact on rural secondary education. If you elect to participate, you will be interviewed regarding your own personal struggles with poverty in rural secondary education. The interviews will take place at a mutually agreed upon time and place and should last 1 hour. Interviews will be audio and/or video recorded for accuracy and proper reflection on our discussion. The audio files will only be reviewed and transcribed by me for analysis. Audio and video files will be destroyed after completing the member checks. Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you may opt out of participation at any time. All information and participation is confidential. Study information will be kept in a secure location at Liberty University in Virginia. The results of the study may be published or presented at professional conferences. Participation is anonymous to ensure your privacy and protection.

If you have any questions regarding the study or your participation, you may contact me at the phone number and/or email listed. If you have any additional concerns regarding the study, please contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd, Carter 134, Lynchburg, VA 24515, or email irb@liberty.edu. Thank you for your time and consideration. If you would like to participate, please sign the attached permission form and return it in the attached self-addressed envelope.

Sincerely,

Rachel Smarr

APPENDIX D: Participant Consent Form

A Case Study Evaluating the Effects of Poverty in Rural Secondary Education
Rachel Jean Smarr
Liberty University
Department of Education

You are invited to be in a research study regarding the impact of poverty on rural secondary education. You were selected as a possible participant because you are enrolled in a Title I school, which classifies the students at a poverty level. Please read the form thoroughly and ask any questions before agreeing to participate in the study.

Rachel Jean Smarr, a student/doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Liberty University is conducting this study.

Background Information: The purpose of this study is to understand what poverty struggles students in rural secondary education face.

Procedures: If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following things:
1. The first task will be an individual recorded confidential interview.
2. The second task will be participating in documented field notes written by the researcher.
3. The third task will be random confidential member checking (review of transcripts).
4. The fourth task will be focus group interviews.

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study: The risks involved in this study are minimal, no more than you would encounter in everyday life.

There are not benefits attached to participating in this study. The study benefits will be for educational research and future rural secondary education teachers and students.

Liberty University will not provide medical treatment or financial compensation if you are injured or become ill because of participating in this research project. This does not waive any of your legal rights nor release any claim you might have based on negligence.

Compensation: Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private and protected. No information will be published that would be made possible to identify with a subject. Records of collected data will be securely stored and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- The privacy and confidentiality of all participants will be vigorously protected with the use of pseudonyms, the site will be referred to as a Future of Tomorrow Technical Center and all participants and the site will be kept confidential.
- Paper data will be stored in a locked file cabinet in my home office and will be shredded when the study is published by Liberty University. Audio and video files will be stored

electronically on my personal computer and electronically locked by a password not shared with anyone.

- The recordings will be used and maintained by Rachel J. Smarr who will have the only access and they will be erased when the study is published at Liberty University.
- It cannot assured that other participants will maintain their confidentiality and privacy.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in this study is voluntary. You may decide to withdraw your participation at any time without any hardships formed by Liberty University or the researcher.

How to Withdraw from the Study: If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you, apart from focus group data, will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study. Focus group data will not be destroyed, but your contributions to the focus group will not be included in the study if you choose to withdraw.

Contacts and Questions: The researcher conducting this study is Rachel Jean Smarr. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board. Please notify the researcher if you would like a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent: I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.
(NOTE: DO NOT AGREE TO PARTICIPATE UNLESS IRB APPROVAL INFORMATION WITH CURRENT DATES HAS BEEN ADDED TO THIS DOCUMENT.)
The researcher has my permission to audio-record/video-record me as part of my participation in this study.

_____

Signature Date

_____

Signature of Investigator Date

APPENDIX E: Interview Protocol

Standardized Open-Ended Interview Questions

1. Please introduce yourself to me including your educational background.

2. Of the formative educational experiences you have obtained regarding poverty, what has made them significant contributions to your classroom and school?

3. Of your contributions, which do you feel worked and why?

4. How do your students' parents become involved in the fight against educational poverty?

5. How does a Biblical worldview influence your approach to students suffering from poverty?

6. What formative experiences do you think they would want to tell me about?

7. Tell me about the struggles you've experienced outside of the classroom due to poverty.

8. Reflecting on your educational career, what advice would you give to incoming educators as they develop curriculum in poverty locations?

9. This next question is unique in that it will invite you to look ahead. How do you expect your approach towards poverty to change or develop over the next several years?

10. We have covered a lot of ground in our conversation, and I so appreciate the time you've given to this. One final question… What else do you think would be important for me to know about the development of your classroom and students regarding poverty in secondary education?

APPENDIX F: Focus Group Protocol

Focus Group Standardized Open-Ended Interview Questions

1. How do you feel administrators and teachers work together to reduce some of the impact of poverty in rural secondary education?

2. What contributions made by teachers, administrators, and students do you feel work the best and why?

3. Of your contributions, which do you feel worked and why?

4. How do all stakeholders become involved in the fight against educational poverty?

5. How do you strive to be more attentive to the needs of the students suffering from poverty, while meeting teachers' needs in the classroom?

6. What specific experiences would you like to tell me about?

7. What measures are being taken to obtain additional federal, state, and local funding to sustain rural secondary education needs?

8. Why or why not do you feel federal funding seems to be sufficient in supplying your academic necessities?

9. What closing thoughts do you think would be important for me to know about poverty in rural secondary education?

APPENDIX G: Emerging Themes Table

Theme	Supporting Comment
Hunger	"My students are always hungry" (Karen).
Bullying	"I finally made it, but when people are bullying you or you feel like you could use more help, then it's hard to keep going" (Brooke).
Parental involvement	"We as educators simply encourage our students' parents to start off their educational contributions by being proactive in their child's life" (Molly).
Mental health	"It ultimately goes back to a quality education and having a caring adult to overcome the mental games along with the physical shortages students face" (Rhonda).
Hygiene	"We try to wear clothes that are still clean more than one day, not in a row to school though, to save on laundry detergent, electric, and water for the washer and dryer" (Jeanie).
Government funding	"Rural counties are shunned in financial aid. Often it is based upon population which hurts us severely. Although our numbers are fewer, our students are just as great and deserve the same opportunities as students in richer demographics" (Amy).