



UW ODYSSEY PROJECT SOCIOLOGY ORACLE





Dear Reader,

Welcome to the first issue of the Sociology Oracle - a volume produced by UW Odyssey Project alumni as part of their coursework in Soc 134: The Sociology of Race & Ethnicity. Soc 134 was the first sociology class to be offered as part of the UW Odyssey Project, and its intention was to help students view the world as a social scientist might. In his well-known book, *The Sociological Imagination*, C. Wright Mills describes the benefits of thinking like a sociologist, saying:

“The first fruit of this imagination...is the idea that the individual can understand his own experience and gauge his own fate only by locating himself within his period, that he can know his own chances in life only by becoming aware of those of all individuals in his circumstances. In many ways, it is a terrible lesson; in many ways, a magnificent one.”

This Oracle represents the hard work students have done to understand a social issue they are passionate about by collecting data - through interviews, surveys, or online forums - from individuals living with the issue in their everyday lives. In some cases, students knew their respondents well. In other cases, their respondents were strangers. Students reported being surprised by what they learned - even from people who they thought were just like them. They felt deep empathy for respondents whose stories resonated with them. They were quick studies in connecting respondents' narratives to broader social problems. In our class discussions, they offered insightful criticisms of sociological theories that failed to recognize the agency, resilience, and individuality of the humans they spoke to.

In other words: these articles are the fruits of their sociological imaginations!

You will notice that these articles are all formatted in a similar way. This is because students were also practicing following the structure of a traditional social science article - describing their problem, explaining how their work builds on some previous knowledge, and presenting their findings by theme. While the traditional sociological research article isn't always the most engaging or provocative piece of writing, taking some objective distance from a social problem can offer the writer a different angle from which to view themselves and the world. The dispassionate investigator can often ask questions in a research context - for example, “Why is it difficult to seek mental health services?”, “How does being a DACA recipient affect one's relationships with coworkers?”, or “What are women's experiences in religions with traditional gender roles?” - that are harder to ask in casual conversation. Fortunately, as you will read here, this style of research still offered students opportunity for self-reflection.

Because Odyssey students have rich life experiences, speak multiple languages, and are connected to others in their community through various channels, they were able to ask research questions, identify data sources, and connect with respondents in surprising and remarkable ways. These skills are just another set of tools they can use to change the social world.

I hope you will enjoy reading these articles as much as I did as their instructor.

Sincerely,
Nidia Bañuelos
Assistant Professor
Department of Liberal Arts & Applied Studies, Division of Continuing Studies



THE SIGNIFICANCE OF HAVING EQUAL RIGHTS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

MARGARITA BARAJAS

Introduction

My topic is about people with disabilities and equal rights. I picked this topic and these questions because in my family we had two different people who had two very different disabilities. One family member had a gunshot wound to the head and sustained brain damage. The other person was born premature. At that time the doctors didn't understand premature infant health, and they ended up doing a lot of tests on her. She then became mentally disabled. I now work with people who have all different kinds of disabilities. The CDC estimates that 61 million adults in the U.S. live with a disability.

Literature review

Previous research mentions that employees with disabilities are paid less than non disabled workers (Baldwin and Johnson, 2006; Hale Hayghe and McNeil, 1998; McKay, Avery & Morris, 2008). A similar percentage (22 %) of employees report that attitudes and stereotypes are a barrier to employment of people with disabilities in their own firm (Bruyere, 2000). Dr Michael Stein joined professors and students in a seminar that addressed disability and employment. The organization for the Economic Co-operation and development conducted a study in the late 2000s, discovering that only roughly 40% of persons with disabilities are employed compared to the approximately 75% employment rates of persons without disabilities. However, these articles don't mention much about equal rights for anyone with disabilities. Another thing is that these articles do not consider the role of public opinion on disabilities in impacting disabled people's employment opportunities.

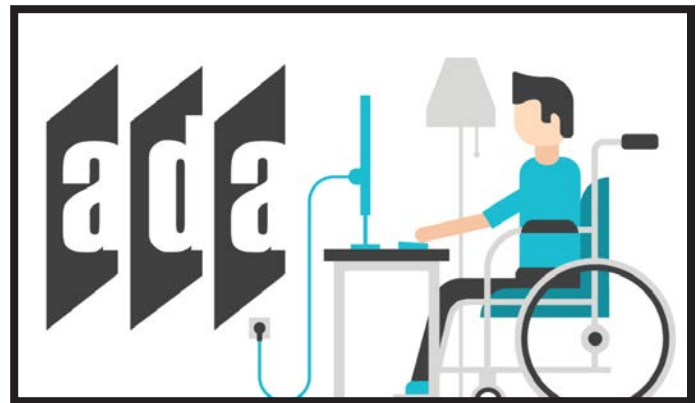
Research Question

Does a person with a disability have equal rights in the workforce?

Data and Methods

To answer this question, I plan on using my own personal experience of working as a job coach with people who have disabilities. I conducted two interviews with two very different women.

One is a Hispanic woman interviewee; we will call her Moon. She has life experience, but does not have a disability herself. The second interviewee is an African American woman; we will call her Stars. She also has experience with some type of disability. I also plan on using my own experience of working as a job coach for people with all kinds of disabilities in the community. My research asks questions about people's attitudes towards disability, whereas my literature review focuses on the financial impact of disabilities. This is a big difference. It is possible that public attitudes toward disability are impacting how disabled people are treated – including their employment! I plan on comparing both women's stories and asking them questions about their personal experiences. Disabilities are so common, and it is important to understand people's opinions of disability rights.



Findings

In comparing both women's stories, both women agree that a person with disabilities should get equal rights in and out the workforce. Stars said, "All people should be treated equal and NOT different because of their disability. We're all the same and our disability should not define us." Stars also stated that in her opinion, people with disabilities and equal rights do not vary from race to race, but it does vary depending on what kind of disability the person has. Moon mentioned that when her sister who was mentally disabled was old enough, she was able to get a job and stay there for many years. Her coworkers knew she was high functioning but could not speak. Her employer and coworkers treated her with respect. Always including people with disabilities in everyday activities and encouraging them to have roles similar to their peers who do not have a disability is disability inclusion. Since the Americans with Disabilities Act was enacted in 1990, many social barriers have been removed or reduced for people with disabilities. There is more work that needs to be done for people with disabilities to become more independent and involved in the world and workforce.

Conclusion

These were the questions I asked:

What are people's opinions of those with disabilities, including their work rights and abilities?

In your opinion, should a person with disabilities get equal rights in the workforce?

In your opinion, why should a person with disabilities have equal rights in the workforce?

In your opinion, do people with disabilities and their equal rights vary from race to race in and out the workforce?

This is what both women want people to understand:

A person with disabilities is still a person and deserves to have equal rights in and out the workforce. People who have disabilities range anywhere from high functioning with family, jobs, going to school and/or college, to people who are not so high functioning enough for taking care of a family or themselves without the help of someone.



They have seen many of the barriers and attitudes towards people with disabilities persist. They both say either they or other colleagues put an emphasis on making a person with disabilities feel comfortable and respected as a member of a diverse and productive workforce.

They have also seen many positive changes in and out the workforce for people with disabilities. Getting and having the right resources out there will help in making a difference. It will help not just for a person with a disability but also for those without a disability to gain a better understanding of a person who does have a disability. As we all know, there is still more work that needs to be done for people with disabilities.



THE USE OF PRAYER AS A COPING MECHANISM

EMILY BECKAM

Introduction

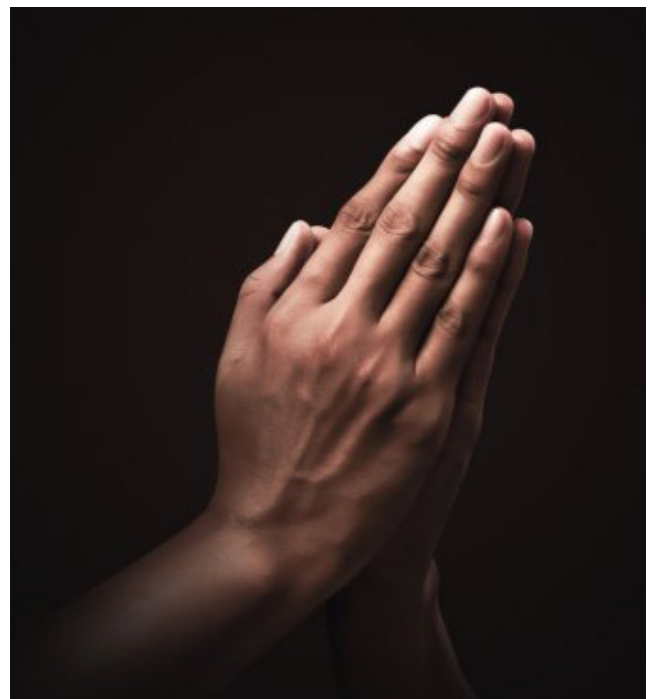
Worldwide anger seems to have increased. Overtime, is it due to the pandemic? Could it be related to the war in Ukraine or the fact that society was forced to separate from their life? We do not really know. However, I am more interested in the impact anger has on society and whether people of different ethnicities experience anger for varied reasons. I also will be highlighting how the use of emotional management strategies varies based on a person's social position (Sharp, Carr, Panger, 2016). In the study "Gender, race, and the use of prayer to manage anger," socially disadvantaged individuals are more likely to use prayer to manage anger. However, it is unclear why. I will seek to find answers to the pathway that may explain why women and blacks are more likely than men and whites to use prayer as a coping mechanism.

Literature

The article "Gender, race and the use of prayer to manage anger," (Sharp, Carr, Panger, 2016) argues that social stratification by gender and race influences an individual's emotional experiences. Women and blacks have a history of longstanding social economic and political inequalities in the United States. Previous writers suggest that women and blacks are more likely than men and whites to use prayer or interaction with divine others as a means of managing negative emotions, including those related to societal inequality (Sharp, Carr, Panger, 2016).

The article "Global Emotions Survey" discusses the book "Deaths of Despair and the Future of Capitalism," which highlights the findings that men and whites' death rates are at an all-time high due to alcohol poisoning, opioid overdoses, and suicide. The Gallup Polling Company did a survey of 160,000 people in 116 countries and found that stress, sadness, anger, and worry were not due solely to the pandemic but had been trending upward for over a decade. (Jack Kelly, 2021)

This quantitative evidence supports the understanding of why prayer in women and blacks is so important. It also highlights why men and whites could benefit by incorporating this emotional management style into their everyday lives. This quantitative data indicates the scope of the problem. In contrast, my study will explore the deeply personal experience of prayer, how prayer may impact one's anger level and how gender and race may play a role in the relationship between prayer and anger. In this way we may be able to explore how the use of prayer helps people feel less angry.



Data and Methods

To answer my research question, I interviewed a black woman that is the youngest of eight children whose mother was strict and belonged to an apostolic faith and who now goes to an Apostolic Pentecostal church (Lois). I also interviewed a white male who is a deacon at my church that retired from truck driving, the second oldest of five children, and a family-oriented person (Cal). These two individuals are from my church, they are married and have a great relationship. They gave their opinions from a black and white perspective. Their interview took place on Zoom, and they seemed amazingly comfortable with me wanting to interview them. The interview took about an hour as I took notes; I also recorded just in case I happened to forget something important.

I interviewed a white woman who is the oldest of four children. She has all brothers and works as a doctor in the clinic I work at. She was excited to allow me the chance to interview her. The interview took place at work in a quiet room so that there were no interruptions. Lastly, I interviewed a black man who was born and raised in Chicago, the second oldest of four children, the leader in his family and a deacon at Madison Pentecostal Assembly (Eric). The interview took place right at my dining room table. He seemed pretty interested in doing the interview.

In these interviews I conducted a more in-depth conversation regarding their reason for being angry, their history and how they manage emotional barriers, their role and social connection and how that affects their behavior in society. I chose these respondents because it is particularly interesting that they are from different ethnic backgrounds, and some are in a faith based church and other respondents are not. My questions will be based on the following:

Do you belong to a religious faith? If not, do you consider yourself spiritual in any way? Can you tell me a little bit about your faith or spirituality?

Can you remember the last time you were angry? What kind of things make you angry?

Do you feel prayer is important? Why or why not?

Do you feel your anger reflects the years of direct or subtle form of institutional and interpersonal discrimination? Why or why not?

Findings

Use of Prayer for Strength: One of my interviewees learned a lot about faith from her mother, who was strict. Lois followed her mother's upbringing and kept it going by joining an apostolic faith. Lois feels that historically black women have been the backbone of black culture. Lois states that "the women in the bible were strong and endured much." Cal uses prayer for different reasons. He believes prayer gave him strength to avoid drug abuse and helped him get through trials of life. Cal's use of prayer was as a soothing tool that he would turn to instead of drugs. Eric used prayer to help him stay strong and to keep him out of trouble. He states he would get into all kinds of trouble, but when he decided to turn his life around praying was his strength.

Finding the right faith: Eric found it hard to find a church home. He would visit different churches and found that none of the churches were real about their belief. He states it took him a long time to find

a church that preaches the truth, has real beliefs, and shows it. Cal went to several churches growing up and felt that they weren't quite "right." Cal had given up on church for a while until he visited Madison Pentecostal Assembly. Lois also had to find a church for her. She refused to go to a Catholic church because she remembered how it was growing up, when she was forced to go. Lois's faith was not based on what her family believed in, but she went back to Apostolic faith and that is what she believes is right for her.



Prayer Transforms People: Lois experiences some racism at her job. She states how a woman from work put her hand in her face and was being completely rude to her. She states "I immediately started praying." Lois was a woman with a very bad temper, and she states that if it was not for prayer, she would have lost it. She knew that was not the way to handle things so she did what she knew would help her with this lady: she prayed for the lady and her anger. Eric's anger comes from being disrespected and mistreated, with no accountability. Eric explains that sometimes you get so angry that you end up doing something you would not normally do, but he states he has to step back and pray and I God to release the anger that is building up inside him. He states that without prayer anger will overtake him. Cal states he prays for the people of the world. He hardly gets angry but when he does, he prays and it helps him.



Conclusion

My interviewees had a lot to say about the use of prayer to help manage anger. In my research I found that prayer is useful; it helps deal with everyday life, drug and alcohol abuse, anger and a bad temper just to name a few. It is clear that there is more research to help answer the question of why women and blacks use prayer more than men and whites. It is clear that not all people use prayer to manage anger but maybe they should. The data I received from my interviews is that prayer is used for a lot of different reasons. One of the main reasons is to keep from doing something you might regret later. My findings help me to answer my research questions and more. Men and whites could benefit by incorporating prayer into their everyday lives.



SOCIETY AND MAKEUP

SARINA BENFORD

Introduction

Society has always been fascinated with beauty. For as long as I can remember, associating beauty to me meant physical beauty. There was a point in time where makeup was worn and accepted among both men and women and was looked at as a sign of wealth. But as Americans detached themselves from the British and European traditions and evolved as its own country, makeup became a beauty trait among women more than men, then marketed to only women until recent cultural shifts and modern-day acceptance. Wearing makeup was something that I thought as a kid made women beautiful. How strange that at such a young age I was already used to the idea of makeup being a tool of beauty. In this article I am going to look in depth at the views American people hold about makeup, how it impacts our views on beauty standards for women, and how the media has impacted American beauty standards per makeup.

Research Questions

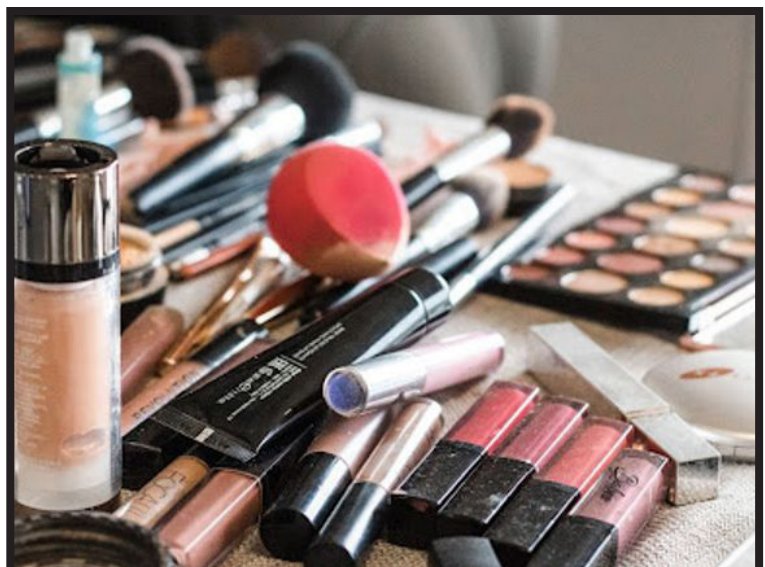
How do different cultures view women wearing makeup? How does the media play into wearing makeup? I am curious to see the difference in answers for a man versus a woman, and if they think makeup is a positive or a negative thing.

Literature Review

In the 2019 dissertation by Kelley Kelleyanne, *Societal Pressure and Makeup usage*, the author explores how pressure to conform to beauty standards can influence women's behavior, attitudes, and motivations. She collected data from 132 female college students from Texas. The data found evidence supporting the existence of three relationships. First, a weak relationship exists between the amount of pressure women feel to wear makeup and their use of it. Second, a strong relationship exists between the amount of pressure women feel to wear makeup and their attitudes towards themselves—with women experiencing more pressure having lower self-esteem. Finally, a weak relationship exists between the amount of pressure women feel to wear makeup and their reasons for using it. While this data helps associate the pressure between makeup and beauty standards, it does not show both men and women's views, as men can just as easily be affected by makeup standards. Additionally, it does not show how the media has affected the views on beauty standards with makeup.

Data and Methods

In order to answer my research question, I interviewed one white American man and one white American woman and asked them their views on makeup. The respondents are both in the same age range in their mid-30's





and know that the underlying question is about makeup, so before asking my questions I asked them to define beauty, as I am also interested in comparing my findings about Americans to the previous literature on makeup use in other countries. Both respondents generalized it to be related to physical traits, which will lead me to discuss if media creates that perception for Americans. I asked about their perceptions regarding their definition of beauty, how they think the media affects the ways makeup is marketed, if cultural background has an impact on their views on makeup use, and whether they think makeup is a good thing or a bad thing. This approach helped

me identify similarities across genders and between people who view wearing makeup as a standard of physical beauty. Each interview was 45 minutes long and was recorded and went in depth with qualitative research questions for both people.

Findings

First, I interviewed an American woman whom we can name KT. She is a white, 34-year-old student teacher. I first asked KT what she felt defined beauty, and a list of physical traits were given. When asked how she feels about the topic of beauty and makeup she goes back and forth on it. She doesn't wear makeup often, and now with masks you can get away without having to wear it as often. Makeup is fun to use as an art, she says: "it as an aesthetically appealing tool." KT goes on to say she sees American culture versus other countries' cultures, the difference in perception of what beauty should be and there is a big difference she thinks between European makeup and what we do in America. It is more accepted, KT thinks, in other countries to not wear as much makeup and to have natural beauty. I asked KT her thoughts on self-esteem with makeup and social media. She says filters in apps and on the internet/magazines warp what we see. In American culture it is so heavily used, and she remembers seeing an airbrushed and untouched photo of Vivica A Fox and realizing how much editing is used. KT then went on to say that the media is playing a huge part in encouraging girls to use specific toys and items, makeup being one of them. KT remembers as a child being able to buy those little makeup sets and "caboodles" showing that makeup is targeted specifically towards women and at a young age. She also remembers her mom not knowing how to use makeup that well and so she taught her younger sister how to use make up as well. In all, after asking KT if she felt makeup was a good thing or a bad thing, she said:

"If you can view your body and face as a canvas and that you are simply creating art or enhancing beauty already there, then it can be a good thing. Makeup in and of itself is not a bad thing. The problem with makeup is that it is used as a tool to make people feel bad about themselves."

My second interview was with an American man who we can note as RL. He is a white 34-year-old machinist. When I asked RL what he thought defined beauty he went on to explain that he feels the definition of beauty is a forced perception based on our society influencing it. With saying that, RL defines long hair, big bust size, tiny waist, big butts, that gets "pushed onto women." His definition of beauty is more than just looks: intelligence and work ethic makes women beautiful. However, physical looks weigh in on his definition. It can also create catfishing in dating situations because of men being unaware of how much makeup is affecting a woman's appearance. I also asked RL his views on self-

esteem with makeup and social media. He said that America only cares about money and companies push their ads and products, programming us from a young age to think that is what you need to do to look pretty. RT then goes on to say, "I guarantee that in Europe the ads and demand for the standard of beauty is lesser and the relevance of ads and headlines are probably not as showcased... Our entire perception is warped into whatever the media wants us to view it as." At the end of the interview, I asked if RL thought makeup was a good thing or a bad thing, he answered with:

"As a whole, no it is a bad thing. I would say 80 percent bad 20 percent good. It can be used for good ways to boost self-esteem like if someone is going through chemo. But its where do you draw that line, it's to boost one's self esteem, but then it turns into this vicious cycle where your self-esteem seems to be lowered if you aren't wearing it every day."

When comparing the interviews, I noticed the same underlining common ground that physical traits defined beauty to them, also finding that American culture seems to have more of a harsher effect on the views of beauty standards to them. As Americans they view Europe having a more natural approach on makeup standards and both said that it is more accepted to not have makeup in other countries the way we do in America. It also showed me their views on how the media plays into makeup and how people view the standard of beauty. Both interviews highlighted the media having such a strong effect on our perception on makeup and how society's standard of beauty is set based on the media.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the beauty definition that I had grown up with and remembered being that of physical traits was not just myself. It seems a trend that has been passed down through generations. For example: my female interviewee taught her younger sister how to use makeup because although her mother did not know how to use it, she felt it necessary to have her daughters to learn it. The media allows you to



see a view on what beauty looks like and what you should also see it as. It also sets a societal pressure to buy into and wear makeup. The responses I received between the male and female interviews were very similar. This is even further evidence of the media's influence on makeup use: it affects men's and women's preferences in similar ways. It creates this false idea that wearing makeup makes you more beautiful than wearing none. I hope that someday wearing makeup doesn't define beauty and that physical beauty is not the definition of a beauty standard.



THE RACIAL DIVIDE OF OUR FOOD SYSTEMS

CHAR BRAXTON

Introduction

Organic food is false advertisement. The word organic can mean different things based on your geographic location, income, and race. The history of our food system is based on generations that worked the land of this Earth. My grandmother moved to Wisconsin in the 1940s and lived off the land by creating a garden to provide food for her family and other people in the community. She planted healthy food that would be labelled organic if grocery shopping in a store today. She used natural remedies from her house to eliminate pests from her garden, such as pepper flakes mixed in water. Then TV dinners and McDonald's were introduced to the American household as a nutritional, fast and affordable way to put dinner on the table for a family meal. With this major shift in food marketing, a lot of people of color changed from growing their own food to buying fast and prepackaged food. The result of this shift has created a further gap in access to quality food between the socio-economic classes and changed the meaning of what is organic. Today, organic food is marketed towards the Caucasian household that is usually upper to middle class. In my opinion this type of behavior has added to a further racial divide in our food systems.

Research Question(s):

My research paper will address some of the issues of food inequalities by asking "How has organic food created a racial divide between socio-economic classes and contributes to disparities in our food systems?"

Literature Review

In his article, "From Food Desert to Food Mirage: Race, Social Class, and Food shopping in a Gentrifying Neighborhood," Daniel Monroe Sullivan (2014) describes a case of the Alberta neighborhood in Portland, Oregon. When a new upscale supermarket that sold organic food entered a food desert, the college educated white residents benefited more than the other residents. This research paper adds more evidence to the racial divide and agrees with the previous research I have read (Lin 1995, Dettman & Dimitri 2009, Slocum 2007). What is interesting about this article is



that the education of the residents matters more than whether they own or rent their homes. This is surprising because you might think that home ownership is an indication of wealth, which would matter more than education. However, this article has found that people without a college education are not frequent customers of the store. The author suggests that further research should include income levels in the data. The introductory paragraph talks about how food deserts are detrimental for people that live in poor and minority neighborhoods because according to the author, the food has “limited availability, lower quality and higher prices of fruit, vegetables and other healthful foods.”

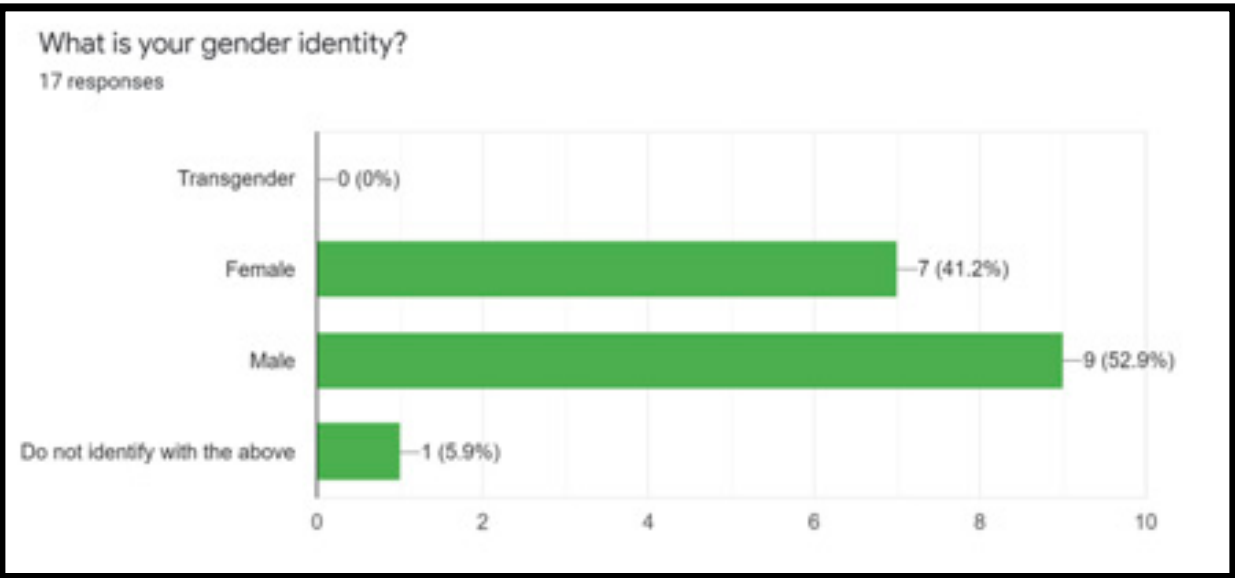
This topic is particularly important to me because healthy food should be available to all people regardless of race or social class. My paper will address the cultural differences of what is considered “healthy” which Sullivan’s paper did not address.

Data and Methods

In order to collect data for my research question, I created an anonymous food survey

questionnaire. The questionnaire was given to staff and students at Madison College South and the UW Odyssey Project. They were able to access the questionnaire through a flyer that I created with a scan code. In total they were 17 responses with 7 females and 9 men and one person who did not identify with either gender.

Figure 1



Results and Findings

In response to the open-ended question, “What is your definition of healthy food?” most people agreed that vegetables and fruit are healthy foods, while sugary foods, fried, and fatty food were not. For example, one respondent said, “Naturally grown food with no additives or chemicals to augment the shape, taste, or color of the food.” While another respondent said, “Non-fried, fatty, oily food. Additionally, only healthy levels of sugar and similar ingredients. As long as you eat in moderation anything is fine. For example. brownies and ice cream are fine to eat as long as you have it in moderation.”

As Figure 2 shows most of the respondents agreed that it was important to find healthy food.

Figure 2

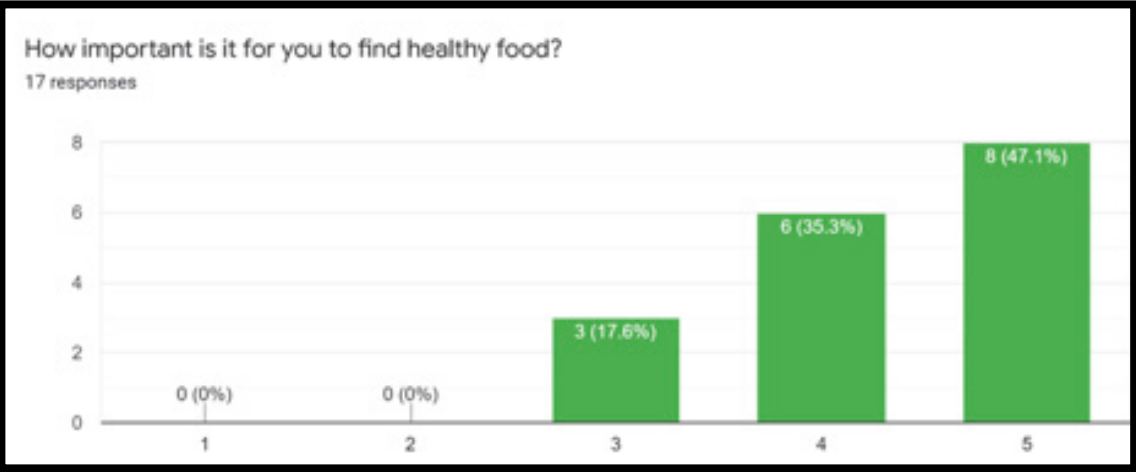
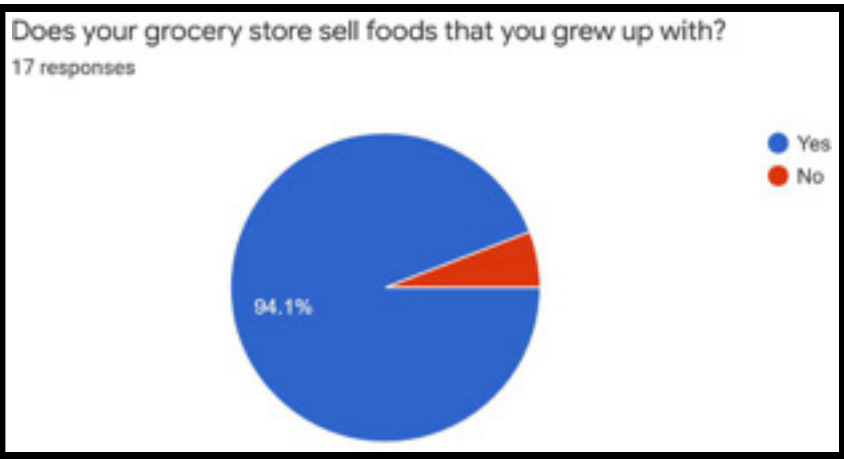
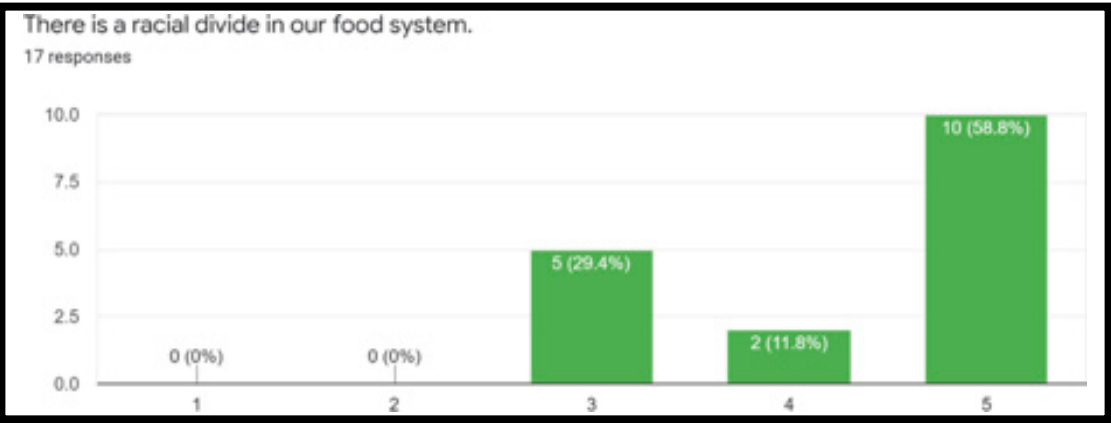


Figure 3



In Figure 3 the chart shows that approximately 100% of the respondents answered that their grocery sold foods that they grew up with.

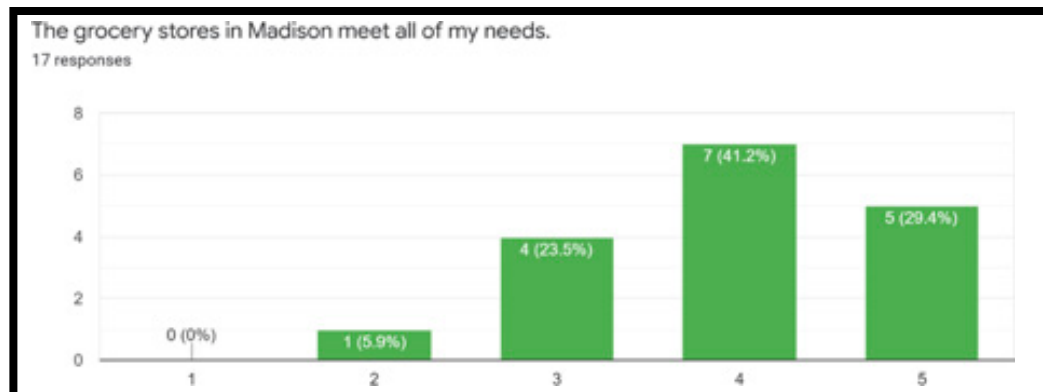
Figure 4



In Figure 4 the range of the respondents started with neither agreeing or disagreeing to strongly agreeing regarding the question of a racial divide in our food system. As shown below, more than half the respondents agreed there is a racial divide.

In Figure 5 the respondents gave a wider range of answers to the question does the grocery stores meeting their needs as seen in the chart below. Most people either agreed or strongly agreed that the Madison stores met all of their needs.

Figure 5



Discussion

What I find interesting is that people felt there is a racial divide in our food system, but on the other hand the food survey (Figure 3) findings showed that their grocery store met all of their needs. It is possible that people feel that the racial divide is not impacting them, but other people in society. Future research should address the causes and various ways to measure the racial divide. But despite these limitations, this study still shows that people are aware of injustices surrounding our food systems and want change.

Note from the author: Char Braxton is a 2005-06 UW-Odyssey Program graduate and a staff member. Even though a high school counselor told her that she was not college material, she has completed a Chinese language course, nominated, and awarded “Exemplary Learner” 2020 and inducted into Phi Theta Kappa, March 2020. The spring 2021 issue of ‘On Wisconsin’ published her story and life journey. She is committed to education, volunteering in the Madison community, and guiding other as they coordinate their educational goals.

I took this class to satisfy the requirements for the Liberal Arts degree and to investigate how a college sociology course is portraying some aspects of what I live and experience daily when it comes to racism, social issues, and life.

References

- Dettman, R. L., & Dimitri, C. (2010). Full article: Who’s Buying Organic Vegetables? Demographic Characteristics of U.S. Consumers. *Journal of Food Product Marketing*, 16(1), 79–91.
- Slocum, R. (2007). Whiteness, space and alternative food practice. *Geoforum*, 38(3), 520–533. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2006.10.006>
- Sullivan, D. M. (2014). From Food Desert to Food Mirage: Race, Social Class, and Food Shopping. *Advances in Applied Sociology*, 4(1), 30–35.



WHAT ARE THE POSITIVE & NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE AMONGST TEENAGERS?

TISHA BUTLER

Introduction

Social media is a large part of my teenagers' lives. Since the pandemic, social media usage has increased around my house. My research interest is in how social media positively and negatively impacts children. This motivated me to look more into this for class. When thinking about social media with adolescents, I only thought of the negative effects. With this project I am looking to get a better understanding of both the positive and negative effects of social media on my children.

Research Question

What Are the Positive & Negative Aspects of Social Media Usage Amongst Teenagers? This question is very important for me to answer as a parent to teenagers. I am so shocked about the results.

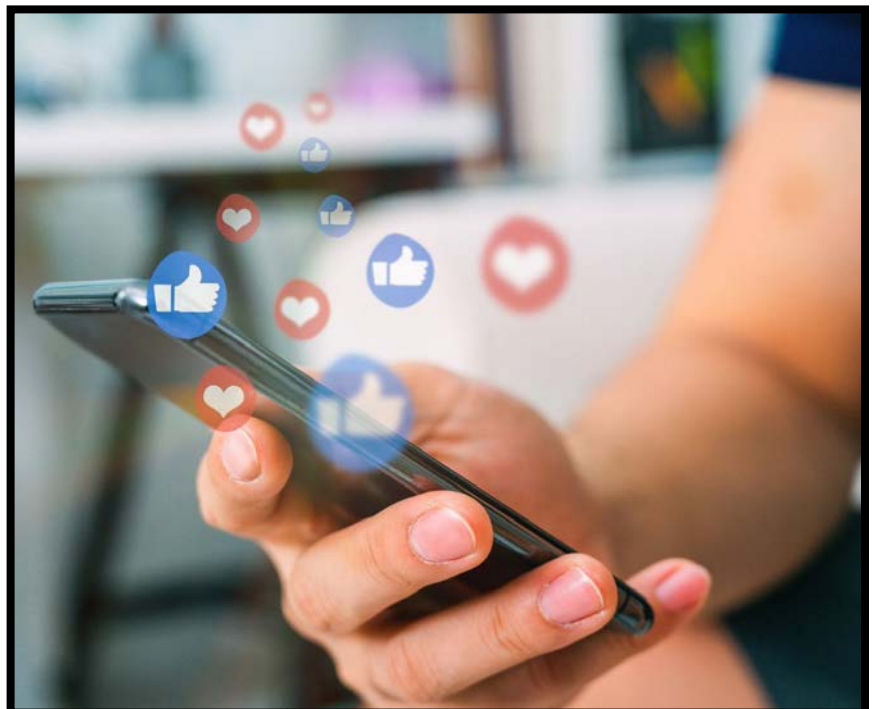
Literature Review

According to the Pew Research Center, YouTube, Instagram and Snapchat are the most popular online platforms among teens. Fully 95% of teens have access to a smartphone, and 45% say they are online 'almost constantly'. I learned by reading this article that Facebook is not the go to platform for social media anymore. This was really a surprise to me. The part that is most relative to my question is Section 1: "Teens & Their Experience on social media." The section mostly divided their research up between older teenagers (15-17 years old) & younger teenagers (13-14 years old) & gender.

The argument was that social media has more positive effects according to teenagers. For example, they interact with people from different backgrounds & experience, and find different points of view. Over 50% of teens say social media makes them feel more included (71%), confident (69%), authentic (64%) and outgoing (61%). However, at least 25% of teens say social media makes them overwhelmed because of all the drama.

Data and Methods

I expect that my hypothesis was that social media has a negative effect on teenagers. After reading this article, the teenagers feel it is overall more positive than negative. This section will make me re-evaluate my approach.



In order to answer my research question, I conducted interviews with 6 teenagers and 4 adults. The teenagers' respondents were my 2 kids, niece, nephew and two of my kids' friends. The adults' respondents were my aunt, 2 parents of my kids' friend and my best friend. I will ask the teenagers questions about their age and gender. I will ask the parents questions about what they observed since their kids joined social media. Here are some questions I will be asking:

Kids

What do you like about social media?
What social media site do you have accounts with?
How many hours do you spend on social media a day?
What do you dislike about social media?
What is positive/negative about having a social media?
How do you online peers make you feel?

Parent

Do you use social media?
Do you have rules in house for social media use?
How many hours do you spend on social media a day?
Do you follow the rules?

Findings

It was so surprising that all the teenagers were so willing to do the interview with me. I did three interviews on facetime with the teenagers. Two of the kids were in their bedroom and one was in the car with their parent. I also did two face to face interviews and one over the phone. It was so surprising that all the teenagers said they only get on social media because they are bored. Only one has Facebook, all have Instagram and Snapchat, five have TikTok and three have YouTube. They all spend between 6-12 hours on social media sites. They all say it is a distraction and messy but very addictive. The positive things about it are it is very innovative, and they see and experience a lot of new things. The peers do not have effects on either one of them. All the parents' interviews were done via facetime. One was done in the car and the other one's parent was home. All parents have social media and the site of choice is Facebook. One parent stated that their child can not be on social media more than 6 hours a day. The rest of the parents stated they do not have rules within their household. All the parents stated they are on social media between 3-6 hours.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I was so shocked with the teenagers' results. The positive effects of social media usage that my kids have was they had better social skills, felt less isolated, bonded with their friends, and learned about events locally and worldwide. The risks of using social media are online bullying, spending too much time online & disconnected from the real world, and having reduced self-esteem. Before I did my research, I had it in my mind the social media with teenagers was nothing but negative. All the teenagers are on social media because they are bored. The next step we should take as parents is finding and/or creating programs to keep the teenager busy.



TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE VS NEW AGE MARRIAGE

NAFISA "NIFTY" DAVIS

Marriage is such an important institution giving us rights and privileges to pursue what life has to offer, but I found that the dynamics or moral compass of it has changed drastically with the coming of the new age of young adults in this millennia.

I felt this was important to write about because I have found the belief system (morals and values) of marriage had changed and it's bringing in a whole new look at how marriage is in the mindset of many in today's age. I wanted to share my finding as now I am understanding it, because it's affecting me and my own marriage, and how we see our commitment to each other when we said our vows.

So, let's get to it, shall we?

Research Questions

My questions were kind of broad just because I wanted to look for differences between the ages of the women I asked to take my small questionnaire and I wanted them to feel comfortable answering those questions without them feeling they were speaking too intimately about their marriage. These are the following questions asked of 6 women including myself of the (OLDER LADIES, 3) and (3 YOUNGER LADIES) ages: 74, 85, and 60; and 35, 28, and 42:

1. Name and Age= Monae h. 28, Destiny W. 35, and Shay G. 42, Linda H. 74, Barb L 85, and me Bridgette M. 60.
2. When did you get married?
3. Where (state and city or Town)?
4. What there a reason other than love you got married when you did?
5. In today's era of women, do you think there are some other things you might have thought of before you got married when you did?
6. If divorced, why do you think it happened?





Literature Review

I really had to go first and see if there were any articles written on my particular research on marriage and the new vs the old way of thinking on this matter, and I did find several articles which shocked me. There were others thinking my mindset, but there was one that stood out for me, and it was entitled, "21st Century Marriage, Now What They Used To Be" published by PsychCentral on November 11th, 2015.

What I discovered is that the new age women, especially from 24-years-old and up, their views are much different than those from older women. Dr. Shelly Lundberg and economist Robert Pollark used economic measuring tools

to come to the conclusion that those women who became educated and had careers sought to have a partner with the same or better qualifications in life and goals so they can build a future for their children vs themselves, but the uneducated women married for economic status and not of much anything else, and many of those marriages failed and became single-parented households due to not really being compatible mates in the long haul of marriage.

I further believe that they have opened such an array of opportunities to women of this new age; I think they just see beyond what women could back in time.

Data and Method

I asked the women over dinner while we talked about the questions of marriage and just took it on as a group, like having the elders speak to the youngsters on the marriage game. As we were at the table, I began with the statement to set a tone, "Are the values of marriage really changing with the younger women?" Ms. Linda said, "Why, sure, they are, women now can get what they want without a man."

Ms. Destiny then stated, "We have evolved so much in the last 40 years and we now have a voice, where in your era, Ms. Linda, there were no options for women, no voice for us." Ms. Monae chimed in with, "We were slaves to men." I am glad I was not back in that time; I think I would be dead because I have a big mouth and I will speak my mind on things that are not right. I said, "I believe if it wasn't for knowledge, I wouldn't know I had a voice in anything pertaining to what I want or don't want in my life." Ms. Barb finally said, "You youngin's really don't know the gift God has blessed you with, my papa gave me to one of his friends to marry for farming equipment and my ma couldn't say nothing. He was older, but I did learn to love him. I didn't get to finish school, but I loved when he took me to the picture show on the weekends for a nickel and we'd see a movie with Carey Grant (who I loved), and he sang with Grace Moore in a movie called 'When You're in Love.' I knew then, I wanted to be a singer, but the only place I could sing was in the church choir and my home on Christmas. You ladies are blessed."

Then she ate some more food shaking her head, loving the catfish, potato salad, and spaghetti I had fixed. I asked my other questions, and just like my article said, the most knowledge it seemed the ladies had, made them desire something different from a mate for marriage. All said, “if they knew more before they married,” they may have asked for or looked for different things in their mates, but only one regretted marrying the person they did, and that was me. I saw all the signs but I didn’t listen, and I feel it was too much physical attachments and not enough of logical thinking. We had a great time listening and gathering wisdom from each other. I was glad just to hear from other women on the subject, it made it a great night!

Finding

What I found in researching and from my ladies was that being knowledgeable on the rights or opportunities women have access to gave them so many advantages to get what they desire in choosing mates and the direction they wanted their families to go in (meaning what they desire for their children). One theme that resonated in all of us and my researching was that education played the key factor in every situation in the marriages: the more they knew of self and their worth, the



more they wanted the same or better from a mate. The other I saw was that the younger women were raised in the urban areas, where the older women were from rural areas, and education wasn’t a priority in their era, but being pretty and basic household values were (including caring for children). I enjoyed learning how marriage is changing with time, so women can have a say in what we believe and can bring us to that pursuit of happiness feeling.

Conclusion

I must say, I had a motive to making this my topic. I have been going through a messy separation and divorce, and I wasn’t understanding how the dynamics or values in my marriage were changing, and I found that it had changed with knowledge of myself and my worth. It changed how I was hearing the demands of my husband weren’t things that included my thoughts or opinions but only his, to the point he found other women more to his pallet.

I, on the other hand, though hurting from this, I also found a new love, and it is me. I found me and my worth, I found my voice and I made boundaries for the first time in my life, and it feels good. Yes, how women see marriage is changing, because for the very first time, many of us now really can see ourselves and what we desire in it THAT: “AND IT FEELS REAL GOOD.”

Thank you.



ONLINE DATING FROM THE MAN'S PERSPECTIVE & FROM THE WOMAN'S PERSPECTIVE

SARAH MANDELA GALINSKI

The importance of this topic is to reaffirm to people that you can find “true love” by online dating...NOT! My research has proven that online dating is not only difficult, but very time consuming. I have chosen this topic to write about because I am currently online dating. To say the least, I am having fun dating online.

In terms of general online dating, you have your basic DO's and DON'Ts. For instance, you DO fill out your bio, so people can briefly read about your likes/dislikes. Some DON'Ts I have found out upon researching this topic are, DO NOT post old photos of yourself or filtered pictures. A few reasons why you wouldn't utilize a filtered picture as a photo in your online bio is the simple fact that that's not what you look like in real life (face-to-face).

Let's get this HUGE question answered: How do men and or women make a decision about potential partners in the online dating world?

I chose this question because there are many young adults and older folks seeking lifelong partnership. According to healthyframework.com, over 5 million Wisconsinites are looking for that special someone. 49% of women are single and 48% of men are single. Hmmmmmm, where they at!!! You might say, welp this article lets us know that they are online looking for YOU. Lol if you are also single, like myself, and seeking lifelong partnership. Anyhow, interestingly enough this article states that 80% of households have internet access; the article's quoted source is Census.gov. This article is so groovy and helpful they even gave great tips on how to start online dating in Wisconsin. I really enjoyed this article, Healthy Framework.

To back up and further support my question, I read an article titled, “Online Dating: Aim High, Keep It Brief, and Be Patient.” This article is from BBC News, so it's from a very reliable and known source. I love the fact that this article mentions both men and women inbox the potential partner with SHORT but DIRECT messages. Also mentioned, the potential partner whom they DM'd would sometimes if not the majority of the time be out of their league...hence the quote, “Aim High.” This article actually made me reexamine the process and steps I have been taking in my online dating journey to finding my lifelong partner. Am I not aiming high enough, is what I ask myself now. I also read that over 270 million people use dating apps worldwide. That's a lot! Over 39% of couples reported to have met online and still have a sustaining healthy relationship. Those numbers are also very staggering and POSITIVE. A few questions that popped into my head after reading these stats: When online dating, how much of one's profile



is true? How would online daters decide how much to divulge and how soon to spill it in a DM or a Bio? These may be dealbreakers because it could help decide whether the individual has admirable qualities or not...UPFRONT! My finding after reading this article is there was no mention of in person raw data, ie face-to-face interviews. This is where my data collected comes in to support; from conducting in person interviews to observing someone scrolling and seeking a potential partner online.

When I started this research paper, I for sure thought I had it all in the bag...NOT! So, I initially wanted to go about gathering information via observation and one interview. To my pleasant discovery the observation route was a no-go. Upon observing this individual in the comfort of their own home for not even an hour, I realized that their approach to online dating was EXTREMELY passive and nonchalantly quick. When scrolling there wasn't any pausing, just aimlessly scrolling with a giggle here and there. But, for the most part there was no in-depth engagement! First, they are in the comforts of their own home. Second, they are dressed in relaxed pajamas. Third, the atmosphere was a mood of freeing delight, candles lite, I'm their company, they were drinking water...etc. All I am stating is the fact that I observed this individual and from what I saw and heard and felt was the fact that they were not serious or focused on finding or seeking a potential lifelong partner...from my observation of all 60 minutes.

I began my observation and note taking unbeknownst to them (so that they were comfortable and barely even noticed me staring and onlooking as I took notice of their body expressions, face reactions and mood changes, which were many. Now typing this research paper, I wish I would've maybe asked a question or two. Maybe mentioned some general questions about myself and online dating...some steps and process. Maybe then my observation method may have been more revealing.

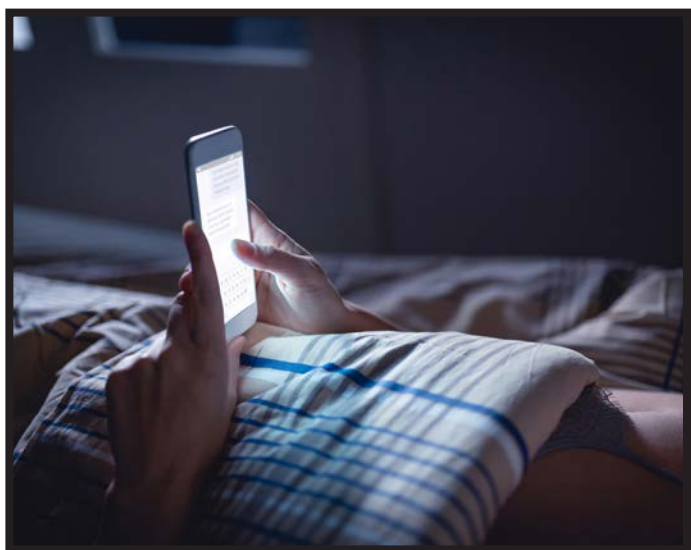
How serious is online dating to men and/or women who are seeking a life-long partner/mate?

After I went over my notes from the observation, I concluded that I needed to draw "RAW" data from in-person, face-to-face interviews from both men and women. The feedback that I received from the in-person interviews had me in a spin because they were a complete 180 degrees of a difference from the observation. This is a really interesting and important point! Even though it LOOKS like they're not putting thought into it, they really are. They're just fast and know what they want! In this instance I only observed a woman doing this rapid scrolling. Looking back I wish I would've observed both a man and woman to have great data to compare with. When scrolling there are a few things that stand out, like is there a photo present, appearance of the image in the photo, brief bio with catchy words or what mood

are you in when you begin your search. First, I interviewed a young 30+ year old woman in her living room. Then I interviewed a young 40+ year old man in his dining room.

Passing Time by Online Dating: Both these interviewees are passionate about online dating. They took their time in scrolling through the profiles of individuals.

Direct Messaging and Game playing: Both interviewees responded to direct messages and also both mentioned giving out their REAL phone number. When I received the information about giving out of real phone numbers, I interjected



and wanted to know more...Why? Interviewee B stated "If the vibes are right, I give out my real digits. I don't play games." This really shocked me and I snickered a little, just the way he said it, I believe. I was shocked by this because he is a very handsome young man and I assumed he would have many ladies coming at him, online and off line...so one way to regulate that is with an alternate way to communicate i.e., messaging vs giving out your real phone number immediately because an individual asked for it. Interviewee A stated "If he has the balls to ask me for my phone number, imma give it to him. I don't want to play games."

In conclusion, online dating from the man's point of view and the woman's viewpoint is very similar. Men and women both bring their BEST selves into the online dating space, in hopes of finding that special someone. My personal experience with online dating is that it is fun and time consuming. If you aren't serious about finding someone special, my advice is don't online date...from the interviews I had both interviewees were serious about finding that special someone. There has to be COMMUNICATION. For the most part, EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION by both interested parties...no game playing. I really enjoyed this research topic and my hope is that everyone would find their special person, online and/or in person. Life is short, have fun and enjoy the good and bad times. Let's WIN! Let's GROW! TOGETHER!



TALKING WHITE JEANA GALLOWAY

I would like to start my article off by talking about a few things that I think are pretty important related to my topic. My research question is why do people tell black people they talk white? Why is it a negative thing to speak properly and enunciate your words? I believe it's important to bring attention to because it is something that I have firsthand experience with and I've come across a lot of black people that this has also happened to. It is something that still goes on in the black community, and it's another way to separate us from each other. It doesn't feel good when people of your own race question your blackness purely based upon the way you speak.

I always thought maybe this goes on more with children than it does with adults but I have come to find out in my research that it also happens to adults. When these adults are commenting on the speech pattern of the black person, I don't think they are taking into consideration where the person has grown up and who they have grown up around. It seems that it would be a no brainer that you pick up the accent from the people that you grow up around but it doesn't matter where you grow up or where you are from, if you're Black people expect you to use (AAVE) African American Vernacular English. If you deviate from that norm then you are looked at as a different kind of Black person, maybe a little less Black than everyone else. That can cause depression and loneliness to certain individuals, and the Black community needs to figure out ways of coming together not separating ourselves more. We have a very negative reputation everywhere in the world. There are countries where we know we will not be welcome and people assume the worst in us, so a lot of us were raised to be extra careful in the way we carry ourselves in public and the way we speak. Code switching is a great example of that.

There's an article I found in the Slate magazine about a Black girl's experience with this...She calls out that stereotype that Black people have a disdain for speaking proper and getting an education...she says it is not talking white it is speaking your language fluently. It is not a deviation from your Black identity. That line really speaks to me because it reaffirms that it is ok to be Black and not use AAVE. My accent does not make my Blackness (For lack of a better word). The article also talks about that kids as young as third

graders were already linking speech patterns to race and intelligence. If you sound white then you can be teased or bullied by the other kids so they made sure to try to avoid that. I was searching for the reason that it's like that in the Black community, why over achieving is seen as acting white. We can be smart and be black. The article says that some black students that were in Honors courses felt isolated because they were the only Black kids in the class. I don't know if we will ever get to the point where we don't judge black people that have a different accent as acting white or taking away their blackness.

As I was trying to figure out the answers to my research question I came across a lot of short and right to the point videos where people were talking about a certain

experience where they were linked to acting white and how it made them feel. It felt like a few of the videos were meant to nicely educate your white friends on things not to say to black people that they may have thought were nice but it turns out that it's actually a backhanded compliment. I don't think unity between Blacks and Whites will ever happen. We have had all this time since abolishing slavery to figure out ways to just all be Americans but it doesn't work because there will always be people trying to promote separation and equating Black people with negative.

A few themes that I came up with are kind of related to what I just mentioned in the above paragraphs that black equals bad and white equals good; for example, if a child is in class and they are being disruptive and talking back to the teacher, that could be considered acting black, but if a child is trying to do their work and respect the teacher and go out of their way to be good in class, they could be considered acting white. These stereotypes are so harmful for our community because children internalize these things and fall right into the example that is set before them. So, if they see someone getting bullied for speaking proper and getting their assignments in then that child doesn't want to get bullied so they don't get their schoolwork done because they don't want to look different from their peers. I think a big problem with this is not showing these kids real life examples of black people that do good things for our society; they mainly get shown negative things. For instance, take a young black boy and ask him what he wants to be when he grows up and mainly, they think sports or rapper. Chances are they aren't going to be those two things so they need to have something to fall back on, but society is showing them mainly rich black men are into sports or entertainment. I don't know what it's going to take for us to better ourselves as a community and better our children and not judge each other in a bad way based on our performance at school and then end up being considered an under achiever. The media is responsible for a lot of the bleak portrayal of Black people. I remember us reading an article in class about what the Kansas City Newspaper had done in their biased reporting.



We need more productive and favorable images of ourselves to be shown so that these kids know they can grow up and make something of themselves. There used to be something called the American dream where you would go to college, get married, get a house, have kids, get pets, and retire. It sounds great but I don't know if that is the dream anymore. We have to have hope that maybe we can get better as the years go on. I'm pessimistic, though, on a personal level.

So overall what I have learned from doing this research paper is that not much has changed since I was a child or throughout the years for other black people; a lot of our experiences are the same. What I wanted to find out is that why in the Black community is over achieving and speaking properly considered bad or something to be mocked. I have come to the conclusion that it stemmed from way back to slavery days when Blacks and Whites were true enemies. We wanted nothing to do with the other so I can understand it a little bit, but I can also see it the other way too. Why not try to assimilate into the world of the White people? They have structured a whole society around themselves and they are used to having the best of everything and we know that we deserve that as well. So, I would almost think that being able to code switch into their world and kind of be accepted to a certain extent and that that would be seen as a benefit, but maybe it was back then. It is a topic that will forever continue to come up in my life and other Black people that speak like myself. We just have to instill values and morals into our kids and encourage them to do well in academics and go the extra mile in school. The problem isn't that Black kids are dumber; it's the way things are presented to them and the other stuff going on around them to get distracted by. Other cultures push education onto their kids and it's very important to them. I don't want my culture to be seen always as the reckless and uneducated people. It's very hurtful to hear other races describe Black people because it's usually not good.



I hope we can learn to get away from this seeing as it is isolating and painful to other human beings. Our identity is formed in many different ways and it may be linked to our accent. That's fine, but sometimes it isn't and that's also fine. The crazy thing to me is that White people don't mind if you talk white and they aren't the ones that make fun of you for the way you talk; it just feels natural... So now it's only fitting that I share the nicest compliment that I've gotten related to the way I speak. I will never forget and this was so random. It was a Black guy named Darryl from Florida. He was performing at the Overture Center with Drumline and I said something. He said, "your accent...is it indigenous to this landscape?" I think he actually understood right off the bat that Black people can speak in many different accents and tones depending also on where we were brought. We are still Black.



MENTAL ILLNESS AMONG PEOPLE OF COLOR AND THE TABOO OF IT

ERICA GARCIA

Introduction

Mental illness has been a huge problem among people of color of all generations, especially since the beginning of the pandemic. It's been extremely hard for people to seek help for many reasons. One of those reasons is that POC have a hard time connecting to therapists/psychiatrists because most of them are white and a big majority of them are males. They can never truly understand how POC are feeling or have a deep understanding of what they've been through in life. There are some therapists/psychiatrists that are of color but not as many compared to their white counterparts. This makes it hard for POC to have access to. Another reason it is hard for POC to seek help for their mental health issues is because it's been a taboo for generations among a lot of cultures especially for the older generations, who were in fact taught that nothing was wrong with them. They would say "it's all in your head," yet the younger generations are now trying to break that stigma, which is not an easy task. I myself, as a woman of color, have struggled all my life with mental health issues and still do till this day as many of my fellow millennials whose parents or grandparents have all taught us on some levels that mental health issues are taboo.

For this reason, my research asks the following questions: Why is it taboo among people of color to acknowledge and or seek help for mental illness? Why aren't there more people of color as therapists/psychiatrists? Why is it easier for the younger generation to seek help than it is for the older generation?

Literature View

As they mentioned in their study, it's been pointed out that there needs to be a more culturally sensitive mental health intervention. It was shown that the patients did prefer someone that they could connect with but were not treated in the appropriate way. Therefore, the patients were not satisfied with their treatments. This proved that without more POC therapist/psychiatrist patients of color are less likely to seek help, which is where my research comes in. I will include the differences between the older generation and younger generation of POC who also refuse or can't find the help they need because we do in fact need a therapist / psychiatrist that we can connect with on a deeper level to get the real help that POC deserves.



Research Question(s)

My working question is: Why is it taboo among people of color to acknowledge and or seek help for mental illness? Why aren't there more people of color as therapists/psychiatrists? Why is it easier for the younger generation to seek help than it is for the older generation?

Data and Methods

I was able to talk to a professional and a client to get both sides of views and opinions for my questions. I

interviewed both parties over the phone. The lady I interviewed as a professional had been working in her field for years and would like to stay anonymous. The client I interviewed had been dealing with depression and anxiety for most of her life. She is 34 years old, single, never married or had kids. She is a Mexican immigrant.



Findings

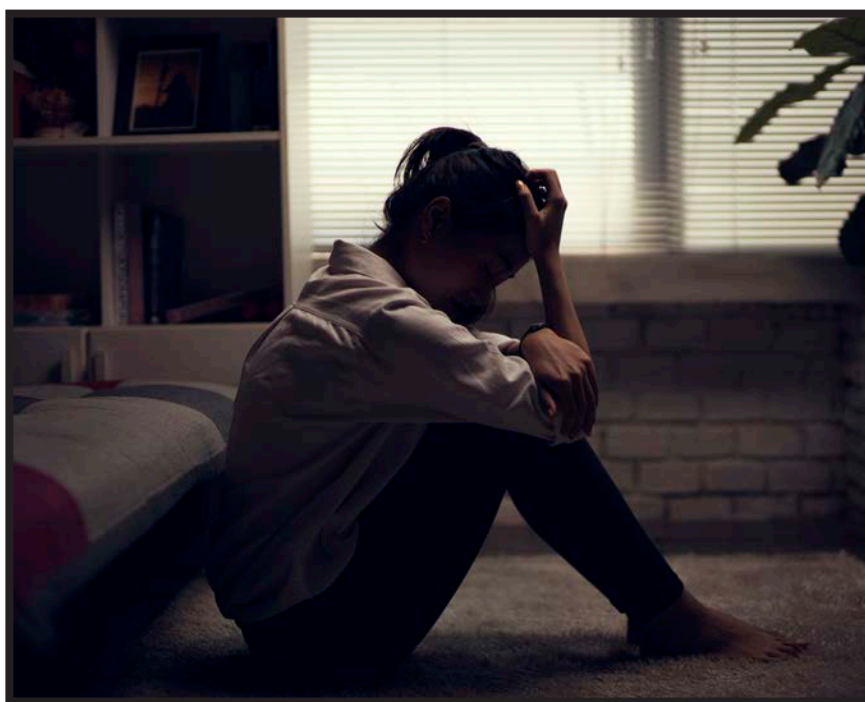
The professional had mentioned that the reason most older POC don't seek help for mental illness is because "The older generation was institutionalized like schizophrenics or bipolar back in the day but in the 80's we couldn't keep people housed up anymore so a lot of people were released." So the younger generations now have more freedom because people aren't as traumatized like the older generations. A lot of places also over medicated patients back in the old days. Another cause of stigma amongst people of color is that most of them are religious. They also thought well "our ancestors were strong people and we need to be like that." They also feel like it's another strike against us because of our skin color. As for seeking help it can be hard because if they don't understand our culture or background then it can make it complicated to connect. So we don't have realistic expectations and it's more of a challenge for us. If POC can't or don't get support from their family or from their community it makes it hard to seek help.

From her experience she said there really aren't enough POC therapists or psychiatrists which makes it hard for POC to make a connection with them. She feels this is due to the social status which makes it harder for POC to get the support and resources they would need to further their educational background so they could go into the mental health fields. She also mentioned that "it's ok for white therapists to try to connect but they can't if they've never experienced what POC have experienced in real life." She mentioned that every immigrant that has mental illness has gone through a lot of trauma, for example refugees or latinx's going through Mexico can also experience trauma. When

you mix trauma and mental illness, for some people it can be overwhelming; there are people who have similar experiences but different reactions. This is why therapists/psychiatrists need to build rapport with clients, not just read off of the charts. Clients need to be able to trust the people who are supposed to help them, and POC have a hard time trusting and that's been ingrained since infancy.

This brings me to the client I interviewed. She also mentioned that since she started her mental health journey it really has been a struggle. She's had a hard time connecting with therapists/psychiatrists because all she has come into contact with are older white females that make her feel like her feelings aren't validated and can't seem to connect with her. Since she grew up in a Mexican household with strict religious beliefs and mental health was something that was never talked about as a health concern, it made it harder for her to seek help even for someone considered to be on the younger generational end. In Mexican culture it's common for people to not acknowledge it as an immediate health concern and it makes people feel like it's something that you can just push through like it's nothing. It took her years to finally realize that she could no longer go on the way she had been since childhood and needed to make a change in her life no matter the cost.

Since then she has grown to accept help from others and is now learning how to establish boundaries and stand up for herself. She's been educating her family more on mental illness and how they too can benefit from healing their own past traumas and not to feel ashamed for seeking help. She hopes to one day find a POC therapist/psychiatrist that she can finally be able to connect with that way she can truly be free from generational traumas and depression. Until then she will continue to take medication that has made a big difference in her life as well as continue to meditate and seek other spiritual healings.

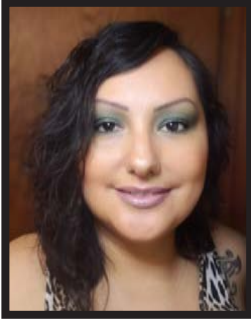


Conclusion

In conclusion, I have come to find that from both the professional and client points of view, it truly is hard to seek help for POC because there still isn't a cultural understanding on how POC truly live and the hardships they have to endure on a daily basis compared to their white counterparts. Until then it will continue to be an issue but the younger generations are continuing to break through the stigma that their elders had to endure and help pave a new path for those to come. This will hopefully then increase the need for more POC working in the mental health fields.

Works Cited

Meyer, O.L. & N.Z. Davis. (2013). "The Influence of Race and Ethnicity in Clients' Experiences of Mental Health Treatment." <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4228688/>



CREEPY PASTA STORIES: EFFECTS ON CHILDREN & FAMILIES

MARIA GARCIA

Introduction

Virtual school and internet usage among children has risen during the COVID-19 Pandemic. The American Academy of Pediatrics reported in 2019 kids aged 8-12 spent an average of 4.5 hours on screens and teens aged 13-18 spent 6.5 hours per day (Li & Ismail, 2021). I have noticed a change in my own children with their increased online activity and I am interested in other people's experiences as well.

I want to delve into why children are drawn to Creepy Pasta, specifically, and whether it affects children like other social media or online content. Creepy Pasta is a website that is focused on creepy animated fictional characters and imagery that's designed to scare and excite young people with online short horror stories and videos. While a lot of online content is positive or neutral, some is meant to be sinister and terrifying and we simply don't know enough about its impact.

I also wonder why children look up creepy content. Is it out of loneliness, for attention and/or to socialize? Does looking up creepy content affect their mental health, behavior and/or self-esteem?

I have experienced Creepy Pasta affecting my children negatively. Virtual school, Creepy Pasta and other online activity has caused my children to become depressed, anxious, lonely, feeling isolated and even had one of them believing in fictional characters and fantasy. One of my children actually got addicted to the Creepy Pasta phenomenon.



We had to limit internet use and screen time, and we blocked certain websites to stop our children from going on these types of websites. These strategies have helped a bit, but the children of today are very smart and find ways around the blocking of websites. Some children have even learned how to hack to a certain degree, including my kids!

Psychologists and sociologists really don't know how this content is impacting children and their mood. We also don't know how addicting it is or if it can become an obsession that can lead to behavioral problems. Most of the work done in this area is done by media studies scholars. (<https://upcolorado.com/utah-state-university-press/item/3444-slender-man-is-coming>)

There is a real-life story of two Wisconsin girls that attempted to murder their friend over a Slender Man fantasy. Slender Man is one of the more well-known fictional Creepy Pasta characters. He wears a black suit and is very tall and thin. He also does not have any features on his face. Slender Man is known for stalking, abducting and traumatizing humans. We certainly don't want or need violence like this happening again, so I hope that by bringing awareness, this might help prevent other incidents.

Research Questions

My research questions are: Why are children drawn to Creepy Pasta and/or other dark content and how do they report feeling/acting afterward? How are the parents and other family members affected by these behaviors coming from children who engage in Creepy Pasta content?

Literature Review

In a recent news article, "Investigators in the 'Slender Man' case discuss chilling interviews with 12-year-old attempted murderers," Yang and Dooley (2019) show how Creepy Pasta can affect some children and trick them into thinking that fantasy is a reality.



In 2014, Morgan Geyser and Anissa Weier believed that if they killed their friend Payton Leutner, it would prevent Slender Man from killing them and their families and that they would become his proxies chosen to live in his mansion. Instead, both girls ended up getting sentenced to a psychiatric hospital.

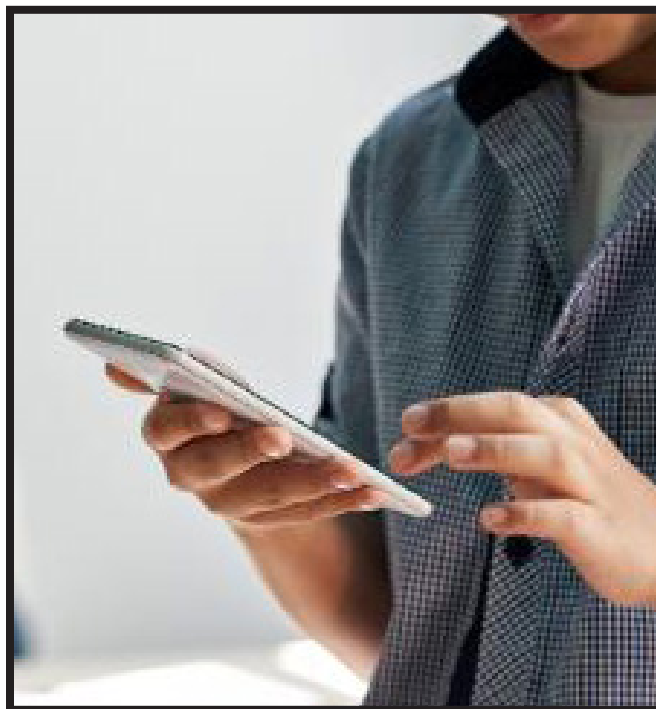
Fortunately, Payton Leutner survived this horrible attempt on her life. However, the article did not talk about how many other dark fictional characters there are online, nor the impact they have had on other people committing crimes

similar to this one. It didn't talk about how much of a problem this is or has been, if any. It also did not mention how the members of either family felt and how they were affected. I would like to fill in some of these gaps and provide more information through my own research to inform others of how much of a problem this is and can be, especially for children.

Data and Methods

Since my research questions have to do with an online dilemma, I thought it would be best to read and observe online articles, videos and forums of people that watch or review Creepy Pasta material to collect data to answer my questions. I took some data from some three newspaper articles that showed how the family members from the attempted murder case felt. I also studied the contrast between parents that agreed and disagreed with allowing their children to view Creepy Pasta from Quora forums.

I also read about five other articles about the Slenderman stabbing, just to get a better background on the story. I spent time reading content on creepypasta.com to familiarize myself with the stories and characters. I've watched countless videos on YouTube on Creepy Pasta and other similar stories and crimes. I also read five different questions and answers on Quora to get as many writers' views as I could.



Findings

In another news article, "Brother of 'Slender Man' stabbing survivor: 'I couldn't believe ... that kind of thing could' happen," the family of Payton Leutner tells how they felt when they found out about the attempt on her life. Joe Leutner, the father, explains how it was a scary experience for his son Caden Leutner and how he had to go through the experience while being under the care of other family members without his parents. Joe stated that just because this happened to Payton didn't mean that it didn't happen to Caden as well. This shows that – even though this was a remarkable case – it had repercussions beyond just the people directly involved.

Payton and Caden's mother, Stacie Leutner, also recalls this being a difficult time for the whole family and life changing. Caden felt like no one understood what he was going through. Both parents stuck together, even after their divorce, to be by both of their children's sides. Sticking together as a family has helped them all heal and get through the whole ordeal (Robinson, 2019).

The news article "Mothers of teens who pleaded guilty in 'Slender Man' stabbing case say there were no warning signs of violence" shows the other side of the how the parents of the guilty teens' families felt. Anissa Weier's mother, Kristi Weier, says that she was unaware of her daughter's beliefs in Slender Man because Anissa had never talked to her about it. Kristi also stated that even though she and Anissa's father were divorced, they still were very involved in their daughter's life and monitored her online use.

Morgan's mother, Angie Geyser, could not believe that her 12-year-old actually had admitted to stabbing her classmate, especially finding out that Morgan had planned it for months. Angie admits to knowing that her daughter was fascinated by Slender Man and they had talked about it together. She said that even though the content was dark, she thought it was normal for middle school kids to be interested in scary stories.

Neither mother ever imagined their daughters hurting anyone because there weren't any warning signs. They had no idea the influence that Slender Man had on either girl. It wasn't until after that Angie and Kristi had found goodbye notes, letters of wanting to die and drawings of Slender Man.

Kristi and Angie had to drive long hours to see their daughters in jail behind a piece of glass where they were not allowed contact. Anissa and Morgan were under strict confinement without much outside time. The two moms explain how hard it has been to see their children shackled in court and imprisoned. They do understand that what Anissa and Morgan have done is wrong and that they need professional help, but the pain of not being with their kids is difficult (Dooley, Whipp, Robinson, Valiente and Effron, 2018)."

Because this case is a remarkable one, I also wanted to read about parents whose children have not committed crimes, but who also have an interest in Creepy Pasta. To better understand this more common experience, I studied responses to a post on Quora. One post on Quora asks, "Should I ban my child from Creepy Pasta?" producing a few mixed answers from different people. One person, who I will call H.C., says it depends on how the child reacts to Creepy Pasta. If they are having nightmares, they should be banned. H.C. admits that, having read Creepy Pastas, it is graphic stuff and not for young children. H.C. also says that if kids are mimicking certain things they are reading about the Creepy Pastas, then it is best to ban them, but it's unnecessary if the child enjoys the content without the behaviors.

Another Quora respondent, J.H. says that her daughter is obsessed and sneaks to read the scary stories every chance she gets and it changes her. When she is not looking up Creepy Pasta, her daughter is fine.

Quora writer E.V. states that you cannot ban anything from a device that you have given your child and to get real on such expectations. E.V. blames the parents, saying they failed for giving the child a device.

Another contributor, S.B., believes if your child loves Creepy Pasta, let them get into it because she



enjoys it for herself. J.Z. also agrees and says if they are over 10 years old its okay, but to still monitor the child's reactions and whether or not the content is sexually inappropriate.

It seems that each parent has a different view about their children being engaged with Creepy Pasta content. Overall, I see more negative influences in this content, especially for younger children. Although it is geared towards people ages 18 and up due to the horror and sexual content, younger children are still interested in Creepy Pasta and still find ways to access the content.

Conclusion

I have come to the conclusion that Creepy Pasta and other dark content has caused more harm than good. Tragedy, obsession, nightmares, harmful thoughts and actions have occurred from the beliefs in this fictional horror content.

Through my research, you're able to see how Creepy Pasta and dark content has affected children and their families in traumatic ways. You also get to see different parents' viewpoints. Everything leads to the children and families being impacted negatively by Creepy Pasta.

The best thing I have learned from this is that parents should talk to their children about creepy content and internet safety while explaining the dangers. Monitoring the children helps, but when that isn't enough, take away devices and access to the internet until behaviors improve. Even seeking counseling would be helpful for these families to have someone neutral to talk to about it.

Creepy Pasta is intended for an adult audience, so in my opinion it is not appropriate for children at all. Creepy Pasta is very addictive, scary and can cause unhealthy obsessions and behaviors in children. There are other kid friendly scary stories that are safer for kids if that is what your kid is into that you can read together.

Writer's Memo

I decided to write this research paper in the Odyssey Sociology class because of my personal experience at home with my kids doing virtual school. At first virtual school was amazing, until my kids started exploring other things online through gaming & YouTube, etc. Then it started getting dark & dangerous, which became very stressful & concerning to me. I felt that it was an important topic to discuss & inform other people that might be experiencing similar situations. Researching & writing this article helped me learn & deal with my own situation. My kids are back in regular school & things have gotten so much better now. I hope that my article spreads awareness & hope to those in similar situations.

Works Cited

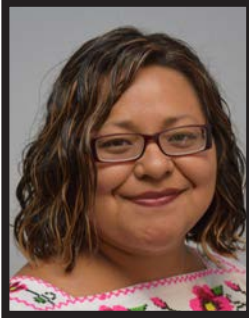
<https://abcnews.go.com/US/investigators-slender-man-case-discuss-chilling-interviews12/story?id=66320806> (Yang and Dooley, 2019)

<https://upcolorado.com/utah-state-university-press/item/3444-slender-man-is-coming>

<https://abcnews.go.com/US/brother-slender-man-stabbing-survivor-kind-thing-happen/story?id=66424530> (Robinson, 2019)

<https://abcnews.go.com/US/mothers-teens-pleaded-guilty-slender-man-stabbing-case/story?id=52739807> (Dooley, Whipp, Robinson, Valiente and Effron, 2018)

<https://www.quora.com/Should-I-ban-my-child-from-creepypasta> [Online forum post] Quora



HOW DOES BEING A DREAMER AFFECT YOUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS IN THE WORKPLACE?

MARISOL GONZALEZ-RODRIGUEZ

Introduction

The USA is facing at this moment a shortage of workers. Since the pandemic has taken so many lives, many businesses had to close permanently. Even now that things are normalized, many companies are in a lot of need of workers. It would make sense for the government to implement an immigration reform now or open again the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals called “DACA” so people can work and study legally in this country.

The reason I want to work on this issue is that I think I will find very interesting new information about how we as a society see each other, and how we interact in the workplace once we know more about the personal struggles of our co-workers. I want to know the way people are treated when they are tagged as Dreamers or DACA recipients. Is it easy to navigate the workplace, or find the career they want? Can they live without fear in this country? What are their struggles? Are Dreamers treated differently because of their status? What are the reasons Dreamers share their immigration status with their co-workers? Do Dreamers feel like Americans?

Literature Review

Recent news coverage shows that disclosing your immigration status can impact your employment. The article ‘Dreamers’ in Search of a Job Are Being Turned Away, by Cardona(2021) shows the experience of Rodriguez, a DACA recipient from Venezuela who is rejected from a company after revealing his immigration status. I found this article interesting since it shows the social problems this group has faced since ex-president Trump decided to eliminate DACA. The children of undocumented immigrants were brought to the USA by their parents and see the USA as their home. They are called “Dreamers.” Mr. Rodriguez is filing a lawsuit against employers to prevent them from turning away immigrants like

him using the civil rights law. Since DACA was initiated by the Obama administration in 2012, about 800,000 undocumented immigrants have benefited from the program by having the opportunity to graduate from college and start successful lives. I feel this article contributes a lot to my project since I want to know the difficulties this particular group faces in the workplace. This article provides me with information about the experiences of Dreamers seeking employment and it helps me to keep wondering what will be the perfect solution to immigration in this country.





Although I found this article very interesting, it does not cover the day-to-day situations Dreamers face in their workplace just for being Dreamers. Where do they see themselves 5, 10, or 20 years from now? Cardona focuses on the problem of DACA recipients being turned away from employers, but what about employers that accept the DACA recipients? Are they willing to keep supporting them unconditionally? I also want to know the opinion of their co-workers and most importantly their relationships in the workplace. My article will highlight its strengths and point to its limitations and areas for future research.

Data and Methods

In order to respond to my research question, I interviewed 4 people ages 26, 29, 37, and 38 from Mexico and South America currently working office jobs and being business owners. I interviewed DACA recipients and business owners to get different perspectives about being a worker and being an employer. I conducted these interviews in different places - from people's homes (zoom) to public places like a coffee shops. All of the interviews were recorded on a recorded device, but I also took notes. Most of the interviews were more than one hour long, and they were conducted in Spanish.

Interview #1: Gina. 38 years old. Came to the USA when she was 15 years old. Lived in fear and in the shadows until DACA. Now she works in an office job as a case manager helping people. She loves her job and the people at her workplace are very nice and supportive of her immigration situation. She gets along with all of her co-workers and she has a special bond with the other DACA recipients.

My second interview was with Mr. Ramon, who is 29 years old. He was brought from Mexico to the USA by his father when he was only 8 years old. Becoming a DACA recipient has been very beneficial in all aspects of his life. He thinks it's a huge privilege since now he can get a driver's license, work, and continue his goals of education; he is studying to become a social worker. Now he has more opportunities to get better-paying jobs. He gets along with all his co-workers since he has three jobs (library, MATC, and a non-profit organization). Several times during his job journey he had to quit his job because he faced too much discrimination in the workplace.

My third interview was with Mr. Mario, 26 years old from South America. He came at the age of 7 on a plane with his mother and two younger siblings. He thought it was a vacation to see his father who came 6 months previously. Mr. Mario learned of his status in this country during his last year of high school. Since he was a very good student they offered him to enroll in a pre-college program. He was very happy to share the news with his parents but unfortunately, he will never forget the response of his parents because that changed everything for him. They told him that he can't apply because he didn't have a social security number and was forbidden to talk about it. Being a DACA recipient has been a blessing for him and his siblings that were also able to enroll. He was able to go to college with a full scholarship which he thinks wouldn't be possible without the DACA program.

My fourth interview was with Mr. Vicente, a 37-year-old Mexican who crossed the border by himself at the age of 16. He was detained and put in a detention center and they told him he would stay there until his parents went to get him. So he escaped and tried to cross again. He came to New York City to live with his sister and brother-in-law. His first job was as a store clerk earning less than the minimum wage. After a year, his sister went back to Mexico and he stayed by himself. He came to Madison to visit his cousin and he decided to stay in Madison. His family in Mexico always had a business so he decided to start his first business cleaning carpets. After the remodeling company he was working at closed so he went to the bank, got a loan, and started his own business. He owns a construction company now, but it took him a lot of effort to get where he is. For 3 years he worked during the day and studied at night without days off, since he worked during weekends. He has 3 employees now and partnerships with other construction companies. He is always happy to hire people regardless of their immigration status. He is not a DACA recipient because he doesn't have proof of being in this country at the age of 16.

Findings

Community, Service, and Family Orientation: All of the interviewees work in fields where they can help others and their favorite parts of their jobs are service-oriented. So immigrants are providing valuable assets to this country - not stealing jobs. When I ask them what do you think about the idea of immigrants stealing jobs, all of them disagree since they know there are a lot of jobs like agriculture and many other jobs that nobody wants except for the undocumented immigrants. One of the interviewees mentions this:

"If the undocumented people will go to ask for jobs with guns in their hands asking to fire the white workers so they can be hired, then and only that will be stealing jobs, but he has never heard, or read anywhere something like that so is not true."

A couple of the interviewees also mentioned being motivated by their family members - especially younger siblings. The interviewees also supported families with their different needs - from bringing the library to the places where libraries are too far for the community, to providing resources for housing to the most vulnerable community. One of them worked for a non-profit organization where he felt



he can make an impact and share his values. He worked there for several years until the pandemic hit the organization and unfortunately didn't survive. So now he decided to start his own business helping companies to create a healthy environment in the workplaces with a focus on inclusion and equity. He has clients overseas and hopes for immigration reform so he can take the opportunity to travel to different countries through his company.



DACA Opens Doors: In addition to the obvious ways that DACA helps recipients, a few of them mentioned the idea of getting information and support from other DACA recipients (Dreamers). I thought this was really interesting. Economically and occupationally, they had access to better jobs, driver's licenses, and access to better opportunities. I found out that the interactions are different between Dreamers since they are more united in the workplace. Also now they have more opportunities to get better-paid jobs and feel confident, and professional. One of them even noticed when he got his first job working in a bank that what he was making weekly was more than what his father was

making in 3 different jobs and definitely more than what his mom gained taking care of little children as a full-time worker in a nursery.

The Double-Edged Sword: Not everything is roses though! Some of them mentioned fear - of DACA ending or of being discriminated against because of their status - and disappointment. For example, one of them will never forget when he was selected to attend to a pre-college program but he couldn't because he didn't have a social security number. Another person described being able to go back to Mexico after 17 years and experience the true feeling of freedom and belonging, but knowing that she would have to go back to the USA to the "golden cage" since her life is built here in the USA. One of them mentioned that motivation from your family is good, but it's also a lot of pressure too. The struggles are still there as another interviewee mentioned, since the DACA program is for him "like a broken promise and only temporary." Another disadvantage of the program is that every 2 years when they renew their work permit (DACA) they have to spend money to pay for the application and everything like driver's license and re-apply to their jobs again plus agree to participate in the war if the country needs them.

Conclusion

Being a DACA recipient or so-called Dreamer is not easy! These are some reasons: You have to agree to participate in a war for a country that doesn't give you a status, have to pay for supporting the economy of this country as an essential worker, risk losing your job when you re-apply if the administration changes, not to mention not having the benefit of retirement either plus dealing with the fear of being deported when the government decides to a country most of the Dreamers don't even remember. There is a lot to do, but the spirit of hope is deep in each person interviewed. For now, they learn to live one day at a time, always grateful for at least being out of the shadows and trying to live with dignity. I wonder when it is going to be the moment in history where this country can realize this is a nation made by immigrants and for that reason, they should create an immigration reform that is fair for all immigrant workers. In the meantime Dreamers will continue contributing to the economy of this country and stand strong as "DACA" recipients or "Dreamers" because "Soñar No Cuesta Nada" (Dreaming Costs Nothing).



COVID-19, AN UNEXPECTED CHALLENGE FOR HUMAN KIND

HENRY OROPEZA IRISSON

The Covid-19 pandemic has created unprecedented change and a need for a response not only from our government and elected officials but from every human being around our planet. Many of us are worried about our loved ones and our livelihoods, and there are no rules set in stone on what to do or one right way to cope with what we are experiencing. It has been a time, and still is, filled with loss and uncertainty. From health concerns to social isolation, our ways of life have dramatically changed. Let's look at some numbers provided by the CDC; how we as the general public can cope with this pandemic and how mental health has taken a toll on healthcare providers.

First, I present to you Monica (pseudonym), a single mother and a long-time friend. She's 36 years old and works in a HR office for a small private company here in Madison. Her husband was deported, but her parents are in the area and help in any way they can.

Henry: "Hello, Monica, thank you for sharing this time with me, for helping me with my paper and to let me learn with you about your experience with this awful pandemic, and how it has impacted your own mental health, personal life and those you love."

Monica: "You're welcome, Henry, my pleasure."

Henry: "How has the pandemic impacted your life?"

Monica: "In the beginning it was very surreal. At first, I thought this was going to be about 2 weeks locked down, maybe three weeks, and nothing more. As time passed, everything started looking differently. I couldn't see my Mom and my Dad, they have always been very resourceful, emotionally or with the kids, and that really took a big hit on our mental health. I was missing them so much, especially during the summer of 2020. We used to always get together on my Dad's birthday. We would always throw a big party for him. Other family members and friends always joined us. We were very sad! Before this, my Mom used to get very anxious about getting sick, now with this she was and still is terrorized by the idea of getting sick. She worries about the idea of going to the store and bringing those germs with her. My Dad has been battling skin cancer for 3 years and his immune system is compromised. Knowing my Mom, I could see her worrying



about all the things she can avoid so other things don't happened, like getting sick with COVID. They have been dealing with depression ever since. I used to feel powerless. Still do! I did most of my parents' grocery shopping for the longest time. I'll go to the store after work and drop the groceries at their door. I remember putting gel on my hands all the time, so I didn't bring any germs with me to them."

Henry: "I am so sorry! It really has been very challenging for a lot of us and sounds like you were not exempt from it. Were you able to connect with them in any way?"

Monica: "Well, yes! Thankfully there is always technology you can rely on, right? But it will never be the same. It's not the same when you can't hug them, kiss them, feel their presence."

Henry: "You've mentioned earlier that you and your parents have experienced mental health issues. Have you looked for any type of help?"

Monica: "Yes! In the last six months I have been fortunate to be able to see a therapist. Also, once they were vaccinated my mom begged my dad to see a therapist. He did not like the idea, but he finally gave in. I personally was on a waiting list for five months. I'm glad I can see her on a regular basis. My therapist has suggested that I start doing things I used to before the pandemic, like exercising regularly and meditating. I'm still skeptical about doing yoga in an enclosed space, though."

Henry: "As for your kids, how are they?"

Monica: "My kids were very challenging. During the beginning they did not understand what was going on. They are kids; they don't know much about reality. It was extremely hard as a single parent. Thankfully I have been able to work remotely and that helped a lot. For my youngest, it was hard for him to keep up with homework. We are in a better place and that is all I want to talk about my kids, if that's OK!"



Henry: "Thank you so much for sharing, Monica, and as for you parents, if you don't mind sharing, how are they?"

Monica: "Both of my parents are vaccinated. I was able to hug them for the first time in over a year this past May after we were all vaccinated. We have been able to see each other quite often since, and we try to respect CDC guidelines, etc. I usually get tested a day or two before I go see them just in case."

Henry: "do you have any advice for people that may be in the same situation that you are or were in? And I say 'are' because we are still in the pandemic."

Monica: "always, always try to stay connected with loved ones. Call them, schedule a zoom meeting, but try your best to stay connected. That's my two cents!"

Henry: "thank you so much Monica! I appreciate your time and sharing this with me."

Monica smiles, and heads back to work.



Next, I will be interviewing, Napoleon Bonaparte (pseudonym) , a nurse at a local hospital in Madison, WI. I have known Bonaparte since 2005. He has struggled with COVID as he is a healthcare provider. Here is the interview:

Henry: “Napoleon, thank you for giving me the honor.”

Bonaparte: “Hehe, you’re welcome!”

Henry: “Please try to describe how was it, and still is, to work in a Sub-Acute Unit at the hospital you work for during the pandemic?”

Bonaparte: “Well, just imagine that before the pandemic we were always short-staffed. Many nurses quit during the pandemic, some are still not willing to go back to work, and others went to private agencies because they are making a lot more money there.”

Henry: “Wow! I’m sorry to hear this. I hope your peers and superiors are giving you the support you need.”

Bonaparte: “They try. I guess we all try, right? We try to do our best every day, but these are unprecedented times. I never expected to see this or to go through this in my lifetime. I guess there is always a first time for everything.”

Henry: “I guess! Tell me, how has this affected your mental health or has it not?”

Bonaparte: “Of course it has. Seeing people dying on a regular basis is horrible. Sometimes you walk into a patient’s room, and you hear stories where people are being evicted, all this happening while their loved one is right there at the hospital, or losing their homes, jobs, etc. It is very dramatic. It takes a lot not to be able to let these things affect you, but eventually it will. I have insomnia; I have had COVID, and I had to deal with post-COVID symptoms for about 6 six months. Half of my body was numb.”

Henry: “I’m so sorry, my friend! Are you doing better now? Have you sought any non-professional or professional help at all?”

Bonaparte: “No, not really! But I will soon. I have been super busy, you know, we are always short-staffed at the hospital. I’m making good money, but I am also very stressed out and depressed. I will be talking to my primary doctor about it next month.”

Henry: “What kind of help would you be looking for, if I may ask?”

Bonaparte: “Mental health help, of course. I need to talk to a therapist. I also need just go far away for about a month, too. I have been talking to my supervisors about that. Seems like it may be a possibility this winter. I can’t wait!”

Henry: “I have heard that nationally there is a disproportionate affect on black and brown communities, What have you seen locally in Madison?”

Bonaparte: “What I have seen in the communities of color and non-English speaking communities is that they are harder hit with severity from this virus. Poor quality of life, as you and I know our communities are very hard-working people, lack of a good diet, and lack of health care access are the main reason I think our communities get impacted the worst by the corona virus. In addition to the other ways in which these communities are affected such as lack of housing in some cases and socio-economic status. A lot of these families work in essential work and are force to continue working; therefore, they are more likely to get infected and affected by the virus. In addition, many of these families also lost their source of income or are not getting any kind of government help. Such is the case of the undocumented folks.”

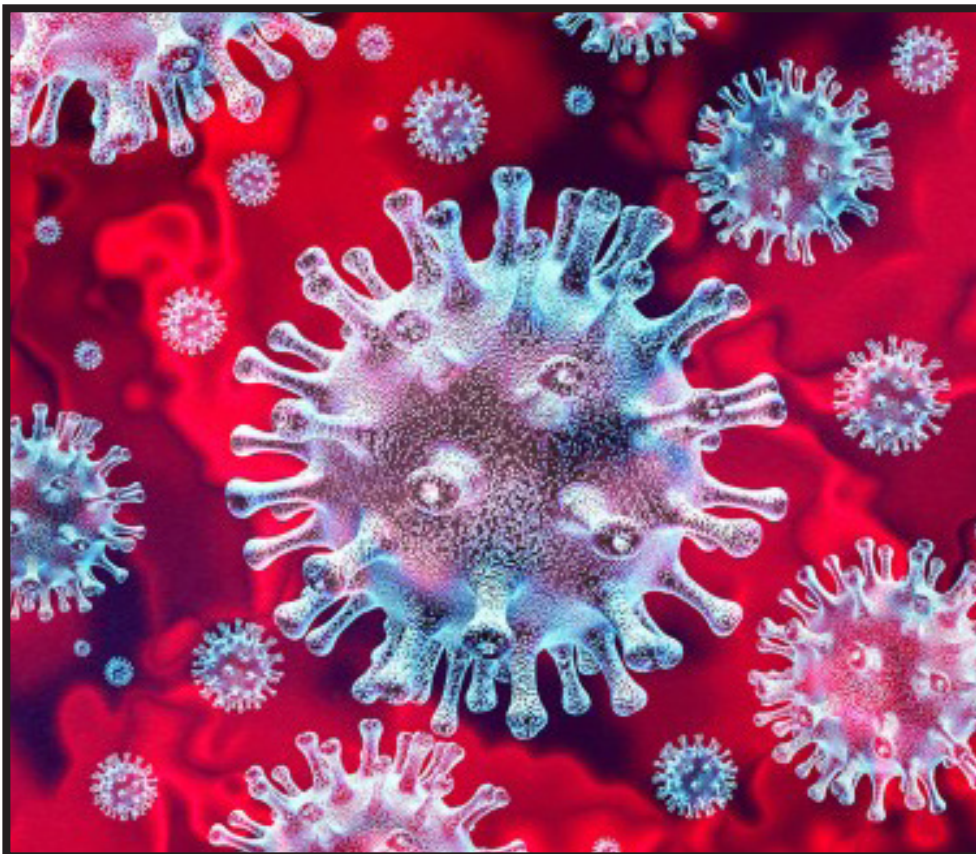
Henry: “Is there anything else you would like to add? Any final thoughts, perhaps?”

Bonaparte: “We all play a role in our society. For me, however, when it comes to taking care of POC and Spanish-speaking communities, I always see it as an opportunity to get them informed about this virus as well as telling them about resources that are available for them. Opportunities such as where to get vaccinated. This pandemic is also a great and at the same time weird opportunity to ask ourselves who we want to be as a community. This is the time to talk about these issues and how we prevent them from happening in the future.

Lack of housing and lack of health care is a big issue. I hope people and our elected officials can see that.”

Henry: “Mr. Bonaparte, my wonderful friend, thank you so much for being part of this interview. I’m glad I get to call you, friend. Good for you for trying to take care of yourself. Remember: your health is the most important thing. Thank you so much for being on the front lines and for this interview!”

Bonaparte: “You’re welcome! No need to thank me about my job or this interview, really!”



Both interviews were done over the phone as my friends have busy lives and one of them is suffering from severe depression currently. When I asked Monica about her kids, she kind of hesitated to answer but I told her that in no way was I going to share her real name or the name of her workplace. But it is understandable, and I did not touch base on her kids anymore. After the interview we chatted for a while, and I deeply admire her for her bravery.

Bonaparte and I have been best friends for a long time. He and I laughed a little during the interview because it was more like a big brother, little brother interview.

Both interviews were done at around 12pm. I find 12pm to be one of the quiet moments during the day. During these interviews, I learn more and more about how devastating this pandemic has been for everyone when it comes to mental health and people of color. I have not been able to get a hold of my third person, I hope he still wants to meet up.

Personally, I had to be put on medication for depression. It has been day and night for me. I can finally see the light at the end of the tunnel.

Now, let us jump into the numbers and some information the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has put out for us. First off, I'm curious about the long-lasting effects COVID-19 has on people's mental health. According to the CDC on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental health, a research study made from August 2020-February 2021, and partner with the U.S. Census Bureau to conduct a Household Pulse Survey (HPS). This is what they know so far: while they continue to understand the



long-lasting effects of the disease, neuropsychiatric symptoms appear to be the most common “side-effect” among patients. This recent research study by the CDC indicates that COVID-19 patients have an increased chance of developing a new mental health illness within 90 days of diagnosis. For those who are admitted to the ICU units COVID-19 are 38% (on average) more susceptible for developing symptoms of anxiety or depression. Other psychological symptoms that patients may experience are confusion, insomnia, decreased memory retention, and poor concentration. Critically ill patients appear to develop PTSD or Post-Intensive Care Syndrome.

The HPS also suggested that in the U.S. alone about 36% of Americans have stated that the pandemic has had an impact in their mental health. Health care providers have been particularly at risk for psychological distress, especially those who have been in close contact with COVID-19 patients; those who have been quarantined and spent time away from their loved ones; and those who don't have enough or adequate PPE or support from their superiors. Also, health care providers face social stigma because of their profession or don't receive psychological support from other peers. In general, there is no question that this pandemic has affected everyone, especially those on the front lines, but it has been especially challenging for people who prior to the pandemic were living in the margins, who are already in financial hardship, those who were struggling to put food on their table. Now I feel that we are living in a secondary pandemic, the mental health pandemic. All these hardships have created unprecedented levels of anxiety for most people, creating this new crisis, the mental health crisis.

So, what does the CDC do to help people cope better during these difficult times? The CDC suggest that healthcare providers can look for ways to deal with mental health issues by getting regular exercise, seeking psychotherapy services, talking to colleagues or support groups, or practicing meditation. How can we as a general public deal with it? Can we cope the same as everyone else? A study made by the World Health Organization during the months of June through August, 2020 suggests that people must focus on gratitude; gratitude for what is going well and gratitude for anything that provides a sense of hope, and even against the rules, we must try to connect to others, but we must do it safely. What about those in need, should they show gratitude in a way others can? This is a very challenging question, says Doctor Michio Kaku on his radio show “Science Fantastic” in the month of August ’20. He says: “there’s much needed people that need our support, and we must provide with that support by putting pressure on local, state or federal elected officials.”



In conclusion, the light finally seems to be at the end of the tunnel; hopefully it is not the light of an incoming train. But jokes aside, there is no doubt this has been a very challenging time for all of us, a time for appreciating the things we have and a time to show gratitude by helping others. If you see someone in need, don't doubt in extending a helping hand. You never know, tomorrow that person in need might be you. Perhaps these virulent times have helped nations come together as one in order to fight future challenges. Like Carl Sagan once said: “we’re living on

this tiny speck of nothing in this vast universe.” The fact that we have this global planetary problem that needs to be solved, we need to get our acts together and do a collective way if we really want to survive.

In loving memory of those who lost loved ones and those who perish.

Sources

<http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm7013e2>

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/household-pulse-survey/data.html>external icon

[How is WHO responding to COVID-19?](#)



BIBLICAL RELIGIONS AND FEMININITY

JESSICA JACOBS

Introduction

Religion has been a way of life for thousands of years. There are many different religions in our world. Each one has different components that make it what it is; however most major religions have rules governing gender roles. There are specific ideas on how men and women should act, and this is especial for women.

Therefore, my research will be asking the following questions: 1. How do biblical religions define femineity according to their followers? 2. Do these ideas of women cause oppression and stagnation in the growth in the process of individualism? 3. Do women themselves rationalize the inequality through benevolent sexism? 4. How does religious priming play a part? 5. What about positive experiences that some women have had? I hope to get a broader perspective through my research and also a better understanding of the effects for women in different situations and with different experiences and backgrounds.

Literature review

Previous research has documented the history of gender roles in religious traditions. In the article "Religion's roles in gender equality: supramental and subliminal religious priming increases benevolent sexism," Haggard (2019) states that sexism has deep roots in human history, including most religious traditions, and that many religious organizations including Judeo-Christian beliefs, subtly approve of and support sexism. Previous research has detailed how religiosity and sexism correlate, and religious priming plays its own part.

Data and methods

I conducted two interviews with people who have very different relationships with religion, which helped me get a broader perspective on how religion impacts different types of women. My first interview is with a woman who was raised in a biblical tradition, and my second interview is with a woman who found religion later in life. Both have very different experiences, and I know both of them very well.

After my interviews I included all the major details of set interviews, making sure that both experiences were recorded respectfully and truthfully of both women.

Findings

My first interview was with T. T is 25 years old. She was raised in the very small town of Brooklyn, Wisconsin, in a fundamentalist Catholic denomination. T told me that she was very secluded and was not allowed to interact with anyone that was not Catholic. The family home was very far out in the countryside and had no access to anything. Her exact words were "it was like growing up in a cornfield." Everything and everyone were vetted.



She continued to explain to me that constant fear was instilled in them about behaviors and actions that would lead to going to hell. T called it fire and brimstone. We spoke about violent sexism religious priming and forms of abuse. They were engaged by the age of 15 and her whole life was in preparation for marriage. The older Catholic women were always monitoring the younger girls, making sure they acted according to what was taught to them on how women should be. T's mother primed her for marriage, and the women were more aggressive than the men in this action. When I asked T how her upbringing defined her femininity, she quoted St. Paul: "Wives are supposed to be subservient to their husbands." They accepted that teaching completely. The way they talked about femininity they said it was an honor to have to be obedient and that women were talked about as beautiful angelic creatures that were the keepers of morality and purity. You need to be obedient to men because they need to be able to take care of you because you are so pure. By letting them take care of you, what that really means is that women need to be obedient. T calls this a very twisted version of female submission that they teach all the other women honor.



They also talked to me about physical abuse endured by the hands of their father. He felt that it was necessary in order to keep the children in line so that they don't go to hell. It was his duty to keep his children in that line. At the age of 17 T ran away and when they tried to get emancipation from parents they had to really struggle and the police were no help. T's birth name is Anna and they will be legally changing it in the future. What I found to be of interest is how T sees themselves today as defined and femininity. Anna is now T and T identifies as genderfluid, Poly amorous, and atheist. When I asked them if they felt that the way they were raised has pushed them so far to the other side that they no longer identify specifically as woman, they said that they too had thought about that and that they aren't sure. In any case it was something to look at. T is in school to become a lawyer to help with emancipation reform.

My second interview was with an old friend of mine named E. E is 62 years old and was born in Chicago but raised in New Orleans. Growing up her family was not religious except for her grandmother. She was forced to go to church by her grandmother and did not like it much as a child but there was no religious priming involved. It wasn't that long before she ended up in the streets hustling and using drugs. In the midst of this lifestyle, she was raped several times by men and endured a lot of physical abuse. When I first met E it was over 12 years ago and the woman I met identified as a gay woman. Most of her life this is how she lived because of the terrible treatment she endured by the hands of men. She told me that she considered herself the man in the relationships and wanted to show the women that she dated how they were supposed to be treated properly. When she first started to get her life on track she entered into a recovery scene and started to go to a Baptist Church. But the women there had many prayer sessions and prayer circles trying to pray the gay out of her, as she told me. All it did was make her feel worse and never accepted. She moved on and started attending a non-denominational church and this is where the dramatic change took place within her. Through her recovery fellowship and her church

fellowship she was accepted exactly the way she was and that gave her the love and support she needed as she did some serious soul searching.

Throughout the years I watched E change into who she is today and who she says she is now, a God-fearing woman. When I asked her why the fear, she replied, she has to do the right thing no matter what and there are always repercussions to our actions. She equated hell and using drugs as being the same. She stated that the fear of men led her to the belief that she was gay because of all the rapes, but God helped her breakthrough a tremendous barrier. She feels like a lady now and she used to feel like nothing. Her recovery and her church have changed her. When I asked her what the best thing about being a Christian woman was, she replied that she found more love. Knowing what Jesus did for her despite all that she had done was so deep and all she felt was gratitude.

Seven years ago, I attended E and Frank's wedding. She no longer identifies gay and is still happily married. I can't help but to still laugh when I think about what she said when we talked about her husband. She said she told him over and over that she doesn't like men and he stayed persistent anyway. He showed her that not all men are bad and that there are some good ones out there. E plans to become an ordained pastor here in the near future. She is currently in school and works in the community helping other people that may struggle with poverty, addictions, and mental health.



What I found to be so interesting was the way both individuals had different backgrounds and experiences, yet both experienced abuse and both struggled with identity and sexuality. One individual's experience with religion was abusive in many aspects, and the other's experience with religion helped her find out who she really was and played a part in the development of the great person she is today. This is a great way to compare and contrast. The one thing they have in common is they are both courageous and they both escaped great hardships. Both are helping others today as well.

Conclusion

Religion is always going to be a hard topic for some to talk about because people's perceptions and beliefs aren't always the same. Because of the constructs of religion, it can shape a woman's view of what femininity should be like. However, it can provide perspective in many ways too. I would like to see more research on what religion looks like for the newest generation, and what they think about gender roles in biblical religions. What it all boils down to is that everyone has the right to individuality and their own beliefs, but most importantly they have the right to be safe and they have the right to be respected.



THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON UNDOCUMENTED SINGLE MOTHERS

LUIS PEREZ-OLGUIN

There is no doubt the pandemic has affected humanity in different ways. It is hard as many of us are already struggling in life to make ends meet, but that life is constantly changing and we must adapt to it. Undoubtedly everyone in the US suffered the struggles of COVID-19 whether mentally, physically, or economically in their daily life. This added another burden to the daily struggles. However, there is a hidden evil living within undocumented people that was inherited with the “American Dream,” and it is not accounted for in the pandemic we are going through. This is the deeper and unseen essence of uncertainty, fear, and injustice undocumented people face in their daily life. Single undocumented parents with lower-skilled and lower-wage jobs faced another load in their hardship throughout the pandemic. The fear for their children’s health and well-being, and the challenges they face due to immigration status; not being able to have benefits, such as health insurance for necessities. On the other hand, families get strong ties as they support each other in times of need.

In an article written by newamericaneconomy.org, *Examining the Economic Contributions of Undocumented Immigrants by Country of Origin*, a key finding shown was that, “Mexican undocumented immigrant contribution to the economy in 2019 alone was \$92 billion in household income. Almost 9.8 billion in Federal, State, and local taxes, and \$82.2 billion in spending power.” There is no doubt minorities have been hit hard during the pandemic, more specifically undocumented immigrants. However, how has Covid impacted the life of undocumented parents? More specifically, how has it impacted undocumented single mothers?

To follow up with my questions, I interviewed two single undocumented mothers that I have known personally for quite some time. The two of them differ from each other in ways of support for their children. Both of them have blue-collar jobs and have to be on the frontline as their job requires them to be there. To understand more about their day-to-day life and how they managed their family, work, and personal life, I will conduct some questions about their family, jobs, and support during the pandemic. What hurdles do they face whether mentally, physically, or economically throughout the pandemic?

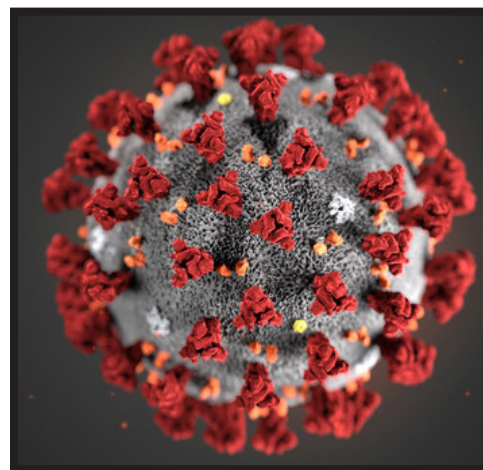
Maria is a forty-four-year-old undocumented mother from Mexico who has been living in this country for nineteen years. She is a single mother of three children. The father of her firstborn left her and returned to Mexico. On the other hand, she shares custody of her two younger kids with their father. Also, the younger kids were born in the US, versus the older one who was born in Mexico and was brought to the US when he was seven months old. She has been the head of the household, most of the time, as she does not have the support of her immediate family. She has been lucky to have some acquaintances that have helped her along the way when she needs to. To provide for her children, she has mostly worked in janitorial companies around Madison where she has lived since she arrived from Mexico. She has worked for more than ten years at her present job where she is the manager now, but she does not have any benefits or health insurance. Furthermore, last year



she lost her father due to Covid, and she could not travel to see him one last time. Maria knows she is not in her best health and physical condition, which she knows precipitated by a minor stroke last year. However, she knows she needs to be strong for her kids. She is also grateful her older sons help around the house, which is somehow a relief for her.

Maria has – for most of her life as a single mother – coped with life and her kids on her own. Maria says, “When my kids were little I struggled a lot over who was going to watch them when I was going to work or any appointments where I could not bring them with me.” The pandemic reminded her somehow of those times when her kids were younger. However, the pandemic added another concern: The one of bringing Covid-19 to her kids as she works in hospitals and clinics where she knew there is always the possibility of contagion. Maria was very focused on the well-being of her children, and not having the luxury to work remotely or work from home was one of her many concerns. Rent, paying bills on time, school lockdown, and kids now staying home were among the concerns.

A challenge Maria faced was not having health benefits where she works. “I could not bear the luxury of getting sick even before Covid because that will require me to go to the doctor; and paying out of pocket is not something I can afford.” The lack of health insurance makes her feel vulnerable, and her nervousness increased during Covid-19. The uncertainty of getting the virus, and not knowing how her immune system was going to handle it, was very stressful. Another challenge is her being undocumented and not being able to travel back to visit her family. She only had her father, as her mother passed away some years back. As she was going through the uncertainty of her health and concerns about her children, a misfortune hit her hard; Last year her father lost his battle against Covid-19. That was very hard on her as she couldn’t be there to see him one last time. Maria’s legal status prevented her from traveling to be at her father’s funeral.



With more opportunities come more responsibilities in life. She holds a managerial position at her work for which she was happy when she was promoted. This meant more hours, more money, and more driving too as she had to drive to the different buildings the company cleans. However, as Covid -19 became more severe she had to work extra hours as employees started to call in sick. Another quandary arose as her new position started to demand more of her time as she needed to fill in for the employees that were not coming to work. “I had to find people to cover for the employees that were sick. If not, I had to go in and do the work myself due to shortage of employees.” She was very stressed as she had to cover and drive to different parts of Madison and outside of Madison. She was not spending much time with her children as she had to work longer hours. “I was not able to help my younger daughter with her homework as my work was taking most of my time.” The little time she had was to work around the house and cook for her children. Her daughter had missed twenty assignments and was failing her grade, but Maria was not aware of it until she got an email from the teacher explaining what was happening. Maria felt bad because she had not dedicated enough time to her youngest. “I am blessed with my two older kids; they help me a lot. My twelve-year-old is very mature for his age, and he was the one who helped my daughter to catch up with her assignments and homework. He is very savvy with technology so he is the one who keeps an eye on my daughter when I am not home. My older son works with me and has been very helpful during the pandemic. He helped me clean the buildings when employees will call in sick.”

My second interviewee is Linda, a thirty-two-year-old undocumented single mother of two children. She was brought by her brothers to the Madison area when she was about twenty years old, and she's been living in Madison for almost thirteen years. She has full custody of her children as the father is not around anymore; therefore, she works a lot to provide for her kids and herself. She has two jobs: during the day she works for an assisted living facility, and in the evening for a cleaning/ janitorial company. The little time she has free is mostly spent with her children and her immediate family and close friends. She lives with one of her brothers with whom she shares the expenses of the house. She keeps in touch with her parents back in Mexico over video chats or phone calls, which is the only way to see them or talk to them as she cannot travel to visit them. As the pandemic got worse, her only support was from her brothers, mostly the ones she lives with. She suffered anxiety during Covid as she worried a lot about her kids and her immediate family. She made certain she cleaned and disinfected herself well before entering the house to reduce the possibilities of contagion.



“It has been difficult as a mother. I want my children to be safe, healthy, and to have more than I had growing up. I was very scared, and I still am! I couldn't have the leisure to stay and work from home, nor get the stimulus check, or collect unemployment.” As scared and worried Linda was, she knew she needed to work to pay for the daily expenses and bills. There was a higher possibility for her getting infected in the assisted living facility as she works around people, versus her cleaning job in the evenings where she mostly works by herself. However, the assisted living facility was very strict with employees as they had to be around older residents. They had to wear a suit, mask, goggles, and a shield besides taking daily rapid tests for temperature or any other symptoms. As cumbersome as this was for her, she is now thankful for all these security measures they were taking; These measurements kept her safe and gave her peace of mind knowing she was safe to go home to see her kids and be around family.

As an undocumented person, she faces many challenges, which makes life a little harder. For example, being able to have a job where she can get better benefits, being able to apply for unemployment, help from the government, or travel to see her parents. “There was a time when I had three jobs just to make ends meet. I do get some benefits at the assisted living where I work. However, they take a lot off my paycheck so I just have it because of my kids, because if it was for me I would not take the benefits they offer.” Many companies have to charge a lot for the benefits they offer, which sometimes makes you question if you should have them or not. Another challenge is she cannot apply for unemployment if she gets laid off from her work. She had to be in the front line at her work which made it harder. However, she noticed that many people who are citizens stopped working because they were making more collecting unemployment or getting stimulus checks. This was a window of opportunity for Linda to pick up more hours. She sees the good and not so good in the system, but she is happy she has a job to support her family.

She never really thought how comforting it was living with her brother as she did going through the pandemic. “I don’t know what would have happened if I were living alone with my kids.” As she picked up more hours at the assisted living facility, the less time she had to spend with her children. Also, she didn’t have to worry much about who was going to take care of her children. “Living with my brother gave me peace of mind.” The support from her brother and sister-in-law was unconditional, and she did not have to worry about who was going to watch her kids, or if they were going to eat on time. She is very grateful, feels more connected to her brother and sister-in-law, and she knows they have her back always. They support one another, and she is always there for them as well.

In summation, undocumented people have been an important foundation for the economy in this country. In the article of newamericaneconomy.org just in the year 2019, the key findings of Mexican undocumented contribution to Federal, State, Local taxes, and spending power reached the billions, which is a great contribution to the country. However, undocumented people do not get any or much help in times of crisis such as during the recent pandemic. The challenges my two interviewees faced during the pandemic made them see that the only people who they can count on are family and close friends. The physical and mental health these two mothers faced during the Covid-19 increased so much that they are still facing symptoms of anxiety and depression. However, the concerns about the well-being of their children were their priority, and their focus was for their kids to have as much peace of mind as possible during the pandemic. The loss of a family member or the thought of losing one during Covid-19 was a factor for severe anxiety for my interviewees. The sorrow they carry as they cannot travel to see their families in Mexico was just another contribution to their depression. On the other hand, the lack of health benefits made it difficult for them to get proper or good health services. Nevertheless, this pandemic created resilience amongst the families of my two interviewees, and they both had to be strong for their kids. In Maria’s case, her kids gave her strength to continue despite all the obstacles Covid-19 brought to her. Her kids were her support as well as the support amongst them, which made them stronger and become closer. In Linda’s case, creating resilience with her brother and sister-in-law as they were a big help for Linda babysitting her kids while she worked.

Findings:

- We might not be able to see the contribution of two single undocumented mothers to this country. However, when those millions of undocumented people living in the shadows in the United States are put together, their contributions to the country are critical for its economy and growth.
- The lack of health benefits is an obstacle when seeking medical attention, or receiving quality healthcare. The stress and anxiety of not having access to financial aid provided by the federal government. Not being able to help their kids with school homework due to the increasing hours at work.
- Not being able to travel to their native country to be with their family. The fear of driving to work or grocery shopping and being pulled over.
- Getting resilience from family, and the support of one another. Bringing them closer and developing strength for one another.



DATING DIFFERENCES

BURNETT REED

The world is changing on a day-to-day basis, and most people have their own way of finding their significant other. “In 2015, there were 185 million users in dating platforms worldwide and in 2020 they became 270 million. The growth has been constant! +15 or 20 million per year. It’s likely to exceed 300 million in 2022” (statisticsanddata.org). My topic is so significant because it outlines how the way

of dating online has skyrocketed over the years. It shows how people sometimes more than others rather go online versus meeting in person. It outlines how some rather leave the looks, touching, and sights out of the question and rather go without.

My research question asked: do couples who meet online describe their initial attraction differently than couples who meet in person/in a blind date setting? In my article, “The Mediation of Matchmaking,” it states how online dating has modernized traditional partner search methods, allowing individuals to seek a partner that aligns with their preferences for attributes such as age, height, location, or education. My research will build on how the couples met, details information on the setting, also age, to see how and what they expected from their spouse.



In my article, it highlights community. It speaks volumes as to my interviewee stated a lot of people in her community have changed their ways of dating due to tradition sometimes being altered or modernized. My article was illustrated in Chengdo, China. According to recent data, some 30% of the 7 billion people on our planet now have access to the internet (internetworldstats.com). With respect to forming romantic relationships, the potential to reach out to nearly 2 billion other people offers several opportunities to the relationship-seekers that are unprecedented in human history. My research was so important to me because I myself met my spouse online and it shows how generations can intertwine between various age groups.

How I answered my question was very unique because in this case I didn’t have a direct answer. One respondent claimed she does look for things when meeting her spouse. She stated to her something like credit, religion, body build, appearance in public, talents, makes a big difference because she’d hope that’s what a man in his late 40’s-50’s should look for in his partner. Versus the others who met online have very little standards they need met before moving forward. The couple I interviewed said “she thinks her relationship bond is solid as glue due to the fact that the bar wasn’t so high.” Most people agree to disagree on these topics. Personally, what I gathered is no, people don’t think their initial attraction is different vs people who meet in in-person settings.

I conducted very fun interviews with my interviewees. We laughed about how both couples are currently with the person they met in their own walks of life. I asked them, would it be okay to interview together, and both parties agreed. We learned together, we laughed, we educated one another, we made friends. They answered the same questions and both said they could see the love each other had from their partners. My research was to see the difference but ultimately there were, but both ways concluded in both couples happily married.



SCREEN TIME AND SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT: A STUDY OF CHILDREN'S BEHAVIORS AND PARENTS' ATTITUDES

GRISSEL RODRIGUEZ

Introduction

Screen time these days is important for many reasons. We are exposed to it through school, work, business, and much more. This research emphasizes how different types of screen activities benefit or harm preschool-age children. This is an important topic for me because I work with families from different cultures and backgrounds that speak different languages, and all have children ages 0-4. Some of these families approve screen time for academic purposes or just for fun. I also know families outside of work that allow their young children the unlimited usage of screen time and are noticing speech delays and other development delays. A study from the Pew Research Center says that 71% of parents are concerned that their children spend too much time on screens. It seems like some parents worry about this and see it as a big problem. Is screen time necessarily harmful?

Research Questions

For this reason, my research asks the following questions: How do preschool-age children feel and behave after having screen time? And how do the parents of preschool-age children believe screen-time affects their children's cognitive development? I always ask myself, how much time is too much time? I wonder what others think about this. In this research, I want to learn more and inform others about my findings.

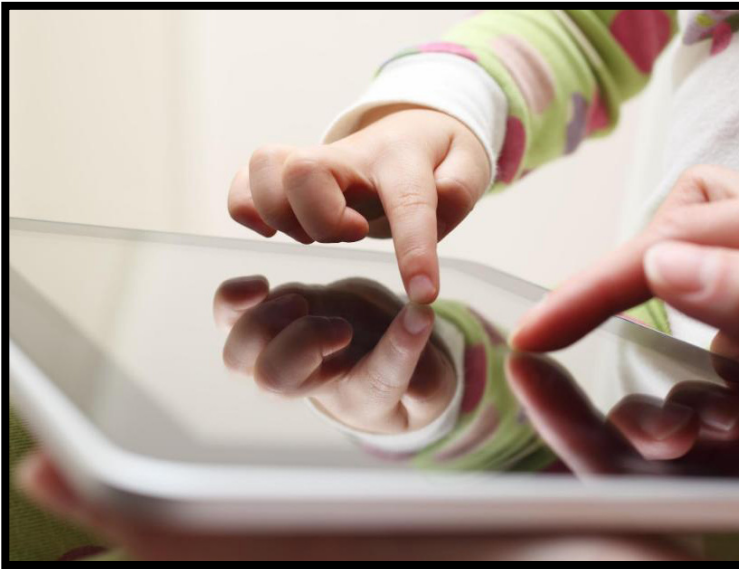
Literature Review

My question builds on existing literature, which suggests that screen time has positive and negative impacts on children depending on their characteristics and the types of entertainment they use.



In the article "Preschoolers' Social Cognitive Development in the Age of Screen Time Ubiquity" Taigan MacGowan and Louis Schmidt (2021) suggest that screen time for boys and girls has different outcomes. The screen time exposure for boys and girls was different based on the targeted programs for the children's gender. For boys there was more gaming time and they had lower performance on academic tasks with relatively lower social cognitive ability.

For girls screen time was more associated with helping others, solving conflicts, and educational messages; it was more positive role modeling and interpersonal lessons. The preliminary results of MacGowan's and Schmidt's research provide some of the first known perspective evidence of the impact of screen time on preschoolers' social and cognitive development around the time of formal school entry.



Their study has implications for parents regarding the amount of screen time they allow their children to engage in and to what kind of programming their children are being exposed to. However, MacGowan and Schmidt do not speak about children who are exposed to more than one language in the home.

I think this is very important because children might have the academic capacity, but if the researchers conducted their study only in English and if researchers asked preschoolers, they would only know the answers in their mother's language. In this research, I cover both screen time in English and the children's mother language. Furthermore, MacGowan

and Schmidt suggest that "future research should explore the educational quality of television and video game consumption." In this research, I'm including the perspective about screen time from a bilingual parent and childcare provider. It was very interesting to hear they both agree and disagree on specific questions of the interview. This research focuses on the view of a parent and, on the other hand, of a childcare provider.

Data and Methods

In order to answer my research questions, I planned and conducted two interviews. One interview was with a mother who is very involved in their children's education and who is fully bilingual in English and Spanish. I also interviewed a childcare provider with more than 25 years of experience here in Madison, Wisconsin. When I asked for an interview, both agreed to participate; they also find this topic interesting. During the interview I asked specific questions about their experience and why they think this is relevant in their daily lives. Both interviewees were asked the following four questions:

What is the policy of screen time?

What do you notice in your children's behaviors before screen time? And after screen time?

How do you help your children to cope when screen time is over?

Has the use of screen time changed during the pandemic?

The virtual interview was with the mother that I have known for nearly three years and I'm going to refer to her by her initials, MS. MS has three young girls ages 8-years-old, 5-years-old, and 30-months. I have had the pleasure of meeting these beautiful girls. The interview lasted for about an hour. I chose to interview MS because I've known her for some time and I have observed the loving, devoted, and dedicated mother she is to her children. MS is a mother I wanted to interview to hear about her experience and expertise when it comes to screen time in their home with her kids.

For my second interview, I spoke with a childcare provider that I have known for twenty years. I'm going to call her AB; AB has more than 25 years working in the in-home childcare field. This interview was in

person and lasted for about 45 minutes. I also wanted to hear the perspective from a childcare person because many children go to a childcare facility at least for a portion of the day while the parents work, go to school, or do other activities throughout the day. These two interviews were conducted in Spanish.

In this research, I included a question about the interviewee's perspectives in to regards screen time during the pandemic and how it affected or benefited these children. The COVID-19 worldwide pandemic has likely influenced children's screen time, so my results might differ from previous studies.

Findings

These interviews were conducted in Spanish because both interviewees felt more comfortable in their native language, and I agree with them as I'm also fluent in Spanish. Some of the findings that emerge during the interviews were the increase of usage of the electronic devices in children during the pandemic, both interviewees also agree that is fine for kids to have access to an electronic device mainly in these times where most of the human population depend on a cell phones, and lastly both interviewees talk about the importance to spend quality time with children to expose them to explore and find their talents.

Screen Time Policies: When asked about her policy for screen time, MS answered it's dependent on the child's age. For example, for a child of two-years-old it is one hour, for kids ages three to five it is two hours, and kids ages five to twelve also were allowed two hours of screen time per day.

On the other hand, AB, the childcare provider, said she only allows the kids under her care, who are four years old, to watch tv or be on their tablets no more than one hour a day. Also, MS and AB agreed that children should have access to an electronic device only with the supervision of an adult and with the purpose of academic programming based on the children's age. Both also agreed that children benefit from watching educational programs because kids learn by observing, listening, and doing.

The Effect of Screen Time on Children's Health and Behavior: When asked about the children's behavior before screen time and after screen time, MS said before her 8-year-old daughter had access to a screen, the daughter used to do more arts and crafts like coloring and go out to play outside. Now, after the 8-year-old spent an hour playing outside she comes home asking for the cell phone or tablet. For the 2-year-old and 5-year-old it is a bit more complicated because when their time is over that transition it is difficult because they start to cry.

AB argues that when the kids are exposed for a long time in front of a screen in their home and the childcare provider takes away the electronic device from the kids, they start to do tantrums and it makes it harder for the childcare provider to control the behavior of the children.

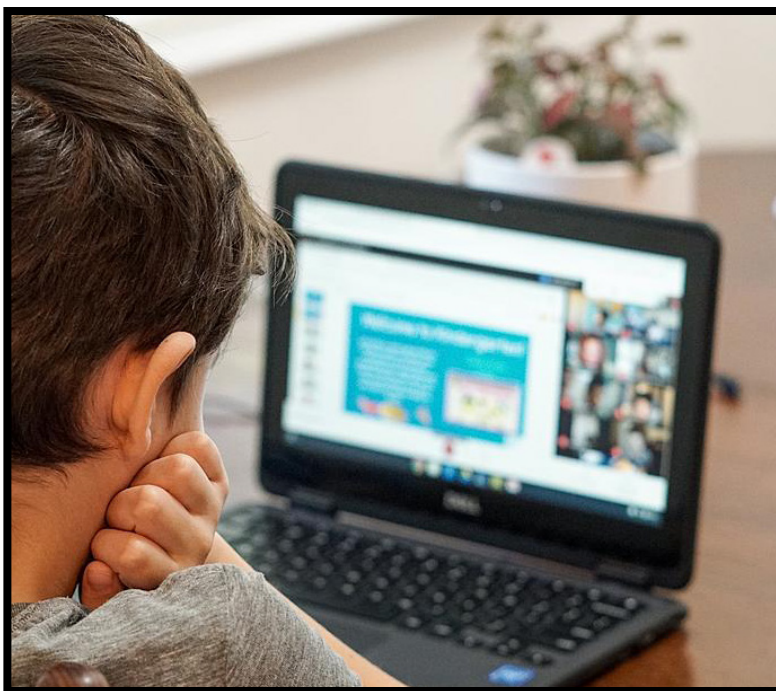


We also discussed how being in front of a screen affects the children's health. And both interviewees agreed that it has affected the kids' eyes. AB and MS said the eyes of these kids get dry and irritated, and some children have described their feelings by saying their eyes hurt.

Helping Children Transition from Screen Time: Both MS and AB agreed that it is important for parents and childcare providers to have strategies to help children to cope when screen time is over. MS mentioned that putting an alarm helps keeping track of the time that her daughters spent with the tablet or cell phone. Prior to giving them the device, she explains to the kids the rules and clarifies that they are responsible for charging their own devices for the next day, and they are very cooperative with that.

AB stated she helps children to cope when their screen time is over by distracting them with something they like to play with. For example, AB takes care of two boys ages 4-years-old and one of them likes to play hide-and-seek, so AB uses that technique that always works for her. On the other hand, the other 4-year-old boy is more attached to the tablet and the only thing that works for him is to play outside but during the winter it is hard to go out because it's cold. So, AB talks to the child about his feelings and says it's okay to feel frustrated or even angry. AB gives him the option to be mad or to join the play time with AB and the other children. AB also offers the child to do puzzles of shapes or letters that he likes to play. After some time, AB said the 4-year-old feels better, and he starts playing with the rest of the kids. At that point, AB voids the tablet access for the rest of the day for this child.

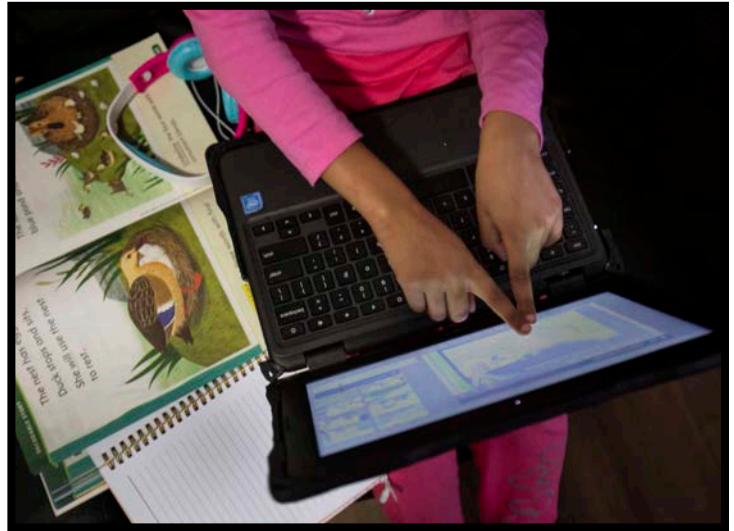
Screen Time During the Pandemic: When I started the conversation about screen time during the pandemic, MS mentioned that screen time changed during the pandemic because her daughters spent three to four hours a day in front of a screen. MS stated she and her husband had to be more understandable towards their children because they already did try doing a variety of activities inside the home like painting, cutting paper, cooking, doing laundry and they reached a point where mom and dad didn't have any more ideas. For nearly two years, their daughters couldn't go outside to the playground, the mall, gym, or just go out for a walk because of the pandemic. MS said, "Worth mentioning that being the home schoolteacher for my two oldest daughters was one of the hardest things I had to face." MS said that when her daughters were under the care of her mother, the kids' grandma gave them unlimited screen time and that didn't help MS and her husband when it came to the home screen time policy.



AB agreed and said "it was very hard when the kids came back to the in-home childcare after the pandemic as most of the children came very attached to their electronic devices. These children that were very used to their tablet, they could continue to the same routing with the childcare provider." AB said it was a difficult transition. At first, it was a big problem to make the transition to limit the screen time in the in-home childcare. AB said she believes that it has been hard for these little ones to

be isolated in their homes without going out because of the pandemic. AB coded, “It was a terrible loss for these children at their young age because they lost two years of their lives, and now they depend on electronic devices. I think they’re marked for the rest of their lives.”

MS and AB agreed that children should have access to an electronic device only with the supervision of an adult and with the purpose of academic programming based on the children’s age. Both also agreed that children benefit from watching educational programs because kids learn by observing, listening, and doing.



Conclusion

The takeaway after I did these two interviews with AB and MS is that both agree that it is good for children to have access to an electronic device, and both emphasize having rules for screen time. MS suggests other parents should implement screen time rules based on the age of the children. MS discovered that limiting the screen time for her daughters has helped her and her children to explore different talents that her children possess like drawing, playing the piano, and much more. MS stated her children wouldn’t be exposed to these activities if they would have been only on their tablets. MS also recommends families to have control over these devices because that helps children in the schools, so they don’t isolate themselves from schoolmates, family, and friends.

Something that resonated with me at the end of the interview with AB was when she said: The best gift you can give a child is your time. Spending quality time playing with your child is the most loving memory you can leave in the hearts of these children. It is critical to make the child feel that they are being raised by people they love. I’ve seen the children that are accustomed to the tablet, and they isolate themselves from the real world. I suggest to all the parents out there to dedicate time with your children that is more valuable than all the most expensive screens in the world. I see children feel so happy when an adult interacts with them. Children feel very important when adults like their mom and dad spend time with them...

When mom or dad get older remember, what you sow is what you will reap. In Spanish this is “Lo que siembras es lo que cosechas.” AB’s remarks were so powerful for me because I don’t think about the future, and it makes me reflect that we already know children are the future, and we need to take good care of them. One way we can take care of our children and take care of their future is by making sure we understand how the things we’re exposing them to affect them, like screen time, and that’s why this research is important. We want to make sure that we know what we let them do when they go on screens because this exposure has an impact on these children’s learning, their communication, personal and social skills, problem solving, and other important cognitive skills.

This research is different than others because it was conducted in a language the mother and the childcare provider know. Future research should not be only interviews but should be built on this same idea to interview kids, parents, care givers, and childcare providers in their native language they understand.



IN WHAT WAYS DOES SOCIAL MEDIA HARM MENTAL HEALTH?

BARBARA ROGERS

In what ways does social media harm mental health? Does the effect depend on the age of the user? Social Media started out as a fun social outlet used for entertainment purposes and to stay connected with family & friends. Apps like Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Tik Tok, and YouTube are all popular apps that have become more integrated with society and the way we communicate with one another. I think bringing awareness on how social media harms mental health is an important topic because social media is a part of our everyday lives nowadays. After observing myself, family, and friends, I have found it to have pros – like news updates, social events, marketing, networking, and emotional support – but, I have also observed some of the cons – like social media addiction, isolation, lowered productivity, etc. At the end of this research, I am hoping to bring more awareness about social media and the effects it has on society's mental health, as well as steps to help develop a healthier relationship between society and with these platforms. Social media only seems to keep growing into a bigger, popular platform. Around 4.2 billion people use social media.

In “The link Between Social Media and Mental Health,” Gordon (2021) reports that the average person spends 2.5 hours on social media every day. Although there are not any long-term studies about social media and the impact it has on mental health, studies have shown social has had an impact on mental health both good and bad depending on your own personal use of social media. This article is a great relation to the question. As stated in the article, social media is growing in popularity. It is one of the main ways people stay connected with family and friends that live far away, especially during the pandemic.

Because everyone is different, it is important to know how social media is affecting your own life, rather than dwelling on its negative or positive aspect for others. Gordon made some good key points in this article and the effects it has on mental health. Although social media is great for being able to stay in touch with loved ones and boost self-esteem, it can also lower your self-esteem when comparing your life



and the things posted on social media to others' lives. Through evaluating their personal social media, people can address the mental health side of social media that a lot of people are just unaware of that is happening to them internally - things like feeling distracted, low self-esteem, less social in the real world outside of social media. I think we are all starting to be aware of the effect social media has on mental health. 81% of people are spending more time on social media now thanks to Covid.

I interviewed/observed, Y, between age 19-23, who is also my sister. I thought Y would be perfect interviewee for the topic of: in what ways does social media harm mental health? I thought she would be great because she is right between the pre-teen and young adult stage. I believe when social media started booming, it has had more effect on the younger upcoming generation between 17-39. She's a 22yr Female, born and raised in Madison, WI. I will be comparing Y interview to my second interviewee, R, who is a co-worker of mine between the ages of 35-40. I talked to Y and R to get some great insight on their views of social media and how they feel it has affected they mental health. I then compared my two interviewees' questions and observations to the information I gathered from the internet about what effect social media has on mental health.

A few questions asked during my interview are:

Do you feel social media impacts your productivity?
How has social media affected your social life?
What is your understanding of the purpose of social media?
How often are you on social media?
What are some of you favorite social media sites to visit?
What do you do/ look for on social media?
How do you feel after looking at social media?
Does social media make you feel behind in life/ the real world? Why or why not?
Do you feel like the pandemic has impacted your social media use in any way?



These are all great starter questions. I hope to collect more data to bring awareness to social media and the effect it plays on our mental health.

They both were asked about how they feel social media affects their productivity when trying to get things done. They both agreed although social media has a lot of positive aspects, it is a huge distraction when trying to get things done.

Another observation I made was they both agreed social media makes them feel less social with others and more closed off.

The understanding of social media use is for entertainment, social connections with family and friends from all over the world.

When asked how much time is spent on social media, they both said 24/7 but realistically 8-12hr throughout each day.

Majority of the social media sites visited were sites like Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok, and Snapchat.

The Impact of social media on interpersonal connections: I found it interesting that each interviewee said they use social media to keep contact with family & friends, and networking with others, but both can agree that social media has made them more closed off in person, due to reasons like being distracted by social media making it hard to hold a common conversation, being exposed to disturbing news events making it hard to trust people. Social media holds a bigger influence over our social life more than we realize it. Sometimes I wonder If we were to have a social power out with social media only for 3-4 weeks how would the world keep social contact? Will it force people to be more social in person? Will talking on the phone or meeting up in person become the new norm again?

“Social battery running low, becoming more introvert? Put the phone down and pick up life, less scrolling more living”

24/7 distraction: Both interviewees feel they spend the entire day on social media which takes up a lot of their time throughout the day. Social media has become a big distraction when trying to stay productive and getting things done. When trying to focus on things like school, hobbies, family, work etc... instead you find yourself logging in and out of social media because you're bored or it's just almost like second nature. I feel like because social media is always available it's an easy distraction.

“It takes discipline not to let social media steal your time” ~ Alexis Ohanlan

After conducting my interview with Y and R, I found a lot of similarities between the two even though there is a 20 year age difference. These are all key observations I made between the two interviewees that I felt were similar or that they related to one another. I felt that Y and R were both relaxed during the interview. Both interviews took place in a quiet setting. Y's interview was done in the comfort of her home. R's interview was done at work. I think doing both the interviews in a quiet setting they both were able to focus on the questions that were being asked. They both reacted to the questions very well. They both enjoyed the interview and thought that I asked very good questions. I think that they both talked a great amount during the interview. I tried to make sure I did follow up questions to get more insight and not ask too many one-word questions.

Both interviews were done in the late afternoon between 3-5pm. I positioned myself across from the interviewees to ensure I was able to read their body language. Some things I would like to do during my next interview is ask more detailed questions. During my interview neither of the interviewees were on their phone, which I thought was funny. I wasn't sure if it was avoiding social media at the moment due to the interview question about social media, or if they were just as much interested in my questions as I was in their responses.





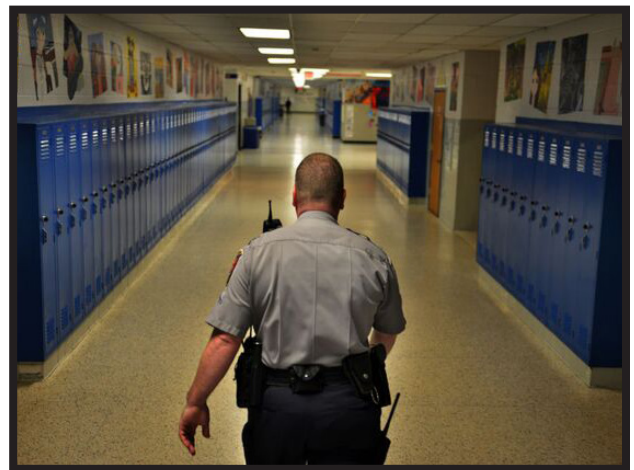
ARE POLICE IN SCHOOLS REALLY A GOOD THING?

HAILEY SJUGGERUD

In current society some schools have been using cops in schools in pretty much the same way as a security guard to try to stem school violence. Possibly the brightest and most hopeful intentions go into making school a more secure safe place for all. Opinions differ on the use of police in schools. Some think it makes children more known to police by having daily involvement when the police who are legally much more than security guards are having much more extensive knowledge of an individual child and possibly their family than had it not been for school involvement. Others have said they wouldn't send their kid to school if there wasn't a police presence. Another prominent opinion of policing in heavily minority populated schools is that having police around activates a trauma response and makes learning harder.

My main question in writing this article and interviewing others with a possible interest seeks to define does having police in schools disproportionately hurt minority students of color? I hope to interview persons with personal experience within education or community service.

The article I am reviewing "Testing the school to prison pipeline" by Emily G. Owens discusses Federal SRO grants given to schools to retain police care of public schools implementing police and police policies into schools, sometimes called COPS or community Oriented Policing Services or CIS-Cops in Schools, disproportionately given to schools with higher minority populations. The author cites the use of such policies as maybe exploiting statistics by use of police in the given schools by officially recording more crime in and out of schools, whereas a school that chose not to use SROs deals with problems in a more community-family oriented way.



The major discussion of "Testing the school to prison pipeline" is would these same crimes often go unreported if police had less contact with children? Do the kids at said schools become "Known" to police in a negative light? The article also uses statistics and quantitative data to support and lead the discussion for or against Police within the institution of school.

The questions I will be asking will start with:

1. Did you go to a school with police presence growing up?
2. How do you feel about cops in schools?
3. Why do you think they don't use regular security guards?
4. What alternatives to de-escalation may be used?
5. Would you send your child to a school using police presence?

These questions will likely become more prevalent moving forward in a growing population. In my own city where I live, they removed police from high schools 2 years ago and now after a spike in fights at the High School level, possibly caused by a sense of frustration from our recent pandemic, our new police chief seeks to reinstate policing in schools. “Sade” is somewhat of a leader in the Madison Wisconsin community, working on the police oversight committee, having previous experience removing the police from Madison schools.



- How were you raised growing up? Sade was raised by “hippies,” activists, and artists between Madison and her other home, Mexico. Sade was raised to be a critical thinker, agnostic, and to question systems.
- What is your own personal background? S - “I was a young mom, working at a number of nonprofits. I am the survivor of sexual and physical abuse. I am a very protective mother of afro-chicano children coming from a family where I was the only minority in a white family that was dismissive of my struggles.”
- Do you have a vested interest in the policing of schools? S - “Yes, I want them out. Justice Castenada formed an ad hoc committee that found in our area of the students arrested or ticketed 95% are black or latino, 75% are girls, making life for children becoming black women harder.”
- Would you send your child to a school with cops? S - “I would not send my child to a school with cops. I felt better for the time my daughter did go to East because she had the support of school liaisons Sylvia and Maria.”
- Why do you think they don’t just use security guards? S - “I think they do use security guards. East and West have good security teams. The security guards (at East and West High Schools) are 85% people of color. Police change their position every three years so they would move in and out of the school. Our former police chief Koval wanted to do things his way and not really the way the schools were asking him to; with him it was my way or the highway. Having police exacerbates disparities and can create a police state.”
- What would you do to de-escalate hostilities at school? S - “I would use conflict resolution skills, have a soft morning having kids come in, get settled and do a check-in. I would use restorative justice and give kids more opportunities to work or do extra curricular things.”

My next subject is “Shane.” He is a vice principal in Pflugerville, Texas, a suburb of Austin, Texas.



- How were you raised growing up? S - “I grew up in severe poverty. My family lived in 25 places at least between my birth and turning 18. Education was stressed in my home and seen as a ticket out. I had the unique experience of being a black male Israelite, being bilingual, able to speak Hebrew and believing to be ‘the chosen people’.”
- What is your own personal background?
S - “I became a teacher to help children at elementary level. I believe the elementary level contributes greatly to adulthood, catching them at an impressionable age.”
- Do you have a vested interest in the policing of schools? S - “I believe the police have potential to help, police get a bad rep. Police and schools should do better at presenting as partners. It’s always going to look bad when police do something punitive. Schools should do something positive like have a get together introducing officers in school and stating whatever agenda upfront to students.”
- Would you send your own child to a school with cops? S - “Absolutely. Parenting starts at home. My child would never be in that situation. What I mean to say is she’s already at an advantage since I’m in education and already know all the ins and outs.”
- Why do you think they don’t just use security guards? S - “I think they do still use security guards, sometimes schools using police is over-reactional. There should be more communication within situational things and partnerships in schools.”
- What would you do to de-escalate hostilities at school? S - “Behavior support plans, my job as an assistant principal is to support positive outcomes. My work is helping kids get the support they need be it a 504 plan for ADHD, or getting a child diagnosed for a condition.”
- Did you have cops in school growing up? S - “We didn’t have cops in school growing up, the cop was our gym teacher (laughs).”
- Do you think race plays a role in having police in schools? S - “Yes and somewhat justified.”

“Starting at home”

My two test subjects were raised similarly in that both came from two different cultures and are bilingual but have very different, somewhat strong opinions. Sade is Chicana/White raised as the sole Chicana amongst a white family of “hippies” to be an independent free critical thinker. Sade was an advocate in her community and attended meetings at her local high school repealing police involvement on a local scale. Shane, who is African American and Hebrew, was raised by a school teacher to also be a critical thinker.



Sade would not send her child to a school using cops, citing a local committee report that found 95% of students being arrested by police locally were minorities and 75% surprisingly were young black girls. Sade, a mother of an African/Chicana daughter, says these practices are “making life for children becoming black women harder.” Shane works in education as a vice principal and states he would absolutely send his daughter to a school with police involvement; he feels parenting should be done more by parents rather than leaving it all up to the school system. I think both of my interviewees show a common denominator of advocating for their children at the parental level first.

SROs or cops within schools may be part of an endogamy.

Bias perpetuates segregation that helps groups or communities resist integrating or merging with other groups that don’t share common beliefs. There needs to be serious inquiry done into any matter of police policing children as they are just children and even common criminals are presumed innocent until guilty. They are starting to really acquire data and it seems to keep coming back with serious justification of possible bias within SROs (cops within schools), showing a much larger portion of minorities at even mixed race schools being arrested, also more SRO grants for school populations being higher in minority backgrounds.

My second subject, Shane, believes this to be justified yet did actually point out there is the bias that he believed would always be there, “You’re always gonna have that.”

Two common themes seemed to develop throughout these two interviews, one of structure and regularity taking away the possible confusion of the environment surrounding kids in a school setting so kids develop and thrive in a familiarity they can count on such as Sade citing soft morning daily for kids entering school each day and Shane expressing a need for the cops to state their expectations so they can be met. The second theme noted was a need for letting kids be appreciated as children and not adults before their time. I think there is a growing need for more research into future outcomes of children attending schools with SROs and their outcomes compared with children who did not, to see how many disparities there are.



WHAT HISTORICAL ROLE DID POLYGAMY PLAY IN THE HMONG SOCIETY?

MAI NENG THAO

Introduction

Up until I started kindergarten, I did not think anything was anomalous about my family dynamics. That was until I started noticing most of my peers had a single father, mother, and only a few siblings. I am a child of a polygamist society, born to my father's second wife and one of the sixteen children that he bore. As I got older, I became increasingly curious as to why my mother chose to marry my father knowing that he was already married, especially since polyamory in the Hmong culture is far from the utopian experience modern Americans believe it to be. More often than not, Hmong polygamist marriages are a life-time commitment filled with hardships, animosity, jealousy, and sometimes even violence.

Regrettably, both my parents are extremely discreet about their relationships and do not find pleasure in discussing their personal life happenings, especially past romantic relationships before one another. Realizing that I would probably never truly know the mind of the young and hopeful man and woman my parents once were, I became more interested in learning about the historical reasonings as to how polygamy culturally emerged and the importance of its contribution to the Hmongs. This led me to the research question: What historical role did polygamy play in the Hmong society? In exploring that question, I had hoped to discover understanding, compassion, and closure to the hard and difficult life my parents chose, and continue to choose.

Literature

Hmong means *people of the mountains* or sometimes known as, *the free people*. An article published in the Hmong Studies Journal (Lee, Gary Yia. "The Shaping of Traditions: Agriculture and Hmong Society." *Hmong Studies Journal*, 2005, members.ozemail.com.au/~yeulee/Culture/The%20Shaping%20of%20Traditions.html. Accessed April 2022.) mentions the strong agricultural history of the indigenous Hmong tribes who inhabited the Southern mountains of China. During the expansion of ancient China dating as far back as four thousand years, the Hmongs refused to fall to China's colonial oppression and military conquests. As a result, Hmongs endured forceful goods taxation as a form of currency from the Chinese government. These goods taxes changed over time but began with hempen cloth, handicrafts, and grains, to name a few.



Hmongs relied greatly on the life of agriculture to sustain the demands of the Chinese government, which led some families to resort to polygamy as a means to pool resources together. A family's wealth was often measured based on the farming capacity each household was able to bring in; hence, the more children or family members you had to help around the farm, the better your chance of survival was.

While the article was able to connect polygamy to imperial China's unfair treatment of the Hmong, it does not provide other explanations as to how polygamy became so socially acceptable.

Data and Methods

Culturally, discussions of sexual intimacies among Hmongs are very personal and private matters and are not to be shared explicitly with others. However, I was fortunate enough to find two individuals who had direct experiences with polyamorous marriages. My first subject (Subject A) is a Hmong woman in her late 50's who is the second wife to her husband of over 30 years. My second subject (Subject B) is a Hmong man who is nearing his mid 60's and has two wives of over 30 years. Surprisingly, my subjects spoke openly and honestly about their experiences and knowledge of polygamy. Although two very different ideologies were presented, it was through these deep and intimate conversations that I learned the historical importance of polygamy among the Hmong society.

Findings

Oral History

As the Hmongs have a rich oral tradition, an interesting theme among both subjects was that they both pulled their beliefs from oral stories. Subject A began with an oral folktale of a Husband and Wife who, unbeknownst to them, had a scheme plotted against them by the King. The King ordered the Husband to kill his Wife and return with her head. The Husband refused to do such a thing, so the King went to his Wife with the same task. The Wife followed through with the deed and presented the head of her Husband to the King. From that point on, Hmong women were deemed evil and disposable.

Although Subject A did not believe in this folktale, she does believe that men created that story to bend the rules to their benefits. This story had great parallelism to the biblical story of Adam and Eve, which reminded me that women were often blamed for chaos and corruption so as part of their punishment, they were inferior to men.

Subject B's response was the most interesting and educational. He mentioned that long ago, plural marriages were exclusively for men who held positions of power such as a ranking government official or a leader. Oftentimes, villagers would offer their daughters to highly respected government officials as a form of respect and admiration. Having your daughter marry such a man not only came with great honor but a guaranteed protection and safety for your entire family.



Agriculture Was Not a Factor

Another common overlap both subjects touched on was the disagreement that polygamy stemmed from the Hmongs' historical agricultural roots. I asked both subjects if they thought polyamory is a result of needing lots of family members to help out around the farmland, to which they both disagreed. Subject A heavily emphasized that men have more rights than women so they are able to socially twist rules whenever it's convenient for them. Subject B reiterated that polyamory became a socially accepted phenomenon because it derived from a place of honor.

Cause and Effect of War

A prevalent theme that both subjects mentioned was the destruction and desperation of warfare. Subject A brought up that after the Vietnam War, she had a great desire to come to the United States. Part of the reason why she married her husband was because he shared similar values to seek out opportunities in the United States.

At an early age, Subject B was recruited into a Secret Guerilla Warfare to fight the Communist Vietnamese. He then gained status through his sacrifice and became that of a recognized leader to his community. Although his second wife was not offered to him as a token of appreciation, his leadership status still allowed his society to support and accept his decision to marry a second wife.



Other Findings

Something astounding that I learned from Subject B was that in the early days, common citizens did not participate in polygamy. Later, as time went on, villagers took on the practice for several reasons. The first reason a man would engage in the interest of a second wife is if his first wife was unable to bear children. The second is if the first wife has only sons or only daughters. Sons are important because they carry on the legacy of the family as daughters are often married off to other clans. However, having only sons might still entice the idea of marrying a second wife to diversify the children as daughters bring balance and prosperity. The third reason is that when parents age and grow old, their hope is that their children will take care of them. Having plentiful children will ensure that you will have a smooth transition into the afterlife.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I believe I discovered the closure I so desperately needed in my parents. Being a child of a polygamist household was not easy. At times I would witness my mothers exhibit hostility for one another and persuade the children to engage in resentment toward each other. I was often confused as to why my mother would marry another woman's husband, but as I got to learn more about the historical roles and importances polygamy played in Hmong culture, I began to grow in understanding for why in generations prior, such practices were the norm. My research uncovered that polygamy was once a reliable source of survival, whether that be for the safety from war affairs or the security near one's death. At one point in time, polygamy was not used for the purpose of dominance, conformity, and submission of women, but a form of strategic efforts to carry on the lineages of the Hmong people. Our parents' decision to enter a polyamory marriage was to guarantee that we become the future ancestors to our future generations.



MIXED RACE PEOPLE AND INTERNALIZED RACISM

TASHA THOMPSON

Introduction

I am mixed race and there are many people in the same boat as me! According to the Washington Post, there are over 33 million Americans that identify as multi-racial (two or more races) (Foster-Frau et al., 2021). I can relate to questioning between my races. Did you know that about 1 in 5 multi-racial adults (21%) say that they have felt pressure from friends, family or from society in general to choose one of the races in their background over another (Parker et al., 2015)? Over my lifetime I have realized that I struggle with choosing one race over the other. I am curious, and so I ask the question: are there mixed black people who experience internalized racism - like I do?

Research question

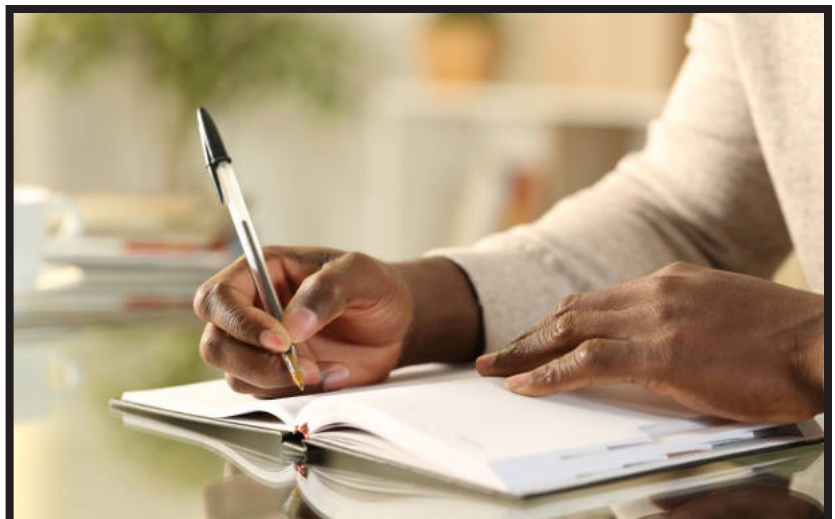
Do mixed black people feel like they experience internalized racism?

Literature Review

The article that I ended up finding was very helpful and painted a good picture of my idea. It didn't change my research question or idea, but it made me think a little harder and more in depth about how interesting my topic really is. It opened up many opinions and made me want to learn more and do more of my own research. In the article "The loneliness of being mixed race in America" (Vox First Person, 2021) there is evidence that mixed race people have higher rates of mental health issues and substance abuse. In another study (Parker et al., 2015), it was said that nearly half (46 %) of all multi-racial Americans are younger than 18. By contrast, only 23% of the overall U.S. population is under the age of 18. Cool, right!? Mixed race people have unique needs, strengths, and challenges. I don't think that the multiple articles that I read were missing anything, as they covered a lot of details. However, I would have liked to see more information regarding internalized racism. I've interviewed a few people from mixed backgrounds to get their input - how do they feel and what they are comfortable identifying with and why?

Data and Methods

I interviewed my three siblings, one tutor, and one student. In total, there were two males (one was from a white and black background and the other was from a black and Nigerian background), and three women from mixed background (two identify as black and white, and the other identifies as Puerto Rican, Hungarian, and German). The interviews that I have conducted lasted between 30-45 minutes each. Three of the five interviews I completed were done on FaceTime. While I was in a quiet



place and ready to get the interview started, the interviewees were doing other things such as; attending to their children, cooking dinner, talking to the kids while their kids were on zoom. Even though they were doing other things, it didn't ruin the interview; it actually made it more comfortable because I could relate to what they were doing and they were my siblings. The other two interviews were conducted on zoom, but in a very quiet room and more personalized. There were fewer distractions. Those two interviews happened at different times and different days; they were able to just talk to me and it was a comfortable environment. As I am a mixed black person myself, I am going to be adding some of my own feelings and why I am uncomfortable identifying with both races. I'd like to give some of my crazy unique experiences.

Findings

After successfully completing interviews, I found that most mixed black people are comfortable in their own skin and are able to accept who they are. The data show that more than half of the people I interviewed were comfortable and accepted that they were from a mixed background. However, two of my interviewees favor their white race—although they identify as being mixed. When interviewee number one was asked if she ever corrects people, she responds:

*“Ooh yeah, when people say you’re black. No, the f** I’m not. I’m mixed—black and white.” - Interviewee 1*

I also found that each of my interviewees that favor or identify more with one race/culture or the other do so because of a lack of knowledge of their history. For an example, Interviewee 2 comes from a two-parent household and she is Puerto Rican, German, and Hungarian (Latina and White). She mentions that her parents didn't internally raise them to be culturally involved, but her mother instilled her Puerto Rican culture in her at a very young age.

“Mom instilled it in me very young, my dad could’ve tried.” - Interviewee 2

Finding number two is that society is making it harder for mixed black people to identify as mixed – asking them to choose one race/culture over the other. Interviewee 3, who has fairly white skin and green eyes, has been raised by black people all his life and the man that he calls his dad is black. He identifies as a mixed man, but having light skin, he gets weird looks and feels like has to choose to be white but that's not who he is or what he wants to be a part of. When asked what are some issues that this group faces that other groups don't, he responds:

“...a lot, people don’t know what to identify you as. Name calling, people don’t know what they’re talking about.” - Interviewee 3



Conclusion

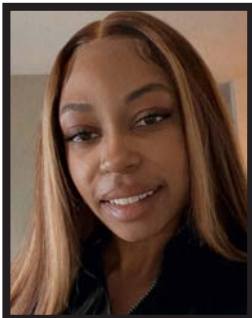
In conclusion, not all mixed black people experience internalized racism. The people that favor one race over another have more background, more knowledge from the side that they favor – meaning that they know more about it, were introduced to it, and were raised with it. I found that if they don't know too much about a race, they chose not to get more information and explore it. In the future I would like to explore and interview more people that actually experience internalized racism and figure out why and if they have had any experience that caused it. After conducting the interviews, no one actually answered the research question, even though it wasn't asked. No one mentioned that they experience internalized racism. It could be that people might be worried about expressing this. I can't be positive from this one method (interviews) alone that internalized racism is rare. I am hoping that in the future society will change so that they make it easier for people of mixed backgrounds to identify so it's not so hard to pick and choose. We should be able to be who we are and who we want to be. I have come to the conclusion for myself that no matter what I see myself as, it isn't about me or what I want: it is what society sees me as. I identify with my white side, but society sees me as an African American woman: a woman of color.

Works Cited:

"Pew Research Center, June 2015, Multiracial In America, By Kim Parker, Juliana Menasce Horowitz. Rich Morin. and Mark Hugo Lopez."

Vox First Person. 2021, "The loneliness of being mixed race in America"

"Washington Post: "We 're talking about a big, powerful phenomenon': Multiracial Americans drive change" October, 2021 By: Silvia Foster-Frau, Ted Mellnik and Adrian Blanco.



THE SIGNIFICANCE OF STIGMA AROUND SEEKING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES LA'CEE WEBSTER

The way we think about things often can influence the way we talk about them. Race/ethnicity, gender, and other social factors play a role in mental health treatment (Ward 2013). To really dive in and understand why and how these social factors relate to one's mental health/illness, I conducted interviews with a provider who works in the behavioral health field and a client who sought mental health services. This comparison gets at the issue of stigma head on. I will only ask them to generally speak on trends they see in the behavior health system, in order to protect the privacy of clients.

Research Questions

For this reason, social scientists have long been interested in how race and gender impact mental health stigma. For example, what role does stigma play in impacting whether or not someone seeks mental health treatment? What role does race/culture play in treatment seeking? How does Eastern/Western medicine impact mental health treatment? Do you think it's important for therapists and clients to share the same gender, sexual orientation, and/or race? What have been challenges in providing/seeking mental health care during the pandemic? I'm curious to see whether people's answers vary depending on their own beliefs, race/ethnicity, and their level of experience.

Literature Review

In the article “African-American men and women’s attitude toward mental illness, perceptions of stigma and preferred coping behaviors,” Ward, Wiltshire, Detry, and Brown (2013) argue that stigma and judgment contribute to why there are fewer African-Americans seeking treatment. Amongst other factors, mental health practitioners are not being culturally competent in society today. Furthermore, there is a lack of African-American psychological providers as well as other cultural barriers amongst providers and clients. My research will add to the research I’ve studied in so many ways: Opening your eyes to the importance of mental health, and balancing your mind, body and spirit as they are all connected; taking another look at the furthering gaps between African-Americans and Caucasians not only when it comes to mental health but other aspects of life as well.



Data and Methods

In order to answer my research question, I conducted interviews with a provider and a client about their attitudes around treatment, those who have sought treatment and those who have not, and some individuals who are behavioral health providers such as psychologists, social workers, spiritual leaders etc., and people supporting others with mental health issues and how their experiences have been. I wanted my interviews to be more of a formal conversation to really dig deep and get their perspectives and observations. This approach helped me identify attitudes, stigma and other thoughts related to mental health. Now that I have completed my interviews with a provider and a client who has sought behavioral health services, my findings were very interesting. I chose to interview these two individuals because it is important to get perspectives from different backgrounds and race/ethnicity.

My first interview was with “J,” a Caucasian female in her mid 30’s working in the field of social work. She has been in this field for 11 years, starting out as a behavioral health therapist. She later switched to social work as she was drawn to working in healthcare. “J” has been with Meriter for five years at one of the primary care clinics. She states, “In healthcare you look at the holistic picture of the person and their social networks to help break down barriers. So their overall health and well-being can be supported.” I thought this was very well said! It’s hard to follow doctors’ suggestions/recommendations if you don’t have access to resources and tools you need.

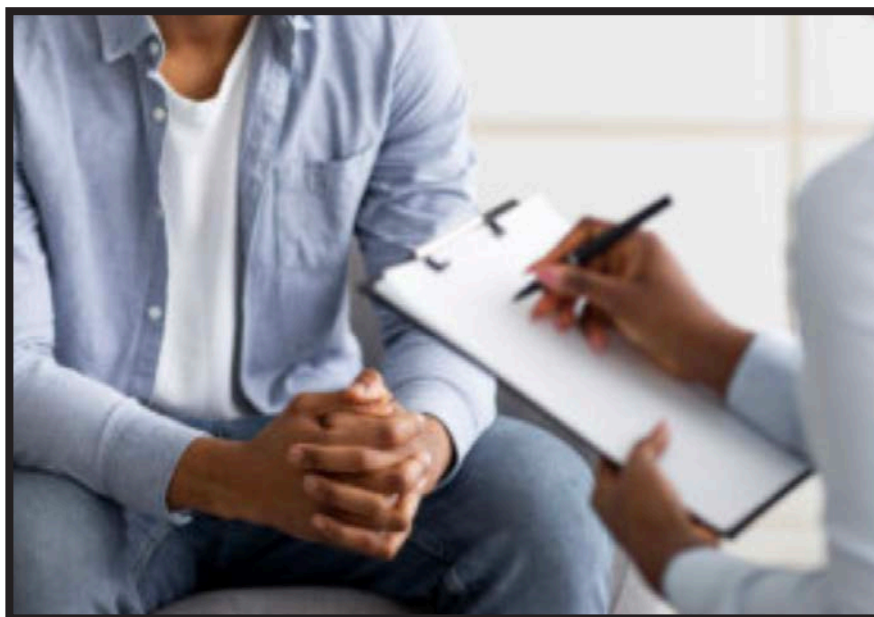
My second interview was with “A,” who is a biracial female in her mid 20’s. She attends school full-time at Aveda, studying Aryurvedic medicine and seeks behavioral health services. This program at Aveda is 10 months long and she is excited to be graduating this August. She encourages treatment and thinks it is more comfortable to have a therapist of the same gender/ethnicity, sexual orientation, and/or race from experience.

Findings

There were three themes that came up in my data collection. The first is time constraints: the numbers of people seeking, needing and wanting mental health services has increased. Clients who can't get help right away, or who do not have a lot of time through work and life responsibilities, give up on finding help. Clients with more intense behavioral health symptoms want to be seen on a more weekly and monthly basis, which puts extra pressure on the system. Things have been implemented to help since the wait time has been several weeks. Meriter/UW health has incorporated behavioral health services at some of their primary care clinics with the hope that patients can be seen more quickly and then transition over to the behavioral health office. Telehealth, warm line, local free support groups, and online depression/ anxiety groups are other options for patients. However, some patients may not have access to such resources for many reasons. The provider mentioned how she would implement processes so that patients can be seen quickly and mentioned these ideal models several times. I can tell she is passionate about her job and cares a lot about the quality care of her patients.

The second theme is shame versus distrust. There is a difference between what the "provider" and "client" believe regarding what roles race/ culture play in seeking treatment. The provider focused on shame, reluctance, and stigma - from shame due to medication, vulnerability, diagnosis, and insurance. As the provider states: "We live in a society where you pick yourself up by your bootstraps, work hard and get by." The "client" listed distrust of Western medicine, stating that pharmaceutical companies are billion dollar industries, and Western medicine focuses on suppressing the symptoms (i.e. Pain pills). Therefore, she believes that the issue will remain, with possible side effects from these medications so you'll keep coming back. It's a vicious cycle. Eastern medicine focuses on the longevity of life, the root cause and eliminating it. Overall, a more spiritual approach involves the mind body and soul. If one thing is in balance, everything is because the mind, body, soul are all connected. Western healthcare doesn't treat African Americans equally, nor does it take them seriously. The "client" states: "DNA in African Americans has proven to be stronger; therefore, providers assume African American can endure more and still sustain."

Some similarities between the "provider" and "client" are around culture. They noted some similar stigmas, such as taking medication, and barriers such as cultural competence. They also discussed



stigmas around being "labeled" with a diagnosis, and type of income and insurance (i.e Government versus commercial). The biggest difference between Eastern and Western medicine's views on mental health is their approaches. The "Provider" states that in Western medicine going to a therapist and getting the necessary treatment/medication is the ideal model. Doing so is the "best" route to what society deems normal - what your "normal" emotions are supposed to look like. The "client" gave me many examples of detoxes and ways to stay healthy and prevent disease. The client is

very knowledgeable and shows extreme interest in Eastern medicine, hence being in school full time at Aveda for Ayurvedic medicine. It's so nice to make connections and just take in all the information from her because I am pursuing the same thing for my holistic skin care business. I learned a lot!

Lastly, cultural competence is a barrier to seeking treatment. Both interviewees talked about the lack of providers and behavioral therapists of color (i.e. psychologists, therapists, social workers). "Most are white females" the provider stated. The provider went into detail about the importance of therapist and clients sharing the same gender, sexual orientation, and/or race. Having a safe space to talk about traumas with someone you can relate to is key - especially if the depression/ anxiety is coming from racism within their community. Having a safe space to talk about these things and process is important. If there aren't therapists in the community that can relate to what clients have gone through/are going through, it is a lot harder and patients are more reluctant. Furthermore, the provider brought up an important point about the tendency for providers to be more critical of patients of color and quick to give stronger diagnosis and have judgment on why progress may not be as quick as they'd like. Overall, there is a lot more judgment and criticism of patients of color, which helps explain why the numbers are so low in African Americans seeking treatment.

Conclusion

Needless to say, there is a need and we should demand access to more behavioral support and resources for the African-American community. When I originally chose mental health as a topic—from my own experiences, and experiences from close friends/family, as well as having done minimal research in the past—I knew the African-American community has been struggling for a long time. However, not only within the behavioral health system which is more prevalent due to COVID-19 (i.e. accessing general healthcare), but also in many other aspects that contribute to overall success within the African-American community. We know there is a nationwide shortage of mental health providers, facilities, and resources. More so, there is still a stigma around all of it.

Despite this, I have found and continue to find outreach focusing on African-American communities. For example, "BEAM" (Black Emotional and Mental Health) is an organization dedicated to the healing, wellness, and liberation of black communities. "The Boris Lawrence Henson Foundation," a foundation changing those perceptions of mental health by encouraging people to get the help they need, focuses on stigma, building trust between African-Americans and providers in the behavioral health field. "Therapy For Black Girls" is an online space encouraging mental health and wellness of African-American women and girls; a referral tool to find a therapist in your area. Lastly, "Safe Black Space" is an umbrella under various services that are offered to address cultural and racial traumas. There are so many more organizations out there that are doing amazing things for the African-American community. More importantly, we need to understand how "we" as African-Americans aren't offered a lot of the same opportunities as other individuals, due to institutional racism.





THE COSTS AND BENEFITS OF INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS ACCORDING TO TEACHERS

SUKAI YARBO

The classroom being the space where every student can learn uninterrupted by outside distractions makes quality of education and teaching a more attainable task and an inclusive classroom where students with and without learning differences learn together. Inclusive classrooms support diverse academic, social, emotional, and communication needs of all students.

My research topic is about how the typical inclusive classroom affects learning and progress for all students from the perspective of a regular classroom teacher and a special education teacher. However, my topic answered many unforeseen aspects of the inclusive classroom, especially with changes that occurred through time like technology, virtual learning during the pandemic, and hopefully will outline extra needs or more to give an understanding of how students on both sides are doing from a teacher's point of view.

Research Question: According to teachers, what are the costs and benefits of integrating special needs students into traditional classrooms?

I had the chance to interview a second-grade classroom teacher and her special education teacher at ABC Elementary School. These teachers were with the same class from kindergarten prior to the pandemic. They taught them virtually for a semester and now they have the same set of students for second grade. This has given both the teachers and scholars enough time together to build a stronger bond and familiarity.

ABC Elementary School has a student population of 658 students and serves pre-kindergarten to 5th grade. It is ranked number 7 in the school district. Forty-eight percent of students are male and 52% are female. Fifty-one percent are White, 20.1% are Hispanic, 11.1% are Black, 9.1% are two or more races, 8.2% are Asian American/Pacific Islander, and 0.5% are American Indian or Alaska Native. The school has 48 full time teachers. Every special education teacher is assigned three classrooms, and each classroom has average of five special needs students. ABC Elementary does not have a special education resource room at this point.





THE COSTS AND BENEFITS OF THE INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM

Both teachers found the inclusive classroom more beneficial for both scholars and parents, and they outlined how it has created a sense of caring and supports within the classroom. In their classroom, the helper gets rewarded and applauded for being helpful and caring for others - giving the kids the culture of catering to each other and being good to each other. They know most parents are 100% for the inclusive classrooms, and they believe it gives all kids fair access to education without segregation due to their special needs.

They believe the inclusive classroom benefits non special needs students too, as they are more comfortable and more tolerant of differences. The inclusive

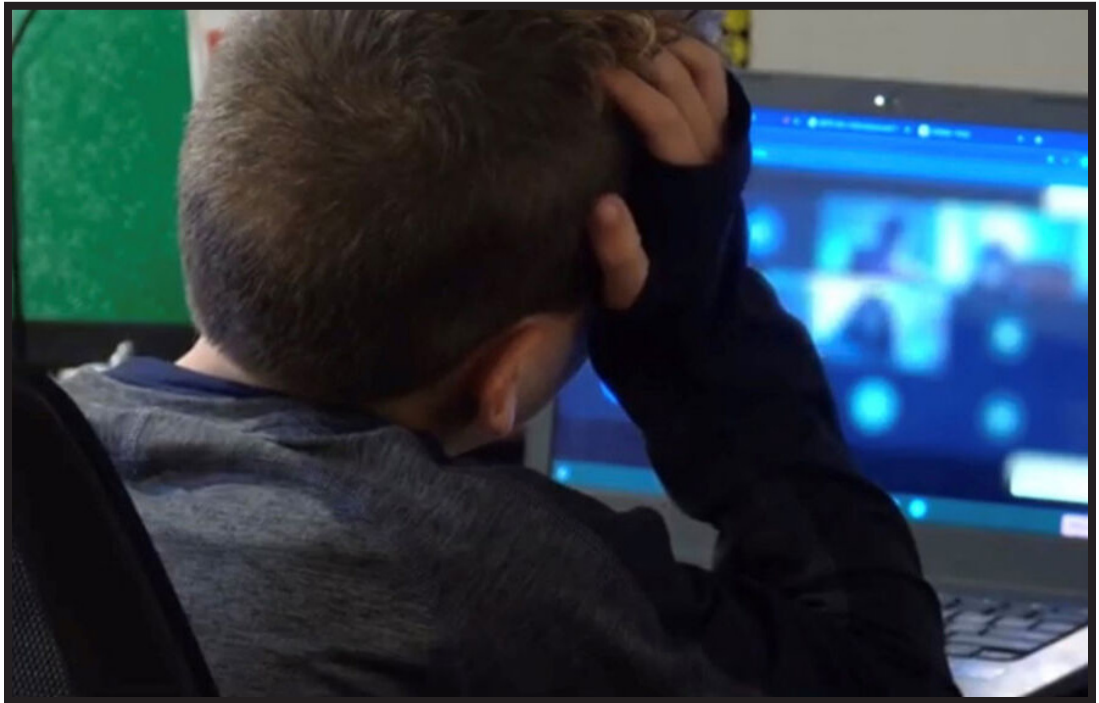
classroom makes differences less different and fills the classroom with more diverse ways of learning, which have both strengths and challenges and help kids know that difference is just a normal part of life and can help them build and maintain friendships. Both teachers noticed kids mimic each other for attention, but mostly when they were younger during kindergarten. Now in second grade they exert more individuality and independence.

The classroom's biggest challenge depends on different factors like the individual, their disability, and their triggers, and they mostly create individual goals instead of competitive ones. Each pupil is working at their own pace, and they always get applauded for their individual milestones. They don't have set goals for achievements, and they just want each pupil moving forward, so their classroom goal is everyone moving forward at their own pace.

Some of the changes they would love to see in the classrooms are smaller caseloads, especially for the special education teacher who juggles three classrooms with an average of fifteen students. They can do with more special education teachers in their school. Also the lack of a resource room for special education is a very big challenge because that could make one on one sessions more conducive than their regular breakout corners. They know the special needs students rarely miss out on any specials because they have specially designed specials for them and they really enjoy their special curricular.

HOW THE COVID 19 PANDEMIC HAS AFFECTED THE LEARNING PROCESS

Both teachers mentioned how the pandemic has affected the inclusive classroom for both special needs and non-special needs students, especially for their classroom, which was kindergarten. They transitioned from a day to day in person classroom



to a virtual classroom with devices and apps they were not familiar with. All the students and parents struggled with the change, but it was much harder for special needs students: staying in the virtual classroom was hard, and learning from their Chromebooks and keeping track of class times and activities was very challenging.

ROLE OF PARENTS IN THE VIRTUAL LEARNING PROCESS

At some point the teachers relied on parents for the success of the virtual classroom. It was very difficult to get five- and six-year-olds to learn from home on a device without the constant supervision of the parents the whole time. They believe it was a learning process for the parents themselves, especially for special needs parents who have to step in and instruct the lessons and explain assignments to the kids. It was a team effort in which parents played a very active role, because the teachers couldn't have done it with the kids alone.



NEW COVID SCHOOL PROTOCOLS

New COVID protocols for schools - like check ins, vitals and non-entry in school buildings - gave teachers more responsibilities, especially for special needs students whose caregivers or parents weren't allowed in the school building. Students no longer share learning material, and they have individual learning stations with all assigned tasks on the Chromebooks. The face mask and individual lunches are all new things all kids had to adjust to.