California State University, Monterey Bay

Digital Commons @ CSUMB

5-2019

Effects of Living in Urban Environment on Student Academic Success

Christina Mendoza
California State University, Monterey Bay

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.csumb.edu/caps_thes_all

Effects of Living in Urban Environment of Student Academic Success

Christina Mendoza
Spring 2019
Senior Capstone
Advisor: Paoze Thao

Abstract

This senior capstone explores the effects of living in violent and urban communities on students and their academic achievement through the use of literature review and ethnographic interview with teachers and survey with students. The findings reveal that enrolling students in high crime rate communities into after school programs while simultaneously attending school-based intervention therapy will potentially decrease the academic delay these students are suffering from, because of the exposure to violence in their communities.

Background and Introduction

Up until the 1970's the words "violence" and "health" were never used together to describe a problem (Dahlberg & Mercy, 2009). During this time, the leading causes of death in the United States were diseases such as tuberculosis and pneumonia. As medicinal technology and knowledge evolved, the rates of these diseases and their ranking as the the leading causes of death decreased. This gave away for homicide and suicide rates take over top spots for death rates in the United States. Since 1965, homicide and suicide have consistently been among the top 15 leading causes of death in the United States (Dahlberg, 2009). A major turning point in the United States came after the release of *The Surgeon General's report on Health Promotion and Disease Prevention* in 1979. In this report the surgeon general identifies violence as one of the fifteen priority areas for the nation (Dahlberg, 2009). The surgeon general's report states that violence can be prevented and should not be ignored in the effort to improve the nation's health.

The risk of homicide and suicide reached new highs during the 1980s, specifically with young minorities that lived in urban disadvantaged neighborhoods (Dahlberg, 2009). According to a report from the Department of Health and Human Services (2009), suicide rates among

adolescents and young adults 15 to 24 years of age almost tripled between 1950 and 1990. It was also stated in the same report that from 1985 to 1991 homicide rates among 15- to 19-year-old males increased 154 percent, a dramatic increase from the last 20 years. These statistics affected mostly young African American males in urban communities. Because of this report, concerns and a call for action was initiated to find solutions. The need for future research was also needed, and thus the research on how living in urban areas that suffer from high violence, will affect students in their academics.

In the 1990's the Center for Disease Control (CDC) received its first appropriations from Congress to begin to research just how violence affects children (Dahlberg, 2009). Research began to be conducted and the results showed that increasingly, children have been involved as both victims and eyewitnesses to episodes of community violence (Ritchers & Martinez, 1993). Rates of community violence and domestic violence are alarmingly high in Urban communities/disadvantaged neighborhoods, with as many as one-third of pre-teen and adolescent children having been the victims of a violent episode and virtually all children having experienced some exposure to violence (DeVoe, Dean, Traube, & McKay, 2005).

The numbers are able to show statistically just how detrimental violence can be to a child. However, seeing first hand the effects of living in an urban environment was what lead me to my wanting to write this paper. I grew up in East Salinas, California. This urban environment had both negative and positive effects on my peers and I. Also, while performing my service learning hours at California State University, Monterey Bay I was able to work with students from urban communities attending Title 1 schools.

As a former student and future teacher in an urban community, my primary research questions is: how does living in an urban environment affect students' academic success? My

related questions are: is there research on the effects of living in urban environment that directly affects students' learning? How does living in an urban community affect students' well-being? In another words, how does it affect students' learning directly according to teachers? What could schools and teachers do to affect change for the students living in urban areas, so they can improve their academic success? And lastly: what could the community do to prevent and reduce crime rate in the urban setting in order to improve the living conditions for students, which, in turn, will impact their academic success? In order to answer these questions, I will begin my project with a comprehensive literature review.

Literature Review

Student academic success can vary from student to student. There are different variables that affect achievement such as: intelligence, work ethic, and the community the students live in. As mentioned in the introduction and background section, it was not until recently that violence has been considered a public health issue. Because of the shift of opinion in classifying violence as a public health issue, there is now a significant amount of research that shows how being exposed to violence can affect children in their academic performance. Also, increasing concentration of poverty in urban areas over the last decades have renewed the interest in the effects of neighborhood conditions on the well being of residents (Ainsworth, 2002). Young people who are witness or are victims of violence are found to suffer emotional consequences, hopelessness, and/or expectations of a violent death (Bowen & Bowen, 1999). It is unlikely that a student will be able to focus on their academics if they are stressed from the violence in their neighborhood the night before. This literature review will consist of articles and studies that have

documented the link between school environmental characteristics and student performance and behavior at school.

Abraham Maslow (1954) placed safety and security secondary only to physiological needs in his hierarchy of needs that must be satisfied before individuals are able attend to the higher-level needs associated with school achievement. In his theory, Maslow (1954), states that in order to be able to feel love and esteem, above all else a child needs to feel safe. If a students is living in an environment where they do not feel safe there will be repercussions that follow. The effects of exposure to violence for children can be severe. Exposure to vio can cause disruption of basic cognitive, social and emotional regulation (Mixon, 2013). The effects can also affect a child's brain functioning, essential for optimal health, growth and wellbeing. Children who are exposed to violence at a young age, will carry the trauma with them as they age as shown in figure 1 in Appendix 5. Living in a neighborhood with high rates of violence increases the risk of direct exposure to violence, the injury or arrest of a friend or loved one, or hearing gunshots close to ones home, all of which may induce trauma and emotional stress for both parents and children (Burdick-Will, 2016). When a violent crime occurs, each individual child's response is unique and may include activation of the stress response system and emotional responses such as fear and anxiety (Sharkey, 2014). As the figure 1 in Appendix 5 shows, two to four year old who are exposed to violence can experience effects such as being nervous/jumpy, insecurity and act out aggressively. These characteristics are not outgrown at the children age. They are carried with them and can develop to make children from five to twelve years old have characteristics such as depression, be aggressive and have school problems.

While conducting research for this literature review, there was no evidence found specifying a specific age range that was most susceptible to the effect of community violence.

However, there was research showing how each age group might be affected differently. For example, it is well established in education literature that around third grade classroom activity shifts from learning to read… to reading to learn (Burdick-Will, 2016). Therefore, a student exposed to violence before the third grade might experience a delay in their acquisition of reading skills, which ultimately will impede him from continuing to learn.

In a study based on data from children in Chicago, Sharkey (2012) finds that African American children who are given cognitive assessments at home within a week of a homicide in their block, score substantially lower than other youths in the same neighborhood who are assessed at a different time. This study provides convincing evidence that cognitive functioning is impaired after being exposed to community violence. This is because young people who witness or are victims of violence are found to suffer emotional consequences, such as: post traumatic stress disorder symptoms, hopelessness and/or expectations of a violent death, generalized psychological distress or anxiety (Bowen & Bowen, 1999).

During the research process for this literature review, very little evidence was found that does not correlate high crime areas affecting student academic success. The opposing viewpoint is that during early childhood and adolescence, children of high socioeconomic status has a positive effects on school readiness and achievement outcomes, especially for European Americans (Leventhal & Brooks-Gun, 2000). There was one journal article that states a pro to living in a high crime areas. Franklin T. Thompson (2002), stated that there are school who prosper despite being located in urban communities. It is emphasized that if there is a strong leadership and administration which provide a positive and caring atmosphere for their students, the students might prevail even in that difficult area. In addition to strong administration, Thompson (2002) states for children to succeed in a high crime urban environment it is

imperative to have: parental involvement, high expectations of students by teachers, focus on student acquisition of central learning skills, effective instructional arrangements and implementation, practice oriented staff development at the school site, and a sense of student efficiency.

Methods and Procedures

Ever since transfering to Cal State Monterey Bay in Spring 2015, I have been brainstorming on topics that are important to me. At the beginning of the semester there was a clear idea in the journey that needed to be taken for this paper, my senior capstone research project. The predefined focus was going to be something that related to myself, students and the community. After meeting with Dr. Thao for intensive counseling, I was able to narrow down my topic and feel confident in my research questions. To answer my primary and secondary research questions I went in search of several peer-reviewed articles in several journals. Even though we had attended a research informational meeting with library staff though LS400 Capstone class, I found it necessary to consult further with Librarians at the Cal State Monterey Library. By doing this, I was able to set myself in the right direction and had an easier time gathering relevant literature to review for my project. Throughout my college career, I was mostly worked with online research sources. I was persistent to find a I am very thankful to Dr. Thao and the Library staff for their support on this project. Once I had made myself more familiar with my topic while conducting literature research, I felt ready to implement what I have learned and get a first hand look at my topic in schools.

Along with countless hours in the library, I also spent time in school's conducting field research. I have been an Alisal Union School District employee for about 6 years. I have worked

with general and special education students. According to the United States Department of Education (2018), a district or school is considered Title 1 if the school has a high number or percentage of low income students. The Alisal Union school District, made up of 12 elementary schools in considered a Title 1 district. My field research consisted of: principal interviews, teacher interviews and anonymous student surveys. All of my field research was conducted in three Alisal Union School District schools.

In order to get my field research going, I first had to set up appointments with all teachers and principals. I was able to set up appointments through the school secretaries with the principals during the Cal State Monterey Bay spring break. The extra time I had on the week of March 18th- March 22nd, 2019 allowed me to spend time at Alisal schools.

The principal interviews were very interesting to conduct. I was able to get an insider's perspective from a person who oversees all business and academics on campus. The principals were all very forthcoming with non-confidential information about their students, student's families and the community which they serve. I asked questions ranging from student life on campus, their opinions about the community and intervention programs in place for students. (See Appendix 2).

The teachers I interviewed provided my with great insight into exactly how students act and perform depending on home life in the classroom. The teacher interviews were an incredible asset to my research because the teachers had first hand, detailed interactions with the target of my senior capstone research project. I had the opportunity to come in and observe two 6th grade general education classrooms. I sdat through a lesson right before lunch. I wanted to have some context about the students before interviewing their teacher. I was impressed with some of the students maturity level for 6th grade, and many others were the complete opposite. The teachers

were kind enough to spend their lunches with me while I conducted my interviews. I was astonished at the amount of insight I got from them. I also had the opportunity to interview a third teacher, and she is an Extended School Day teacher. She was also very helpful and allowed me to come in and observe her after school program class before our interview. I asked the teachers questions about their student population, the vicinity around their perspective schools and how their students reacted to it. (See Appendix 1).

During my interviews with school principals, I made sure to ask their permission to conduct an anonymous student survey with a 6th grade class. I decided to interview at 6th grade level because I felt like the students were at a high maturity level and were beginning to understand the world around. Thankfully, I was granted permission from the principals to go ahead with my surveys. I then took the opportunity while conducting my teacher interviews, to ask their permission and coordinate the best time to come in and conduct the anonymous student survey. In order to help keep each students anonymity, the survey was a Yes/No multiple choice survey, it required no specifics from students unless they wanted to share something (See Appendix 3). In the surveys, I asked students to anonymously answer questions such as: if they felt safe in their community, if they felt like their teachers understand their concerns and where they come from, and lastly if they felt safe in their schools. (See Appendix 3).

Results, Findings and Discussion

Is there research on the effects of living in urban environment that directly affects students' learning?

According to Slade and Wissow (2006), conservative estimate suggest that at least 8% of U.S. children experience sexual abuse before the age of 18, while 17% experience physical abuse, amd 18% experience physical neglect. These numbers are unfortunate because as seen in

the Literature Review of this project, children carry trauma with them throughout their life.

Aggression of individuals, families and neighborhoods serves as a community characteristic

influencing children's development. Because crime restricts a child's activities, it creates an

atmosphere of fear. (Shumow, Vandell & Posner, 1999). When students are preoccupied with

the dangers of their living environment, it will ultimately translate to their performance in the

classroom.

The interest in neighborhood studies shows interrelationships between social setting and

individual behaviors (Catsambis & Beveridge, 2001). According to Catsambis and Beveridge

(2001), a study suggested that urban neighborhoods have a negative impact on their residents due

to their low levels of collective efficacy, which results in social disorder and crime. This in turn

results in school districts facing special challenges in the improvement of academic performance

as a result of crime in poverty in the neighborhoods of their students (Bloom & Owens, 2011).

How does living in an urban community affect students' well-being? In another

words, how does it affect students' learning directly according to teachers?

Teacher A: "It affects them tremendously, many of the kids have trauma and many of

them are very low academically. Unfortunately, education is ot their main focus. Their focus is

on what's going on around them at home and in their communities. Which in turn makes it really

hard for them to learn. How can they learn to read and write when they do not feel safe"

(Teacher A, personal communication, March 21st, 2019)(See Appendix 2).

Teacher B: "We have so many kids that come to school and they want someone just to

listen to them and pay attention. Many of the students do not get attention at home, which makes

them seek it in the classroom, which ultimately makes them very distracted on their academics.

Many of my 6th grade students can't spell and use proper grammar, which is sad because I know

their community affects them". (Teacher B, personal communication, March 21st, 2019)(See Appendix 2).

Teacher C: " Our area is either the 3rd or 4th highest crime areas in California. And i'm talking next to big cities like Oakland and LA. Little Salinas is that high in crime rate. So having our campus around all this negativity is definitely going to affect the students academically. How could it not. Many of the students know what it is like to hear gunshots and still have to come to school the next day and are expected to pay attention and learn? It's hard. It was hard for me as a kid, and I bet it is hard for them now." (Teacher C, personal communication, March 21st, 2019)(See Appendix 2).

Administrator A: "Our district has an online blog that is called 'Cultivated in Alisal'. It features Alisal employees who have grown up in the Alisal area and are now working for our district. I bet if you ask any of the employees who have been features in the blog, all of them have a story to tell you about how violence in their communities affected them academically. It is something that just becomes normal to these kids and them and their parents aren't aware just how much it is affecting them. Gunshots? Normal. A chase? Normal. Last year we had a car set on fire in the apartments that their addresses belong to our school. I see academics being affected and emotional health being affected.

Administration B: "It affects their well being because many students express to me that they feel like they always have to be watching their backs. It affects them when they are confused about why violence is happening. And what is the most sad for me, is when it is just something they have grown accustomed to in their community. That should not happen. That is why we have after school programs, to help our students stay off the street as much as we can. And they get to eat again. They are also getting homework help in the afterschool programs

because many of these kids are behind academically. That comes from not having support at

home, and again the feeling of always having to watch your back. They ask themselves, I am

trying to survive, I can't think about homework right now.

What are students opinions of where they live and how it affects them?

The way students react to certain dangers in the community may vary from student to

student, but it is apparent that they will be ultimately affected by living in an urban community.

The anonymous 6th grade student survey asked students to answer if they felt safe where they

lived. Most students answered they did <u>not </u>feel safe where they lived. (See Appendix 3). This is

an indicator that students are being affected in their living communities. Several students

answered that they felt unsafe because of the "gangsters and bad people" (student response, see

Appendix 3) that lived in their neighborhood. At first, the students were hesitant about answering

honestly to the quarionare. They probably were nervous because it is not something that teachers

ask from them. Many of the students answered that they felt unsafe in their neighborhoods. 6th

grade students expressed feeling of anxiety to even walk home. Many of the students who

answered the questionnaire mentioned that they felt like their teacher did not understand the

dangers and complexities of where they live.

What could schools and teachers do to affect change for the students living in urban

areas, so they can improve their academic success?

Teacher A: "I think that teachers need to step it up and be advocated for these kids. That

is all they need. Is someone to believe in them". (Teacher A, personal communication, March

21st, 2019)(See Appendix 2).

Teacher B: "As teachers, we can be there to show not only academic help, but emotional

as well. We can be there for students. Let them know that we cant to understand and we want to

help. Also, I think having communication with parents is key to letting them now we want to advocate for their families and want to be part of their support system. That is what I think they need the most, it knowing someone is on their side."(Teacher B, personal communication, March 21st, 2019)(See Appendix 2).

Teacher C: "As a teacher you wear many hats. Not just a teacher hat but a counselor, a confidant, a researcher. I think what we can do as teachers to help these families is to be well informed as to what is going on in their homes. This way we can direct them in the right way for the proper services that will benefit them. By doing this, we are one step closer to getting that student back on track academically." (Teacher C, personal communication, March 21st, 2019)(See Appendix 2).

Administrator A: "As an administrator it is sometimes frustrating because there is so many responsibilities that we have to take care of, it's hard to get to know all of the students and families in your school. One way I think I could improve is to sometimes set work and deadlines aside, be outside with the families in hopes of getting to know them better. If I am aware of their concerns and needs that is a huge way I can help them. (Administrator A, personal communication, March 21st, 2019)(See Appendix 2).

Administrator B: " I think we could help by getting to know what kind of help every family needs. That way we can refer them to one of our FRCs. Our Family Resource Centers have so many great resources and ways to help families and it is all free. It is also open to the community. They are able to help with hotel vouchers, clothes, food vouchers. Etc. By directing parents to these centers I think we can really help". (Administrator B, personal communication, March 21st, 2019)(See Appendix 2)

Discussion

The results of the ethnographic study show correlation to the literature review. The interviews and anonymous survey completed with students shows that many of the statistics covered in the literature review are still seen in this sample of people who participated in this senior research capstone paper. One thing that was not brought up on the research in the Literature Review was how students feel safe at school. The teachers and administrators that were interviewed all had simar answers that state their hopefulness to get to know families and their needs. By doing this, they are building a community within the school. This community teachers and administrators are attempting to build within their schools is showing results. It was apparent in the student survey answers; 70% of the students surveys answered that they feel safe at school.

In order to affect change for students, educators must build rapport with the students they serve. A school should be a sanctuary, a place where students come and feel safe. In order to do this, educators and administrators must be open to discussions and talks about difficult subjects, such as the high crime urban environments in which their students live. Also, there is much research that says increasing the amount of parental involvement in the classroom and school in general is a great way to be able to help students cope with the stressors of their living environment. It was also clear in the results of the ethnographic study that teachers and administrators are trying to build up this parental involvement by having better communication with parents.

<div align="center">**Recommendation**</div>

Therefore, I recommend that it is essential to provide counseling, intervention and after school programs to students in order to help students cope with the stressors associated to their urban living environments.

When students are raised or live around violence, it can interfere with basic development by negatively impacting social, academic, and behavioral functioning and peer relationships (DeVoe, 2005). A possible solution the the problem on community violence is having a licensed clinical social worker on site to help students cope with the effects of that violence. A social worker can help people students with personal issues or treat their patients emotional, behavioral or mental health issues.

Along with a licensed clinical social worker, it is important that at risk students, and all students who qualify, to be enrolled in after school programs. Districts are able to receive funding from the state to implement afterschool programs at their site. In 2009, California voters passed Proposition 49. This proposition approved school districts to implement ASES after school programs in their school sites (CDC, 2016). ASES stands for After School Program Education and Safety. The ASES Program funds of local after school education and enrichment programs. These programs are created through partnerships between schools and communities to provide literacy support, academic enrichment, and safe, constructive alternatives for students in kindergarten through ninth grade (CDC, 2016).

In the attempt to address the issue of community violence affecting student academic success, this project recommends the placement of at risk students in afterschool programs, while simultaneously have them enrolled in clinical school counseling.

Problems and Limitations

All together, going out into the field and conducting research was a smooth task. However, I did run into a few obstacles that made the gathering of information for my literature review a bit difficult. I found that most of the information I was coming across was very dated. Most of the relevant information I was finding was from before 2008. Therefore, it is a problem

in just how accurate my literature can be. There is probably new research that has been

conducted and I may not have come across it.

One of the biggest limitations to this senior research capstone paper is the fact of time. As

a full time student, I was only given three months to come up with a topic, conduct literature

review, conduct ethnographic field research and write this paper. If there would have been more

time to write this paper and conduct research it would have been a more indepth project. There

was also the issue or limitation of having to get a hold of busy teachers and administrators. The

problem was that they never answered their phones or email.A total of 5 teachers and 5

administrators were contacted for this project. Only three teachers and three administrators

responded. There was also the problem of finding time to sit and talk with all of them. Because

of time conflicts, one of the aminitratoes that was contacted was not able to sit and be interviews.

Another limitation that I had was that my student survey questions might not have been

very clear. If this research is to be repeated, it would be wise to rephrase the questions is a

manner that might be more relatable and understood by the intended audience. In the attempt not

to make the surveys biased in any way, I decided not to go over the equations to the surveys with

the students, uness they needed help reading a word. They had to fill them out on their own and

that may have been a problem because maybe they didn't understand the waltons.

Lastly, the limitation of scope. This research was conducted in 3 school in the Alisal

Union School District in Salinas, CA. This data cannot be used to make a realization for all of

the state of California or the United States. It was a very small sample size.

Conclusion

In conclusion, how does living in an urban community affect student academic success? Exposure to violence can cause disruption of basic cognitive, social and emotional regulation (Mixon, 2013). If a student is up all night because they are hearing gunshots outside their bedroom window, it is likely they will not be able to focus the next day in class. According to theorist Abraham Maslow (2002), in order for a student to be successful, they need to feel safe.

According to teachers and administrators, efforts need to take place in part of the school to ensure the issue of insecurity and academics is addressed for students who are exposed to violence in their communities. One way to provide support is by enrolling these at risk students in the districts extended school day, or after school program. Here they are able to stay out of the street and receive extra help in academics. It is also recconded along with an after school program, that students should be reviewing school based counseling to address emotional concerns as a result of living in high crime urban environment. It is paramount that as educators, there is early intervention and support provided to these students in order to help close the leaning gap. In agreement with my literature review and field research, it has been have found that living in a high crime, urban environment has negative effects on student academic success.

References

Blooms, C. M., & Owens, E. W. Principals; perception of influence on factors affecting student achievement in low and high achieving Urban High Schools. *Education and Urban Society. Vol. 45, 208-233.*

Bowen, B. K. & Bowen G. L. (1999). Effects of crime and violence in neighborhoods and schools on the behavior and performance of adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent Research. Vol. 3, 319-342.*

Burdick-Will, J. (2016). Neighborhood violent crime and academic growth in chicago: Lasting effects of Early Exposure. Oxford University Press. 133-157.

Catsambis, S. & Beveridge, A.A. (2001). Does neighborhood matter? Family, neighborhood and school influences on eighth-grade mathematics achievement. *Sociological Focus. Vol. 34, 435-457.*

Dahlberg, L., L., & Mercy J.A. (2009) History of violence as a public health issue. Retrieved from http://virtualmentor.ama-assn.org/2009/02/mhst1-0902.html.

DeVoe, E. R., Dean, K., Traube., & McKay, M. M. (2005). The survive community project: A family-based intervention to reduce the impact of violence exposures in urban youth. Retrieved from https://www.ncbi.nlm.gov/pmc/aritlces/PMC3045728/

Leventhal, T. & Brooks-Gun, J., (2000). The neighborhoods they live in: The effects of neighborhood residence on child and adolescent outcomes. *Psychological Bulletin. Vol. 126, 309-337.*

Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review. Vol. 50, 370–96.*

Mixon, Kacy. (2013). Children's exposure to violence: Prevalence & effects. *Military families learning network.* Retrieved from

https://militaryfamilies.extension.org/2013/08/06/childrens-exposure-to-violence-

prevalence-effects/

Ritchers, J. E., & Martinez, P. (2016). Psychiatry. Retrieved from

https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/00332747.1993.11024617?needAccess=tr

ue&

Sharkey, P., Schwartz, A. E., Ellen, I. G., & Lacoe, J. (2014). High stakes in the classroom, high

stakes on the street: The effects of community violence on students standardized test

performance. Retrieved from

Retrieved from https://www.sociologicalscience.com/articles-vol1-14-199

Sharkey, P. T., Tirado-Strayer, N., Papachristos, A. V., &Raver, C. C. (2012). The effect of local

violence on children's attention and impulse control. Retrieved from

https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3519330/

Shumow, L., Vandell, D.L., & Posner, J. (1999). Risk and resilience in the urban neighborhood

of academic performance among low-income elementary school children. *Merrill-Palmer

Quarterly. Vol. 45, 309-331.*

Slade, E. P., & Wissoe, L.S. (2006). The influence of childhood maltreatment on adolescents

academic performance. Economics of Education Review, 604-614.

Thompson, F. T., (2002). Student achievement, selected environmental characteristics, amd

neighborhoof type. *The Urban Review. Vol. 34, 277-292.*

Appendix 1
Teacher Interview Questions

1. How do you think living in high crime, urban environment affects students?

2. Do you think living in a high crime, urban environment affects students academic success?

3. Do you think living in a high crime, urban environment affects students overall? (Whole

Child)

4. How has the vicinity of your elementary school affected your classroom environment?

5. What are the benefits, if any, that students have if they live in an urban environment?

6. How do you handle topics from high crime environment in your classroom?

7. Are there any intervention strategies or resources available for students at your school to help

cope with living in a high crime, urban environment?

8. Did you grow up in a high crime urban environment? If so, do you think growing up in

similar/same living environment helps you help students cope?

Appendix 2
Principal Interview Questions

1. How do you think living in high crime, urban environment affects students?

2. Do you think living in a high crime, urban environment affects students academic success?

3. Do you think living in a high crime, urban environment affects students overall? (Whole

Child)

4. How has the vicinity of your elementary school affected your school environment?

5. What are the benefits, if any, that students have if they live in an urban environment?

6. How do you handle topics from high crime environment on your campus?

7. Are there any intervention strategies or resources available for students at your school to help

8. Did you grow up in a high crime urban environment? If so, do you think growing up in

similar/same living environment helps you help students cope?

Appendix 3
Anonymous 6th grade Student Survey Questions

1. Do you feel safe in the community you live in?
      Yes   No

2. Do you feel that living in your community affects you emotionally?
      Yes   No

3. Do you feel that living in your community affects you academically?
      Yes   No

4. Do you feel like your teacher understands your concerns of where you live?
      Yes   No

5. Do you feel like your school understands your concerns of where you live?
      Yes   No

6. Do you feel safe at school?
      Yes   No

7. Does your school have any resources to help you with stress from where you live?
      Yes   No

8. What are any concerns you have about where you live? Is there anything your school can do to help you emotionally, and academically? Anything else you want to add about where you live or about your school?
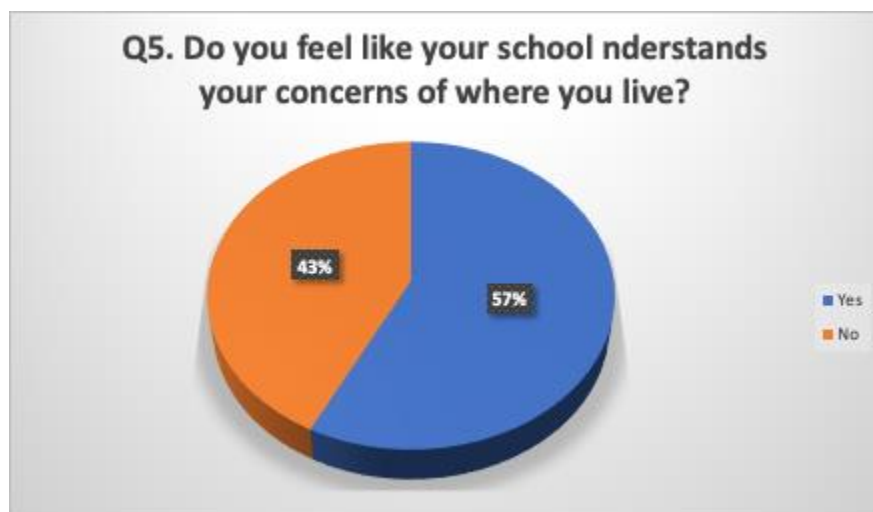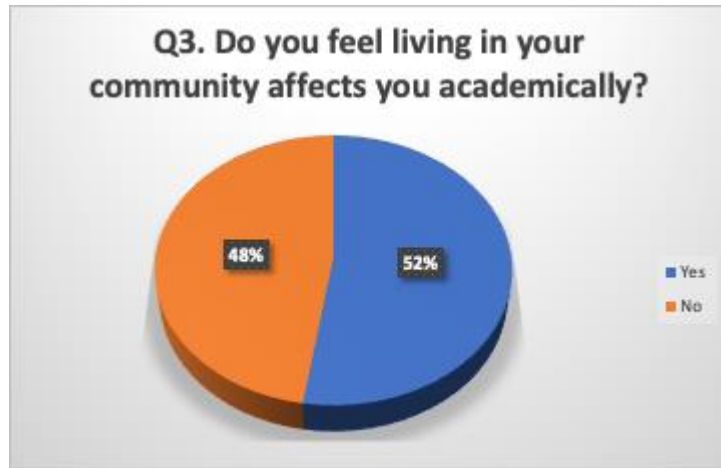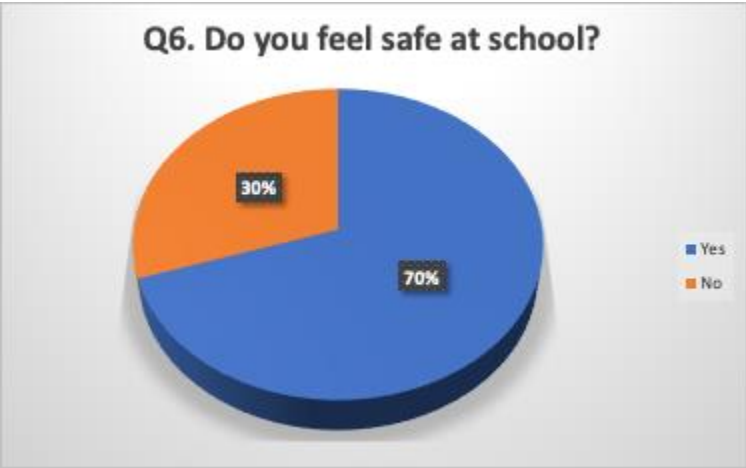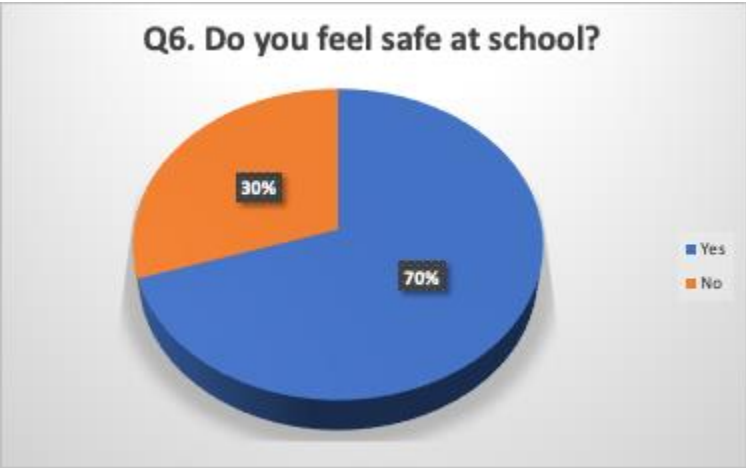
_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Results from Appendix 3
Student Responses

A sample of 40 students from 2 6th grade classrooms
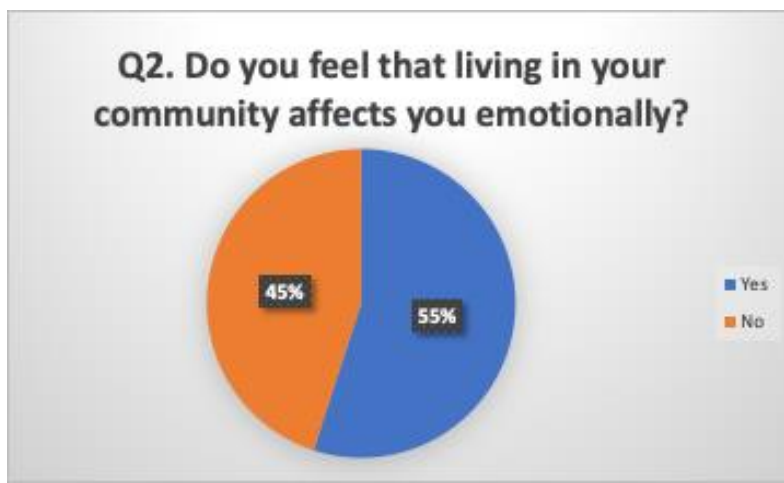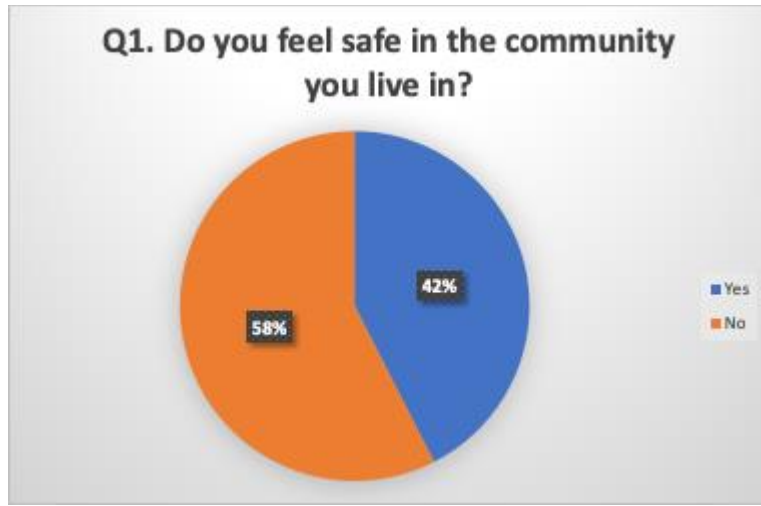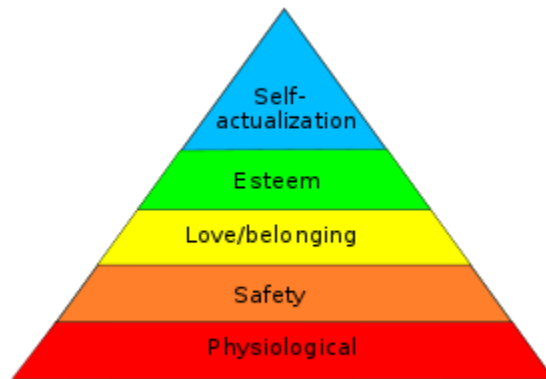
Appendix 4
Literature Review
Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Appendix 5
Background and Introduction
Figure 1