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Perceptions of School Bus Drivers and Their Experiences with Student Behavior: A Qualitative Case Study

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College of Education

Doctorate of Education Program

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Perceptions of School Bus Drivers and Their Experiences with Student Behavior:

A Qualitative Case Study

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Concordia University–Portland

College of Education

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the College of Education

in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of

Doctor of Education in

Higher Education

Donna Graham, Ph.D., Faculty Chair Dissertation Committee

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Concordia University–Portland

2019

Abstract

School bus drivers play a critical role in the student learning experience. School bus drivers are the first and last persons to interface with students and face many obstacles while transporting them. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore how school bus drivers perceive their experiences with student behavior, discipline, and collaboration with campus administration. Bandura's (1977) social learning theory and Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural learning theory provided the theoretical frameworks for this study. Sociocultural learning theory supports school bus drivers taking the steps to set behavior goals, expectations, and reinforcement systems. Sociocultural learning theory also supports the notion that ultimately the learner's role is to receive and follow the authority figure's instructions. The data collection process included collected a variety of information through semistructured interviews, focus groups, and observations. The research question that guided this study was: How do school bus drivers perceive their experiences with student behavior, discipline, and collaboration with campus administration? During analysis common patterns emerged, school bus drivers must ensure their own behavior management success. School bus drivers believe safety is a number one priority. In contrast, lack of communication and training was evident from the school bus driver and campus administration perceptions. The findings in this study provided key insights on the overall experiences and perceptions of school bus drivers. Recognizing their voice on important matters related student management and communication with campus administration.

Keywords: student management, behavior management, Bandura's social learning theory Vygotsky's sociocultural learning theory, school bus drivers, campus administrators

Dedication

Being a child that struggled in school due to late diagnosed dyslexia and many other obstacles, in the natural all the odds were against me making this personal dream a reality, but the supernatural took control over my life. There is absolutely no way I could have ever completed this personal goal, if God's grace and mercy had not ordered my steps and blessed me with unexplainable favor. I dedicate this dissertation to my parents Williams and Barbara Foster (although my father did not live to physically see me accomplish this goal, his presence has been here); my best friends and sisters, Jennifer and Allison, who kept me going with their jokes, listening ears, and encouragement during this process; and my precious nephew and niece Ryan and London, I love you dearly and remember you can do anything with God leading the way. Lastly, to my second-grade teacher the late Dr. Charlotte Parker who challenged me to never stop learning.

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Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Dedication	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
List of Tables	xii
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Introduction to the Problem	1
Background of the Study	2
Statement of the Problem.....	3
Purpose of the Study	3
Research Question	4
Rationale for Methodology	4
Research Methodology	4
Research Design.....	5
Definitions of Terms	5
Assumptions.....	6
Limitations and Delimitations.....	7
Chapter 1 Summary	7
Chapter 2: Literature Review	9
Introduction to the Literature Review	9
Conceptual Framework	10
Social Cultural Learning Theory	Error! Bookmark not defined.

Review of Research Literature and Methodological Literature.....	15
Public School Transportation.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
School Bus Drivers	Error! Bookmark not defined.
School Bus Behavior.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Campus Administrator	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Communication.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Parent Involvement	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Additional Bus Support.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Positive Relationships and Rewards	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Peer Support.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
School Bus Positive Behavior Intervention Strategies	Error! Bookmark not defined.
School Bus Driver Advocates	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Review of Methodological Issues	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Synthesis of Research Findings	31
Critique of Previous Research	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Chapter 2 Summary	34
Chapter 3: Methodology	37
Introduction.....	37
Research Question	37
Purpose and Design of the Study	37
Research Population and Sampling Method	38
Research population.....	38
Sampling method	39

Sources of Data	41
Interviews.....	41
Focus group.....	41
Observation	42
Field testing.....	43
Data Collection	43
Identification of Attributes.....	44
Data Analysis Procedures	45
Limitations of the Research Design.....	46
Validation.....	46
Credibility	47
Ethical Issues in the Study	48
Ethical issues in the study	48
Other ethical considerations.....	49
Chapter 3 Summary	49
Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Results.....	51
Introduction.....	51
Descriptive Data.....	51
Demographics	52
Data Collection	54
Data Analysis	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Trustworthiness.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Results.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.

Themes from the Interviews	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Participants chose to work in public school transportation due to previous experience	60
Family influenced participants' decisions to become a bus driver	60
Participants desire additional communication strategies and skills	61
Participants desire student behavior management skills.....	62
Participants believe the drivers themselves contribute to the occurrence of incidents	63
Participants perceive student behavior as a contributing factor to bus incidents .	64
When preparing to perform their work, participants prioritize safety first.....	65
Participants perceive communication as a significant factor in working effectively	65
Participants have not received any training since the annual in-service training provided by the district	67
Participants received training from external sources	67
Participants would like campus administration to offer greater support to school bus drivers	67
Participants would like parents to ensure children understand the school bus rules and expectations.....	68
Participants perceived student discipline as most troubling issue	68
Participants are frustrated by the lack of administration follow-up.....	69
Participants perceived a lack of communication/feedback from the campus as a barrier to effective student discipline.....	70

Participants believed that school bus drivers must ensure their own behavior management success	71
Participants do not feel supported by campus administration	72
Participants believed school bus drivers would benefit from more training	72
Participants feel that safety is the primary concern when transporting students ..	73
Themes Resulting from Focus Groups	74
Themes resulting from the bus driver focus group	74
Themes resulting from the leadership focus group.....	78
Chapter 4 Summary	83
Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion	85
Summary of the Results	85
Discussion of the Results	87
Theme 1: Participants chose to work in public school transportation due to previous experience	87
Theme 2: Family influenced participants' decisions to become a bus driver.....	88
Theme 3: Participants desire additional communication strategies and skills.....	89
Theme 4: Participants desire student behavior management skill	89
Theme 5: Participants desire to create positive bus environments	90
Theme 6: Participants believe the drivers themselves contribute to the occurrence of incidents.....	91
Theme 7: Participants perceive student behavior as contributing to bus incidents	91

Theme 8: When preparing to perform their work, participants prioritize safety first	92
Theme 9: Participants perceive communication as a significant factor in working effectively	93
Theme 10: Participants have not received any training since the annual in-service training provided by the district.....	93
Theme 11: Participants received training from external sources.....	94
Theme 12: Participants would like campus administration to offer greater support to school bus drivers	94
Theme 13: Participants would like parents to ensure children understand the school bus rules and expectations	95
Theme 14: Participants perceived student discipline as most troubling issue	96
Theme 15: Participants are frustrated by the lack of administration follow-up ...	96
Theme 16: Participants perceived a lack of communication/feedback from the campus as a barrier to effective student discipline	96
Theme 17: Participants believe that school bus drivers must ensure their own behavior management success	97
Theme 18: Participants do not feel supported by campus administration	98
Theme 19: Participants believed school bus drivers would benefit from more training	98
Theme 20: Participants feel that safety is the primary concern when transporting students	99
Discussion of the Results in Relation to the Literature.....	100

Reasons behind decision to become school bus drivers	100
Skills and training desired by participants	101
Factors that contributed to potential incidents	103
Factors perceived to be associated with working effectively	105
Perceived challenges for school bus drivers	107
School bus drivers' perceptions of support from campus administration.....	108
Participants feel that safety is the primary concern when transporting students	110
Limitations of the Study.....	111
Implication of the Results for Practice, Policy, and Theory	111
Recommendations for Further Research.....	113
Conclusion	114
References	116
Appendix A: Researcher's Interview Questions.....	124
Appendix B: Researcher's Focus Group Topics.....	125
Appendix C: Observation Sheet: School Bus Student Behavior Study	126
Appendix D: Participant Personal Data Sheet	127
Appendix E: Consent Form	128
Appendix F: Interview Protocol.....	130
Appendix G: Statement of Original Work	131

List of Tables

Table 1	<i>Job Title of Interview Participants</i>	53
Table 2	<i>Service Years of Interview Participants</i>	54
Table 3	<i>Factors Influencing Participants' Decisions to Become Bus Drivers</i>	61
Table 4	<i>Training and Skills Desired by Participants</i>	63
Table 5	<i>Factors Identified by the Participants</i>	65
Table 6	<i>Variables Associated with Working</i>	66
Table 7	<i>Challenges Associated with Managing Students and Collaborating with District Administration</i>	70
Table 8	<i>Bus Driver Perceptions of Support from Campus Administration</i>	73
Table 9	<i>Bus Driver Strategies for Addressing Student Behavior</i>	75

List of Figures

Figure 1. *Perceptions of school bus drivers related to student behavior on the school bus*.....13

Figure 2. *Perceptions of school bus drivers related to student behavior on the school bus*.....29

Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction to the Problem

Managing student behavior in public schools remains a critical priority for educators and the public (Putnam, Handler, Ramirez-Platt, & Luiselli, 2003). School bus drivers play a unique role in the educational system. Every day, school bus drivers deal with some form of student behavior on the bus (Schlosser, 2015). The school bus is a potential hot spot for student behavior, whereas a school bus driver's ability to intercede is limited (Brown, Karikari, Abraham, & Akakpro, 2018). Parents and campus administration expect students to be transported in a safe and civil manner daily. On the school bus, students with negative behavior are documented; however, school bus drivers are rarely updated or included in discipline or decision making by the campus administration (Atkinson, 2009). In addition, some school bus drivers lack training and skills to document, manage, or communicate challenges related to student behavior management.

While there is interest in the topic of student behavior management at the school, an area of research largely ignored is behavior on the school bus (Doll, Murphy, & Song, 2003; Hendrix, Kennedy, & Trudeau, 2019; Smith, Shu, & Madsen, 2001). The purpose of this qualitative case study is to explore how school bus drivers perceive their experiences with student behavior, discipline, and collaboration with campus administration. This introductory chapter includes (a) background of student behavior on the school bus; (b) problem statement; (c) purpose statement; (d) research question; (e) methodology; (f) research design; (g) definition of terms; and (h) assumptions, limitations, delimitations, and summary. This chapter concludes with a summary and an overview of the study.

Background of the Study

Transporting of students is part of the total educational experience. The school bus presents a context that is different from the school setting. The bus environment is an unstructured and confined space where a variety of backgrounds, cultures, and beliefs exists that contribute to student behaviors (Galliger, Tisak, & Tisak, 2008). To manage student behavior on the bus, school bus drivers need the support of leadership and the skills to address, document, and communicate with campus administration (Goldin & McDaniel, 2018). Negative student behavior can impact the safety of the bus ride. According to DeLara (2008) school bus drivers write numerous student disciplinary referrals for behavior with minimal updates on corrective action taken by the campus. In most school districts in the State of Texas, student disciplinary action is addressed by campus administration (Texas Education Agency, 2017). Student management, communication, and relationship development is non-existent without an effective collaboration between the driver, student, parent, and campus.

According to Sadlier (2011), campus administrators must do their part to support school bus drivers effectively managing student behavior. Established rapport with campus administration gives drivers the support and empowerment to manage behavior (Sherrod, Getch, & Ziomek-Daigle, 2009). Promoting the whole-school or systems-base applications of behavior support must be top priority in every school district (Putnam et al., 2003). As school districts offer transportation services, it is critical that parents and students are trained and educated on acceptable student behavior on the school bus. School bus drivers must be trained and prepared to safely transport and manage student behavior. This qualitative case study explores how school bus drivers perceive their experiences with student behavior, discipline, and collaboration with campus administration.

Statement of the Problem

Some research exists relative to school bus concerns, bus culture, and bus discipline (Brown et al., 2018; DeLara, 2008; Hirsch, Lewis-Palmer, Sugai, & Schnacker, 2004; Kim, Corcoran, & Papamanolis, 2017; Zohar & Lee, 2016); however, drivers' perceptions of their experiences with student behaviors, as well as their ideas for improvement, have not been researched thoroughly. As school districts across America face increasing concerns of student behavior and safety, school bus safety is included in these dilemmas (Brown et al., 2018; DeLara, 2008; Hendrix et al., 2019). Parents hold school districts' and public schools' transportation accountable to provide a safe ride to and from designated stops and the campus. Maintaining a safe and secure school bus environment requires school bus drivers to be licensed, trained, and equipped to handle all behaviors (Putnam et al., 2003). This study explores how school bus drivers perceive their experiences with student behavior, discipline, and collaboration with campus administration.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore how school bus drivers perceive their experiences with student behavior, discipline, and collaboration with campus administration. The theoretical framework for this study was through the lens of social learning and sociocultural learning theories. The sources of data were individual semistructured interviews, focus group, and observations. This study will benefit public school transportation departments, school bus drivers, campus administrators, students and parents. School bus drivers will benefit from having a voice to create or revise policies related to intervention, positive reinforcement, and improving student behavior.

Research Question

The research question that guided this study was:

RQ1. How do school bus drivers perceive their experiences with student behavior, discipline, and collaboration with campus administration?

Rationale for Methodology

This study used a qualitative research method to understand how school bus drivers perceive their experiences with student behavior, discipline, and collaboration with campus administration (Creswell, 2014). The study proposed that given the tools and support, school bus drivers could be an integral part of managing student behavior. Through an individual's interaction with people and places, qualitative research identifies that ideas are socially constructed (Creswell, 2014).

Research Methodology

The purpose of qualitative research is to interpret or understand reasons or opinions (Creswell, 2014). This study has applications for school bus drivers in school systems dealing with the complexities of student behavior management and building relationships with campus administration. Qualitative design provides answers to the how and who in research (Yin, 2014). It is used to gain understanding and insight into the problem or help create ideas (Creswell, 2014). A qualitative methodology was utilized for this study because it best explored the school bus driver's perceptions. Through a qualitative approach, the researcher gained an in depth and broader understanding of the issues facing school bus drivers. Based on data collection, the participant's experiences, perceptions, and constructed meaning, a single case study design was best for this study (Yin, 2014).

Research Design

Case study design was the appropriate method to address the research question. The participants shared information about their interactions and experiences with transporting students and managing student behavior. Through case studies, researchers can explore a holistic and real-world approach (Yin, 2014). In this study, information was collected through Skype meeting, phone, face-to-face interviews, field observation, and focus groups; some of the individuals participated in both interviews and focus groups. The case study design helped to comprehend the experiences and perceptions of the participants. Case study research supported the researcher's focus on processes, context, and meaning (Yin, 2014). The population for this case study comprised 11 employees from a school district in Texas. The researcher debriefed with participants to review interview session transcripts and focus group notes. This process allowed an opportunity for information accuracy and integrity to occur to ensure the researcher captured key information relevant to the research study. According to Yin (2014), the researcher must present case study evidence with clarity, so others can independently interpret data.

Definitions of Terms

Important to this study, the following are key school district and public school transportation terms:

School bus driver. The school bus driver is defined as a certified and licensed Commercial Driver License (CDL) holder that is responsible for transporting students from home to school and back home (Site School District, 2017).

Campus administrator. The campus administrator is defined as a licensed and certified leader (i.e. principal, assistant principal, dean, etc.) assigned to a campus to direct, manage, and

supervise the instructional program, campus operations, and staff and students at the campus level.

Student disruptive behavior. Student disruptive behavior refers to conduct that interferes with or obstructs the learning process and safety of the environment (DeLara, 2008).

Student threatening behavior. Student threatening behavior refers to any actions (verbal or non-verbal) that create a fearful, hostile, or volatile environment (Putnam et al., 2003).

Student behavior management. Student behavior management refers to initiatives that promote positive, supportive, accountable, safe experience and environment for students. Communication of guidelines for students to adhere to minimize disciplinary issues (Goldman & Peleg, 2010).

Positive Behavior Intervention Strategies (PBIS). Positive behavior intervention strategies refer to an educational innovation that creates a positive climate and promotes appropriate behavior among students in any environment (Lindsey, 2008).

Stakeholders. Stakeholders are individuals, group(s), or organization(s) that has a vested interest in the people, processes or procedures (Campbell et al., 2017).

Assumptions

Assumptions were made by the researcher related to methods used during qualitative research (Creswell, 2014). The researcher assumed the process for selection was fair. The researcher assumed the selected participants provided timely responses, candor, and honesty during the interview and focus group processes. The researcher assumed qualitative case study was the best approach to address the research question.

Limitations and Delimitations

The limitations and delimitations are identified in this section. The following limitations exist in this study: (a) given the use of a single case study in a school district in Texas, the results may not be transferrable school bus drivers in other public school systems; (b) the allotted interview time for participants limited the availability of information; and (c) generalizability was not possible due to the design of case study research (Yin, 2014). The delimitations of the research provided boundaries for the study. The first delimitation in the study was to focus on school bus drivers, transportation employees, and campus administration from one large public school district. Secondly, the delimitation of time observation during ride along provided a snapshot of the driver's perspective in the current environment concerning student behavior. Purposeful sampling was used because of the population being studied and their ability to inform understanding of this topic in the region.

Chapter 1 Summary

Across school systems and public transportation in America, student safety and behavior management are continuous concerns (Zohar & Lee, 2016). The literature shows a critical need for school bus drivers to be included in decision making, policy and procedures implementation, and training related to student management (Brown et al., 2018; DeLara, 2008; Galliger et al., 2008; Hendrix et al., 2019; Putnam et al., 2003). Despite evidence of the value-add of effective student management, many school systems have not provided school bus drivers with adequate training to address student behavior (DeLara, 2008; Galliger et al., 2008; Goldman & Peleg, 2010; Goodboy, Martin, & Brown, 2016; Long & Alexander, 2010; Putnam et al., 2003). The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore how school bus drivers perceive their experiences with student behavior, discipline, and collaboration with campus administration.

The case study population included transportation and campus-base personnel. In addition, the case study used three sources of data, semis structured individual interviews, observations, and a focus group session. Chapter 2 provides a review of literature relevant to the framework utilized for the study. Chapter 3 outlines the methodology, the purpose, the research design, the research study, and the framework for analysis and data collection, as well as a discussion on the study's dependability, credibility and ethical concerns. Chapter 4 details the research study analysis and results. Lastly, Chapter 5 provides a detailed summary of the study findings and future recommendations.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction to the Literature Review

Effective student behavior management on the school bus is essential to safe transportation and student learning (Galliger et al., 2008). If school bus drivers lack the knowledge, support, and tools to effectively manage the students, distractions and disruption may jeopardize student safety and driver focus. Despite school districts and communities recognizing the importance of student safety and behavior management, school bus drivers report limited opportunities to receive support, training, and collaboration with campuses (Kennedy & King, 2017). School bus drivers need clarity on how to address, document, manage, intervene, and collaborate with campus administration on student behavior (Goodboy et al., 2016). This study explored how school bus drivers perceive their experiences with student behavior, discipline, and collaboration with campus administration. The literature review provides the framework for the study and identifies key concerns in the research (DeLara, 2008; Putnam et al., 2003). The history of school transportation and forms of student behavior are identified, in addition to the discussions on the role school bus drivers and campus administrators play in managing student behavior.

The literature is a compilation of relevant work from sources related to peer-reviewed articles, periodicals, books, research studies, Concordia library services, and databases. Additional sources included: EBSCOHOST, Concordia University Library, ProQuest, JSTOR, Google Scholar, and ERIC. The following keywords were searched: school bus drivers, TX DOT requirements, student management, student behavior, school bus, school bus driver criteria and qualifications, creating positive cultures, school bus driver training, safety training curriculum, collaboration, effective communication, relationship building, documentation and

discipline training, positive reinforcement, setting expectations and rules on the school bus, student accountability, student code of conduct, and school bus driver morale.

For many teachers and staff, student behavior is a common challenge in education (Collins & Ryan, 2016). According to Putnam, Handler, Ramirez-Platt, and Luiselli (2003), understanding and improving overall student behavior in and around the school system has been a focus for years. Many school bus drivers believe more training is needed, and there is still more work to be done to support them in managing student behavior on the bus (Brown et al., 2018; DeLara, 2008; Hendrix et al., 2019). School bus drivers complete thousands of student conduct forms yearly; however, the behavior continues to be a concern (Childs, Kincaid, George, & Gage, 2016). School bus drivers can be contributing factors to intervention and strategies that improve student behavior and promote accountability. Educational environments can no longer merely assume all students know how to behave and how to respond to social settings (Johns, Crowley, & Guetzloe, 2005). Educating students on bus expectations and supporting initiatives regarding the significance of safe transportation and appropriate student management are essential in diffusing behavior. Consistency and transparency in how student behavior is addressed system-wide can support the safe transport of students (Childs et al., 2016). Putnam et al. (2003) warned that when the whole system is perceived as handling student management poorly, trust is lost, concerns with safety arise, and students are placed at risk. School systems have a variety of options to support school bus drivers in managing behavior. School bus drivers must have constant support and available methods and procedures to follow district policies.

Conceptual Framework

The selected framework for this study was Bandura's (1977) social learning theory and Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory. These theories examine the impact society has on

individual development and focus on human learning as a social process. Vygotsky believed that parents, caregivers, peers, educators, and the culture at large were responsible for developing higher order functions (Ranjbar & Ghonsooly, 2017). Bandura believed a combination of factors like stimuli, cognitive processes, and interactions influence behavior.

Social learning theory. Bandura's research on behavior concluded children learn from observing, modeling, and imitating others. Social learning theory combines behaviorism and cognitive methods to learning (Bandura, 1977). Students mimic and are influenced by parents, television, social media, what they read, and beliefs of others (Hamre & Pianta, 2001). The primary premise from social learning theory is behavior is learned from the environment through observational learning (Bandura, 1977). An example of social learning theory is students seeing their peers get rewarded by the school bus driver or campus administrator for positive behavior. Modeling good behavior on the bus and providing rewards, supports creating a safe environment for the bus drivers and students (Hamre & Pianta, 2001). Moreover, it is possible for students to learn the benefits and consequences of behavior on the bus through their actions or observations. A component of social learning theory suggests people model and are influenced by reinforcements.

Bandura's (1977) social learning theory identifies key processes involved in learning and imitating behavior (a) reproduction, (b) attention, (c) motivation, and (d) retention. If processes are stimulated, then learning is impacted (Bandura, 1977). The theory is relevant to this study on school bus drivers' perceptions of student behavior management. The environment must be stable for the four processes to function effectively (Bandura, 1977). Duplication of negative or inconsistent behavior on the school bus should be managed by changing the mindset of students to believing the behavior is acceptable (Galliger et al., 2008). School bus drivers must be

motivated by training, effective processes, and procedures that support managing behavior (DeLara, 2008). The relationship school bus drivers develop with students and campus administrators must be visible and interactive, thus promoting a model consistent with Bandura's social learning theory (Hamre & Pianta, 2001).

In 1986, Bandura added a cognitive level to the social learning theory. The cognitive aspect accounts for the influence the environment has on a person's ability to learn and display acceptable behavior. The social cognitive theory component of social learning theory is relevant to this study because the basis of behavioral modeling explains how student behaviors are influenced by observation (Devi, Khandelwal, & Das, 2017). This component supports school bus drivers taking the steps to set behavior goals, expectations, and reinforcement systems. School bus drivers can be trained to use the theory to (a) teach new behaviors/attitudes, (b) direct attention back to student safety, (c) encourage existing positive behavior, and (d) incorporate rewards and reinforcements. The assumption is social cognitive theory promotes behavior to become self-regulated (Bandura, 1991). Social cognitive theory is related to moving the learner towards learned behavior (Devi et al., 2017). Three factors that influence each other are environment, people, and behavior. Through social cognitive theory, these factors indicate how people reenact behavior they see.

Figure 1 illustrates the framework based on Bandura's (1977) social learning theory related to this study. The theory enabled the researcher to understand how learners learn from experiences and observations.

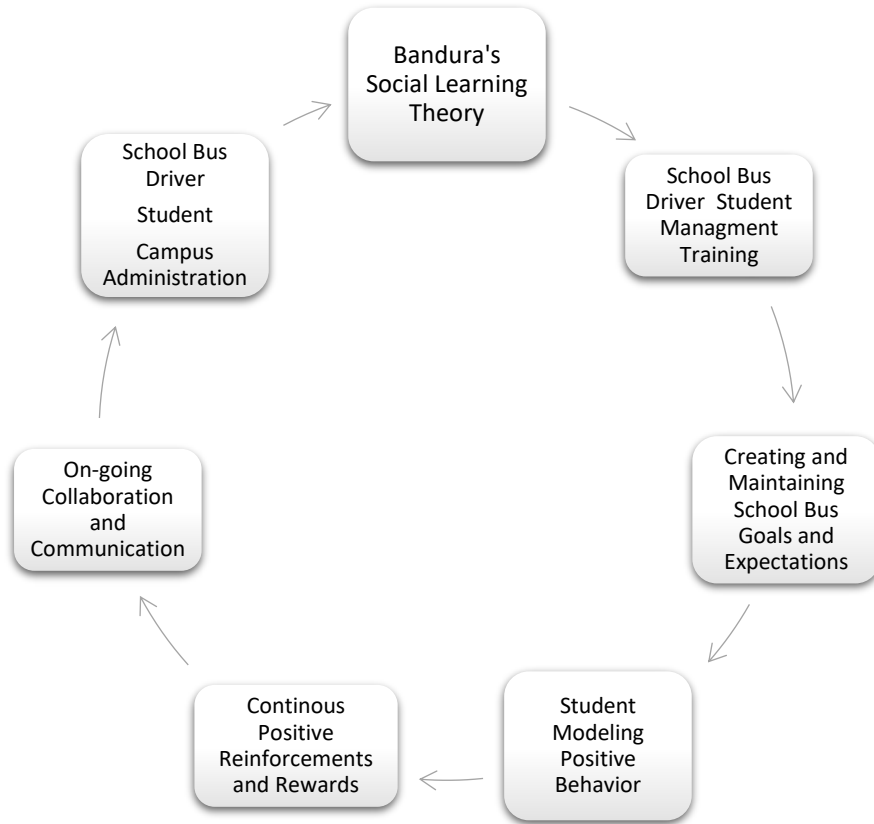


Figure 1. Perceptions of school bus drivers related to student behavior on the school bus

Sociocultural learning theory. Learning and collaboration are key components in this theory. Vygotsky (1978) believed human development and behavior are direct correlations to society and people. Society and people impact each other and play a pivotal role in learning (Vygotsky, 1978). Through sociocultural learning theory, school bus drivers and campus administrators can learn and collaborate on best practices to manage student behavior and promote a safe bus environment. Vygotsky's (1978) theory suggests interaction promotes change in people's thoughts and behavior. Furthermore, he believed children are dependent upon others who communicate what to do, how to do it, as well as what not to do. As the theory is applied to student behavior, students transform what they have learned through interaction. On the school bus, students merely copy what others do, regardless if right or wrong (DeLara, 2008). If most of the students are unfamiliar with ridership rules and expectations on the school bus, students

may act out. The school bus environment consists of a diverse group of students (Galliger et al., 2008). Based on student upbringing, norms, backgrounds, and cultures, all may be different (Kim et al., 2017).

Students experience a variety of developmental, social, and emotional issues that contribute to certain behaviors experienced on the school bus. Vygotsky's (1978) theory supports the notion that ultimately the learner's role is to receive and follow the authority figure's instructions. On the school bus, the driver is the authority figure and sets the tones with goals and expectations. It is vital to the success of student management that school bus drivers and students create mutually respectful relationship and a culture of trust.

According to McKenzie (1999), scaffolding is another approach aligned with Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural learning theory that models a desired learning approach that holds students accountable. The advantages are: (a) provides clarity of expectations, (b) holds students to task, and (c) decreases uncertainty of expectations. School bus drivers can benefit from McKenzie and Vygotsky's approach to set the foundation for appropriate behavior, following the rules on the bus, and any consequences lacking. Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural learning conceptual framework connects how negative student behavior on the school bus contributes to the learned behavior and functions within the bus transportation environment. Through collaboration and knowledge, people can increase understanding and learn. The relationship between the school bus drivers and campus administration must be developed and nurtured to help manage student behavior. Creating a culture of learning allows all stakeholders to ensure students remain knowledgeable of what is acceptable or unacceptable behavior while riding the school bus. Additionally, it gives autonomy to school bus drivers and campus administration to be effective agents of change.

Figure 2 illustrates the framework based on Vygotsky's sociocultural learning theory related to this study. The theory enabled the researcher to interpret findings and integrate with school bus perceptions and experiences related to student behavior.

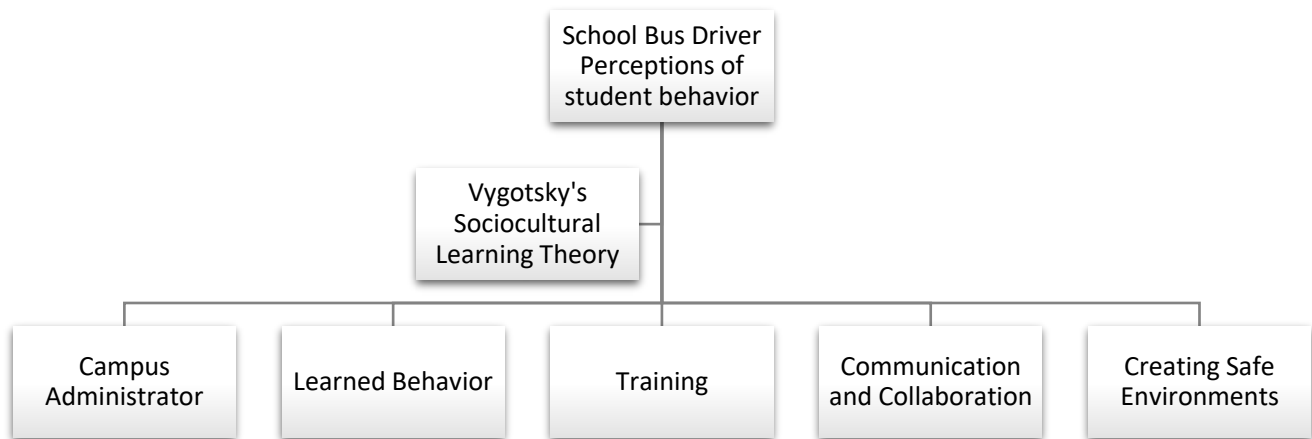


Figure 2. Perceptions of school bus drivers related to student behavior on the school bus.

The focus of this study was examining how school bus drivers perceive their experiences with student behavior, discipline, and collaboration with campus administration. Additionally, this study helped school districts understand the importance of providing the necessary training and support to school bus drivers. This study revealed the need to mandate school bus drivers receive the same classroom management training teachers receive. The framework was an integral part of the research as it provided clarity and provided an in-depth understanding of the methodologies, design, and findings.

Review of Research Literature and Methodological Literature

The literature reviewed was on student behavior, how school bus drivers handle behavior on the school bus, and school bus drivers' perceptions of discipline and collaboration with campus administration. Also, the review of literature examined what support was needed from the whole school system for school bus drivers to effectively manage student behavior and why

their perceptions matter and should be considered. Additionally, the researcher sought to historically understand student behavior management on the school bus. The researcher's goal was to gain in-depth understanding of what others found that influenced school bus driver perceptions of discipline and campus relationships, both pros and cons.

As times evolved during the 20th century and populations changed, family dynamics increased in size, contributing to changes in neighborhoods, and commuting distances surged (Wolf, 2009). Within the scope of changes, birthed the demand for more school buses to transport students and school systems' need to accommodate the influx of meeting the new stressors (i.e. hiring certified drivers, recreating routes, and maintaining bus fleet etc.) and laws that regulate public school transportation. As student ridership on buses has increased, more school bus drivers are experiencing behavior challenges. On average, student behavior problems occur beyond the classroom areas such as school buses, hallways, and cafeterias (Cash, Bradshaw, & Leaf, 2014). Several studies noted the confined bus structure, timeframe on the bus (Galliger et al., 2008), and limited adult supervision (Brown et al., 2018; DeLara, 2008; Hendrix et al., 2019; Putnam et al., 2003; Raskauskas, 2005) contribute to negative behavior on the school bus.

Public school transportation. Today, the transporting of students on a school bus is something taken for granted; however, bus transportation not long ago was introduced as a method to modernize student learning (Ramage & Howley, 2005). The school bus is the only means of transportation to school for many students. The school bus is the largest entity in transporting students to and from school and home. According to the National School Transportation Association (2014), the national school bus fleet is over 500,000. School buses are the largest transit system in the nation. In the United States, school buses travel over five

billion miles and transport 26 million students annually (American School Bus Council, 2016). The American school bus is an extension of the school campus. With nearly 65% of school age students riding the bus, there is limited research regarding the school bus or social interaction on the bus (Galliger et al., 2008). The research (DeLara, 2008; Goldman & Peleg, 2010; Putnam et al., 2003) that exists focused on certain characteristics, such as bus ride length and rural versus urban transportation. A critical aspect of the school bus ride is still forgotten: student behavior (Goodboy et al., 2016). Misbehavior on the bus can create unsafe conditions for students, the driver, and others on the road (Goldin & McDaniel, 2018). Considering the effects of student interactions, the ride to school on a bus can be filled with a variety of behaviors and experiences (Galliger et al., 2008). The research was important to gain a better understanding of student behavior management on the bus.

Many functions comprise a school system transportation department. By far, the transportation department is the lifeline for the school bus driver. Safety is the focus for the department and its personnel. To support the students' safe transport and learning experience, all resources must be provided from the school system and transportation department to the school bus driver. The ability of the school system and the transportation department to create a safe and manageable bus environment that is conducive to learning relies upon continuous communication between drivers, campus staff, students, parents, and the transportation department (Sadlier, 2011). School bus drivers rely on the school system and transportation departments to effectively lead, manage and implement processes that contribute to the safe and successful transport of students and driver. This study looks to provide helpful recommendations for transportation departments and school systems to support school bus drivers in managing student behavior on the bus.

School bus drivers. Howell (1992) asserts that “no position in a school system goes more unnoticed and unrewarded than that of a school bus driver” (p. 33). Daily school bus drivers are tasked with the responsibility of transporting students, yet rarely are their experiences and interactions considered (DeLara, 2008). They are often the first and last personnel to interact with the students. According to Way (2011), school staff, especially bus drivers, have a profound impact on the student learning experience and behavior. In addition to being charged with driving safely, drivers are responsible for addressing concerns of harassment, bullying, illnesses, and other forms of behavior during the ride (DeLara, 2008). Data from DeLara (2008) and Putnam et al. (2003) contend school bus drivers report concerns with the lack of interaction with parents and administrators in controlling student behavior on the bus.

Moreover, the same data suggests that school bus drivers need detailed training to address, monitor, document, and control student behavior. The school system and community expect school bus drivers to provide a safe and civil transportation experience (HISD, 2017). Providing the necessary tools and support to the school bus driver will enable them to transport students safely, recognize negative behaviors, intervene accordingly, and collaborate with key stakeholders. Understanding the important role that school bus drivers play in education and solutions to student behavior enables school systems to maintain success and safe student environments. School bus drivers must have a combination of certifications, skills, and traits to be competent to transport students (HISD, 2017). The training and certification that drivers receive is tailored road safety and bus components, however limited in behavior management. This study provides school systems with data to understand the experiences of school bus drivers and how training, support, and process implementation will strengthen their task in managing behavior on the bus.

School bus driver behaviors. For effective student behavior management to take place, all personnel must be able to maintain an orderly environment (Black, Noltemeyer, Davis, & Schwartz, 2016). Understanding the various characteristics that contribute to negative student behavior is vital for school bus drivers, campus administrators, parents, and students. Several research studies (Brown et al., 2018; DeLara, 2008; Galliger et al., 2008; Goldman & Peleg, 2010; Goodboy et al., 2016; Hendrix et al., 2019; Putnam et al., 2003) on student behavior identified reoccurring traits that contribute to negative behavior in and outside classroom:

- Peer-pressure
- Bullying
- Social Acceptance/Denial
- Harassment
- Physical, Verbal, and Emotional Abuse/Threats
- Social Media Taunting
- Isolations
- Disrespect
- Excessive Noise
- Drug Use
- Mental and Emotional Health Concerns
- Immaturity
- Learned Behaviors

In 2010, Goldman and Peleg's study of pupil behavior on school buses showed that school bus drivers found uncontrolled noise (61%), out of seat activity (48%), and bullying (31%) among the most distracting behaviors. Additionally, school bus drivers report a history of

completing many bus referrals and recommendations for bus suspension, yet behavior continues, and students remain on the bus (DeLara, 2008; Putnam et al., 2003). Rarely are school bus drivers given feedback from the campus. This contributes to the challenges school bus drivers face daily. School bus drivers must be contributing factors to intervention and strategies that improve student behavior and promote accountability on the school bus (Black et al., 2016). The school bus presents an unstructured context where biases, hierarchies, and allegiances are formed (Galliger et al., 2008). Presenting the importance of safety and appropriate behavior to students is essential in diffusing negative behavior on the school bus.

Although school districts may not know where to begin in supporting the school bus drivers, Putnam et al. (2003) suggests managing student behavior on the bus requires a whole-school intervention approach. The whole-school approach includes campus collaboration and accountability, school bus driver training, parent engagement, advocacy programs, ridership rules and consequences, positive reinforcements and rewards, and empowering students as part of solutions (Goodboy et al., 2016). The whole school system must align to support the school bus driver in improving and managing student behavior on the bus. School bus drivers are held accountable for the safety of students; however, students have responsibility to behavior. By identifying and understanding the common behavior patterns of students, school systems can strategize best methods to improve behavior. Over time, this will help school bus drivers apply sound processes and procedures to address and improve student behaviors.

Campus administrator. Many campus administrators are confronted with a variety of transportation concerns daily (Tobin, 2014). These concerns range from unknown bus expectations and unsafe bus stops to late arrivals and student misbehavior. Leaders must strive to build and maintain productive and successful environments. Many organizations are adopting

collaborative cultures. The role and responsibilities of the campus administrator is multi-functional and covers a variety of responsibilities. Internal and external student behavior management is at the core of responsibility (Tobin, 2014). In conjunction with the school bus driver, the campus administrator is key to the safety and success of the student's transportation experience. Having effective student behavior management means ensuring all stakeholders know what is expected when it comes to overall student behavior. A good campus administrator will be visible and always available to listen to all involved without judgment, collect critical evidence, and determine what is fair and in the best interest of the school district, campus, and students (Tobin, 2014).

In another study, Long and Alexander (2010) found that the presence of a campus administrator discourages certain behaviors. Although it is uncommon for campus administrators to ride the school bus, the perception that an administrator boarding the bus or meeting the bus at the campus would give support to the driver. Communication between the campus administrator and school bus driver is essential to managing student behavior. The campus administrator's response time to student behavior concerns on the bus is vital to ensuring the environment is safe for students and the school bus drivers. Goodboy, Martin, and Brown (2016) suggest campus administrators not only address student behavior timely but interact and support the school bus driver. When collaboration is focused on results, everyone involved will begin with a common understanding of what is at stake, how they must prioritize for success, and the tradeoffs that must be made (Patterson, Grenny, McMillan, Switzler, & Maxwell, 2013). Implementing meaningful strategies to address and diffuse negative student behavior must be a common goal and approach on the school bus and at the campus (Goldin & McDaniel, 2018).

Any student management plan, program, or training that campus administrators create must be extended to school bus drivers.

Maxwell (2001) argues that clarity brings understanding to every aspect of an organization. “Bus drivers don’t receive a significant amount of training on how to manage students” stated Salvador Morales, the Transportation Director of El Mirage, Arizona, (as cited by Vail, 1997, p. 34). Training, accountability, and expectations promote clarity and affect the focus of people, processes, procedures, and their ability to effectively function. School bus drivers need support systems that encompass campus leaders, training, communications, and effective relationships with students, expectations, and accountability. School districts have the responsibility to ensure policies and procedures are in place to manage student behavior. Campus administrators can empower school bus drivers by addressing student behavior on the bus. For school bus drivers to be successful in managing student behavior, school administrators must consider drivers as a part of the campus staff. By engaging school bus drivers, campus administrators can provide successful behavior management strategies.

Communication. In any organization, it is critical for leaders and employees to understand the importance of communication and listening. Leaders must effectively manage communication. How the flow of information is handled among employees makes the difference. Leaders should engage with employees and other stakeholders in a way that gives support to everyone’s voice and promotes knowledge sharing (Farmer, 1987). Communication helps to cultivate healthy relationships with stakeholders (Lencioni, 2005). School bus drivers, for the most part, work in isolation (Galliger et al., 2008). Many school bus drivers would agree decision making is made in seconds without the opportunity to ask leadership or colleagues. A high level of communication for school bus drivers is made via radio with dispatchers or

between other drivers (Goldin & McDaniel, 2018). Managing public school transportation is about collaboration and recognizing the importance of the driver, the bus, and the student (Zohar & Lee, 2016). Keith Henry, Chairman for National Association for Pupil Transportation, recommends transportation leadership engage daily with school bus drivers to give support, guidance, and best practices (American School Bus Council, 2016). Open lines of communication with all stakeholders allow school bus drivers to build relationships, trust, and accountability (Farmer, 1987). Communication provides a platform for relationships between students, the school bus drivers, and campus administrators (Goodboy et al., 2016). Continuous communication enables school bus drivers to learn the best approaches to successful behavior management and internal and external relationship building (Lencioni, 2005).

Parent involvement. The communication, collaboration, and relationship between parents, students, campus leaders, and the school bus driver is essential to the student learning experience. Collaboration allows people to constantly learn, transfer, and share knowledge amongst each other. This form of interaction is beneficial for all stakeholders. According to National Coalition for Parent Involvement (2014), parent involvement in every aspect of the educational system is crucial. When parents are involved, students have better social skills and show improved behavior. In most households, the concept of behavior and safety starts at home. In general, students learn how to behave and the importance of rewarding positive behavior from the adults around them (Collins & Ryan, 2016). DeLara (2008) surveyed 30 school bus drivers about parent involvement or lack of related to student behavior management. The survey indicated that from the school bus driver's perception, minimal support from parents impedes the driver's ability to gain control of student behavior. As well, the researcher recommended campus administrators hold conferences that include parents and school bus drivers to report

behavior concerns and action plans. Additionally, parents and students should sign school bus rules and student code of conduct to increase awareness, expectation, and accountability. Furthermore, the campus disciplinary actions and progressive improvement plan should be made available to all stakeholders (i.e., school bus driver, parents, and students). Based on the behavior, campus administrators must collaborate with the school bus driver and work to resolve reported student behavior concerns on the school bus.

According to the National School Transportation Association (2014), school bus drivers can benefit from any training that helps them to connect, communicate, manage behavior, and understand students. School bus drivers must be empowered as authority figures on the bus and have the knowledge and skills to effectively manage behavior. Parents play a critical role in holding students accountable to behave on the school bus. The National Center for Education Statistics (2015) surveyed a variety of school districts through a pilot student management program and discovered that the school bus drivers needed autonomy to communicate with parents first, and if behavior did not improve, the campus administrator was notified.

Additionally, the NCES survey reported a decline in student behavior by 35% from the previous school year. A major concern for school bus drivers is communication breakdown or lack thereof with the transportation department and campuses (DeLara, 2008). It is vital for educational systems to support school bus drivers creating and maintaining relationships and dialogue with parents. Engaging parents in all aspects of the learning experience including the bus environment (i.e., expectations, rules and behavior concerns) promotes a healthy and safe ride to and from.

Additional bus support. School bus drivers that faced student management issues have always communicated the hardships they face in driving a large vehicle with 30–70 students

behind them (DeLara, 2008; Wolf, 2009). According to Raskauskas (2005), managing safety and behavior as the only adult on the bus can be challenging. If another adult were on the bus, drivers may benefit from a fresh set of eyes. In most public school districts, the role of a bus attendant is to support students with special needs during transporting to and from school or special activities based on the student Admissions, Review, and Dismal (ARD) meeting (HISD, 2017). Bus attendant hiring, and placement is based on approved ARDs per student and funding from the school district's special education department. In school districts across Texas, general education routes do not have bus attendant (Texas Education Agency, 2017). Additionally, due to budget cuts across the nation, roles such as bus monitors have been eliminated completely. School bus drivers could benefit from having bus monitors on all routes to help control student behavior. According to National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (2011), having an additional adult on the bus will enable school bus drivers to stay focused on the road and keep students seated. Black (2017) suggested that school bus drivers play an important role and share a common desire to be safe and on time; however, it was indicated that having a second adult on the bus would be very beneficial. At the center of all school systems, safety and learning are core priorities, and school bus drivers are a part of the learning process. There is minimal data on bus monitors or bus attendants; however, they are important and play a critical role in public school transportation (Goldin & McDaniel, 2018). Finding budgetary resources or lack thereof should not negate student safety. School bus drivers have continuous concerns about managing student behavior, so having another set of eyes would be beneficial and contribute to the safe transport of students. The school bus environment is considered an unsupervised entity. School systems must support the notion adding additional personnel can only contribute to student safety and management.

Positive relationships and rewards. Creating an atmosphere conducive to student safety and success is important on a school bus. Drivers must thrive to build positive relationships with students that support a foundation of mutual respect (Poland, 2010). Building respect and rapport contributes to students feeling cared for and known by their bus driver. Also, this supports students' willingness to listen to school bus drivers. In contrast, nonassertive drivers or hostile environments will cause the student-driver relationship to suffer. With positive relationships, school bus drivers may establish trust with students, parents, and campus administrators (Ramage & Howley, 2005). Stakeholders are keen in identifying care and support within environments. Currently, no empirical studies are available on school bus driver- student relationships; however, Brown et al. (2018), DeLara (2008), Goodboy et al. (2016), Poland (2010), Putnam et al. (2003), and Way (2011) established the importance of an effective positive relationship between the two.

Rewarding students for positive behavior is important. School bus drivers have a variety of ways to accomplish this task. A simple verbal compliment on student behavior can go a long way with students. Additionally, a written gesture is important in providing praise and feedback to students and parents. Offering rewards through stickers, allowing light music, or general seating on the bus are options for school bus drives to utilize. It is important for all rewards and recognition to align with school board and campus policies. According to Putnam et al. (2003), the study stated rewarding positive behavior can be successful for school bus drivers in managing student behavior. The researcher further added building positive relationships helped to train school bus drivers to communicate and interact more with students and campus administrators. Maintaining consistency through a reward program enables collaboration and communication with all stakeholders. The potential impact of managing and rewarding student

behavior outweighs the lack thereof (Atkinson, 2009). Transportation departments and school systems must work in collaboration to provide resources to school bus drivers for meaningful student behavior recognition and rewards.

Peer support. According to Peer and McClendon (2012), social cognition and sociocultural theory advocates “constructive, self-regulated, and goal-oriented environment whereas students remain the center focus” (p. 1). Minimizing student behavior through respectful and supportive relationships foster a culture where school bus drivers can focus on driving and safety. Vygotsky (1978) contends through social interaction, mentoring, nurturing, and modeling, learned behavior is empowered. School bus drivers and campus administrators must create environments that support activities where students can positively interact and support each other. Students helping students to assimilate through the school bus environment is a win-win for everyone. School districts have access to a variety of resources to manage or reduce behavior, such as approved volunteers and students as bus monitors, other students, seats belts, and video surveillance (Atkinson, 2009). A study conducted from Westman, Olsson, Gärling, and Friman (2017) investigated a group of student bus riders on whether the bus environment and peer monitors on the bus impacted their mood after arriving to school. The study found students who engaged with peer monitors reported feeling positive and aware of the appropriate bus behavior; whereas, students who engaged in solitary activities or moved from seat-to-seat on the bus reported feeling frustrated on the bus.

Some campuses use student government association meetings to engage students and bus drivers to improve behavior during bus rides. At a school district in Texas, one campus collaborated with district police to form a peer deputizing program that gave students the autonomy to initiate dialogue regarding the bus rules with students. The dialogue was meant to

encourage students to follow the rules while on the bus and promote safe travel. Having supportive peers allows students to interact in a positive manner on the bus. School bus drivers reported being more focused on the road when student peer initiatives were developed. There is no set strategy or intervention that is guaranteed to eliminate student behavior issues on the bus. Schools and transportation departments must continue to be innovative in reducing and addressing negative student behavior. School systems and transportation departments must collaborate to legitimize the school bus driver's authority when managing students on the bus (Pace & Hemmings, 2006). Collaborating with students and school bus drivers to improve behavior is a win-win for everyone. When students perceive school bus drivers as supportive and empowering, behavior can improve.

Positive behavior interventions on the school bus. Creating and maintaining positive environments where student behavior is rewarded, while attention to negative behavior is minimized, is a win-win (Brown et al., 2018). School bus drivers welcome any mechanisms that will alleviate negative behavior. Positive Behavior Intervention Strategies (PBIS) is the framework or approach that assist campuses in adopting and organizing evidence-based interventions associated in improving academic and behavior outcomes for students (Childs et al., 2016). Emphasis is placed on creating and maintaining a PBIS system. Students are taught desired behavior and held accountable by all personnel, including school bus drivers. Based on research from Rusby, Crowley, Sprague, & Biglan (2011), when school systems incorporate PBIS, there is reduction in negative student behavior in and around the school environment. Any decline in student behavior or student disciplinary referrals can make the campus staff and school bus driver's job safer and easier. Students deserve an environment that is safe, welcoming, and helps to contribute to their overall learning experience and success.

PBIS enables school bus drivers to communicate expectations and provide praise to boost student morale. Every school district must incorporate PBIS in its student behavioral accountability and ensure school bus drivers are a part of any campus training. Through effective PBIS, students are taught how to behave correctly in all settings. Likewise, PBIS allows school bus drivers to (a) provide continuous monitoring and supervision; (b) provide frequent positive reinforcement; and (c) correct misbehavior calmly, consistently, and logically. According to Collins and Ryan (2016), “promoting positive behavior in the bus setting is paramount” (p. 33). PBIS provides a diverse framework that school bus drivers can proactively benefit from in managing student behavior. Any proven mechanism that reduces challenging behavior is a value-add to school bus drivers, students, parents, and campus administration. To minimize the challenges school bus drivers, face with student behavior, school systems must be willing to implement PBIS on the bus (Goldin & McDaniel, 2018). It is vital for school bus drivers to remember they are roles models for their students. Providing positive feedback for appropriate behavior on the bus is critical (Johns et al., 2005). Campus administrators can consider including drivers in the same training that teachers receive in managing student behavior.

School bus driver advocates. Every school system should communicate and market the importance and role school bus drivers play in student learning (Scandellus & Cohen, 2016). Public school transportation is the heart of every educational enterprise. The school bus plays a pivotal role in the education system and access to student learning. The yellow bus industry needs voices in all spectrums to make a difference. DeLara (2008) and Brown et al., 2018 recommends school bus drivers need training and supportive relationships with campus and transportation leaders and, most importantly, students. Campus administrators must be willing to

see the school bus driver as an integral part of the staff. Scandellius and Cohen (2016) state that sustainability comes from building effective collaborations. School bus drivers need people who are committed to their overall success, willing to share knowledge, and involve them in the student learning experience (Weber, 2015). Creating a platform for school bus drivers and stakeholders promotes a healthy environment. Understanding and sharing the expectations of safe transportation and the role of the school bus is vital to the success of the work school bus driver are challenged with daily. Educating students, parents, and the community of school bus transportation can only heighten the awareness and importance of student behavior and safety.

Review of methodological issues. One methodological limitation of the previous study is the lack of focus on student behavior on the school bus (Goodboy et al., 2016). The research that exists focused on certain characteristics, such as bus ride length and rural versus urban transportation (DeLara, 2008; Goldman & Peleg, 2010; Putnam et al., 2003); this is another methodological limitation that the current study aims to address by using a wholistic approach by involving school bus drivers and school leadership and including a broad research question. This is important because Putnam et al. (2003) suggested that managing student behavior on the bus requires a whole-school intervention approach. Additionally, qualitative methodologies regarding student behavior on the bus were lacking; this qualitative research was important to gain a better understanding of student behavior management on the bus from the perspectives of bus drivers and school leadership. For instance, Putnam et al. (2003) conducted a quantitative study focusing on frequencies of student behavior to support the use of implementing a specific behavior intervention. In addition, DeLara (2008) conducted a study on bus drivers' perceptions of student bus behavior and how they perceived school administrators valued their input;

however, the study was limited to bus drivers in rural areas of New York which may involve issues related to that specific geographic location.

Synthesis of Research Findings

The overall research (Brown et al., 2018; DeLara, 2008; Galliger et al., 2008; Goldman & Peleg, 2010; Goodboy et al., 2016; Hendrix et al., 2019; Putnam et al., 2003; Way, 2011) focused on various student behaviors, associated factors related to school bus student management, and the lack of support and training for school bus driver utilized different data. Several studies gathered information from surveys, observations, interviews, and interventions. Clearly, school bus drivers were identified as communicators, fact-finders, and first line defenders in combating student behavior. The studies conveyed the importance of the whole school system treating school bus drivers' input as priority and ensuring a safe and hassle-free transportation experience for students. Additionally, the studies emphasized schools that focused on including school bus drivers in PBIS prevention, student management training, and promoted stakeholder support showed a positive impact in student behavior management. In contrast, schools where campus administrators failed to consider school bus drivers as a part of solutions, failed to foster a culture of trust, and student behavior remained a problem. In addition, rarely did the studies include parents and other school employees as these individuals play a critical role in student behavior management.

Furthermore, researchers Brown et al. (2018), DeLara (2008), Goodboy et al. (2016), Hendrix et al. (2019), Poland (2010), Putnam et al. (2003), and Way (2011) clearly provided a correlation between school bus drivers and the support needed by school administrators and parents to maintain student behavior on the school bus. All studies expressed the need for improved communication between students, parents, transportation, and campus administrators.

Also, there was a recommendation to improve the documentation process and disciplinary follow-up at the campus. Another major finding concluded that school bus drivers and campus staff need on-going student management training.

Qualitative research reveals a target audience's behaviors and perceptions, explores issues in the environment, and utilizes various sources of information to answer questions. This form of research requires participants and researchers to work collectively through questioning and gathering information. The environment can be control or uncontrolled. According to Creswell (2014), research processes identify and focus on themes as the researcher collects and analyzes information and the environment. The literature review shows that school bus drivers are not considered an active part of the educational system as it relates to student management, policy implementation, and effective collaborations. In addition, research shows key community and school system stakeholders are disengaged and misinformed about the abilities, impact, and importance of the school bus driver (Brown et al., 2018; DeLara, 2008, Goldin & McDaniel, 2018; Putnam et al., 2003). Furthermore, research suggests there is disparity with the lack of support and training that school bus drivers are receiving (Goodboy et al., 2016; Hendrix et al., 2019; Putnam et al., 2003; Way, 2011). The primary focus of the qualitative research was to create effective solutions for the school bus drivers that moved beyond the issues found in the research (Creswell, 2014). Theming from the research centered around addressing student management on the bus, educating and holding students accountable, creating positive safe environments, and building effective collaborations with stakeholders. According to Way (2011), campus administrators must collaborate and respect school bus drivers enough to solve student behavior concerns. Strategic planning must be at the forefront to ensure behavior intervention plans are in place and training is available. Safety must be a priority throughout the whole

school system. Students and parents must be educated on consequences of failing to follow student management expectations. Through effective training and communication, everyone is held accountable to support a safe and civil commute to school.

Critique of previous research. Some research exists relative to school bus concerns, bus culture, and bus discipline (Brown et al., 2018; DeLara, 2008; Hirsch, Lewis-Palmer, Sugai, & Schnacker, 2004; Kim, Corcoran, & Papamanolis, 2017; Zohar & Lee, 2016). Researchers have quantitatively examined how school bus activity can impact school bus drivers (Goodboy et al., 2016; Zohar & Lee, 2016), yet qualitative research is still needed that focuses on school bus drivers' perceptions and experiences. For instance, one study collected quantitative and qualitative data from school bus drivers qualitative, but the focus was solely about students' disruptive behavior and how valued they felt their opinions regarding disruptive behavior were to school administrators, and may be outdated at this point in time (deLara, 2008).

In addition, Allen, Young, Ashbaker, Heaton, and Parkinson (2003) conducted a study with 58 school bus drivers; however, their study was limited to the topic of sexual harassment. Similarly, Goodboy et al. (2016) conducted interviews with school bus drivers to obtain their feedback on their lived experiences with bullying on the school bus; however, this study was limited to the actions related to bullying specifically. Goodboy et al. (2016) had emphasized the importance of school bus drivers because they are present to intervene when bullying occurs on school busses. Furthermore, Goodboy et al. (2016) noted the need for school bus drivers to have support from their school officials to perform their job duties effectively. The findings from Goodboy et al. (2016) provided support for the need to include school officials in studies regarding school bus drivers. More research is needed to better understand the experiences of school bus drivers as a whole so they can be more supported. Other research has been conducted

on the culture of school bus rides but was limited to collecting data solely from parents who live in rural areas, and like DeLara (2008) and Allen et al. (2003), may also be outdated (Ramage, 2005).

Although there is literature regarding school bus concerns and protocols (e.g., Brown et al., 2018), research is lacking pertaining to school bus drivers' perceptions of their experiences with student behaviors, as well as their ideas for improvement. The current study aims to fill this research gap and will be guided by social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) and sociocultural learning theory (Vygotsky, 1978). Bandura's (1977) social learning theory explains how behavior is learned and how it can influence relations and perceptions between school bus drivers, campus administrators, and students. Social learning theory is centered around behavior modeling, which shows how people can learn acceptable and unacceptable behaviors. Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural learning theory serves as the conceptual framework to explain the notion a learner's environment plays a critical role in development. Thus, every environment must be conducive to promoting positive student behavior and accountability of actions, including school busses.

Chapter 2 Summary

The review of literature provided in depth research regarding behavior, specifically within the environment of transporting students on the school bus. Student behavior is prevalent in school systems everywhere and impedes on student learning and safety (DeLara, 2008). This chapter provided a look at the whole system approach to addressing behavior through the background of school transportation, school bus driver responsibilities, the role of campus leaderships, the support and training needs, and the problem occurring with student behavior while correlating framework from Bandura (1977) and Vygotsky (1978).

Bandura's (1997) social learning theory suggests behaviors are learned and supports the notion that an interactive environment between school bus drivers, students, and campus administrations contributes to effective behavior management. Bandura's theory focuses on behavior modeling which provides context on why or who people act the way they do. Social learning theory was appropriate for this research. Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural learning theory suggests learning precedes development and behavior and consciousness are integrated. School systems and transportations departments must create and maintain environments where student behavior expectations are defined and outlined, training is provided to adults to management behavior, and accountability is learned to support school bus drivers, students, parents, and campus leaders.

Collectively, a study on how school bus drivers perceive their experiences with student behavior, discipline, and collaboration with campus administration provided valuable insight into a growing issue in school systems. That insight will lead school systems and transportation leaders to collaborate on (a) training curriculum to address and management behavior on the bus, (b) strategies to create a positive environment on the bus, (c) effective methods to communicate with students and campus administration, (d) opportunities for student mentor programs, and (e) de-escalation techniques on the bus. School systems and transportation departments must be concerned not only for the safety of students in their charge but also for the local, state, and federal legislation that governs issues of safety and behavior (Goodboy et al., 2016). School bus drivers are instrumental in making a difference in the lives of students. School systems must strive to incorporate the school bus driver in training, planning, and implementing of policies and programs centered around managing student behavior. Positively directed whole system approaches to student behavior on the school bus can be beneficial to drivers (Putnam et al.,

2003). There is a need for further research to explore how school bus drivers and campus administrators can collaborate to improve student behavior on the school bus. The data from this study, in addition to other research, was necessary to expand on the results to address the concerns related to student behavior on the school bus.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

Every day, school bus drivers accept the task to transport students to and from school. School districts and parents trust school bus drivers to safely transport students. Managing student behavior is critical to successful student transportation. According to Farmer (1987), there is no real-time communication or resolve between school bus drivers and campus administration regarding student behaviors on the bus. There are concerns between school bus drivers and campus leadership in the role transportation plays in managing student behavior (Goodboy et al., 2016; Putnam et al., 2003). The behavior goes unaddressed due to lack of interaction amongst the two. Having school bus drivers collaborating with stakeholders to ensure safety, accountability, and student management are important factors (Poland, 2010; Way, 2011). This study explored how school bus drivers perceive their experiences with student behavior, discipline, and collaboration with campus administration. This section outlines the methodology of research used.

Research Question

The research question that guided this study was:

RQ1. How do school bus drivers perceive their experiences with student behavior, discipline, and collaboration with campus administration?

Purpose and Design of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore how school bus drivers perceive their experiences with student behavior, discipline, and collaboration with campus administration. A qualitative case study research design was utilized. Semistructured interviews, focus groups, and observations were utilized for data collection. This type of design helped to understand the

experiences and perceptions of the participants. The qualitative case study design was the appropriate method to address the research question. Qualitative research provided a unique way to understand the context and perspectives of others (Merriam, 2009). In addition, a qualitative method allowed the researcher to gain a broader description from the participants in the study. In contrast with quantitative research, qualitative research was not as statistical in nature but sought to understand real-world settings and perspectives (Merriam, 2009). The case study provided in-depth understanding of how school bus drivers perceive their experiences with student behavior, discipline and collaboration with campus administration. The interviews were used as a data collection agent to focus on the research questions. Semistructured interviews allowed the participants an opportunity to share their experiences in the areas of student management. Interviewing provided the flexibility to ask a variety of questions to gain a higher level of understanding (Creswell, 2014). The focus group provided a collaboration of personal experiences and information which helped construct meaning.

Research Population and Sampling Method

Research population. Data was collected from two transportation managers, one senior bus driver, one safety trainer, one field safety investigator, and 10 school bus drivers that service elementary, middle, and high school routes. These employees worked between three of the four transportation terminals at the selected school district in Texas. The transportation manager, safety trainer, and field safety investigator function as school bus drivers. The researcher utilized campuses and the transportation main terminal location to meet with participants. Fifteen participants were part of the sample. For this study, permission to access district data and speak with participants was submitted via letter to the Chief Operation Officer (see Appendix E).

To maintain diversity of knowledge and experience, the criteria for selection of the research population included: (a) Transportation managers possessed five years of experience in transportation or management; (b) Senior Driver possessed 10 or more years of driving and safety experience in pupil transportation environments; (c) Field Safety Investigator and Safety Trainer possessed seven or more years of school bus driving, safety, training, and investigation experiences; and (d) School Bus Drivers possessed 10 years of public or private school bus transportation experience. According to James (2015), school bus drivers with more years of service and training possess more knowledge and experiences regarding safe transportation and manageable student behavior. The participants were selected because of their experiences and interactions that support student achievement.

Sampling method. A stratified random sampling method was used for the targeted participants. Yin (2014) describes stratified sampling as the division of the population into smaller subsets. In addition, the members of the population shared attributes or characteristics. Stratified random sampling was selected due to its abilities to describe smaller samples within samples that can be stratified to provide more credibility to a research study. This allows the researcher to identify any underlying characteristics among a heterogenous population (Patton, 2001). Unlike stratified purposeful sampling, stratified random sampling has been found to increase the levels of confidence in a study when generalizations are made regarding particular subgroups (Patton, 2001). According to Creswell (2014), in qualitative research, sampling has an impact on the quality of the research. Stratified sampling was the best approach to sample the selected population and address the primary research question. In this study, stratified random sampling allowed the researcher to highlight the experiences of the participants and provided the

ability to make generalizations about the subgroup related to the phenomenon under investigation.

Within the initial sampling of participants who met the inclusion criteria, the participants were then separated into smaller groups called strata. Random sampling was selected for the groups (Creswell, 2014). For the stratified random sample, the researcher requested data from the school district's human resources department that indicated school bus drivers work location and years of service in transportation. In addition, the researcher met with the interim General Manager of the Transportation Department as a reminder of the research and intent to begin communicating with school bus drivers. During the meeting, the manager was informed the participants involvement is voluntary and would not impact the transportation operations or student learning. An overview of the participants rights and confidentiality was reviewed. The general manager approved use of the departments employee messenger board platform to inform employees of the study and general informational date, time, and terminal locations. The informational was posted on the employee board at three of the four transportation terminals. The fourth terminal is managed by the researcher and not included in the research study. Thirty employees expressed interest in the meeting. The 20 school bus driver participants were grouped by years of school bus driver experience: 5 years, 10 years, and over 10 years. Fifteen participants were selected, 3 participants were placed on stand-by in the event someone dropped out of the, and two participants were not selected to participate. Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) proposed less than 20 participants in a qualitative study enables the researcher to work in a closer setting to focus more on the exchange of information.

Selected participants were emailed (via personal email addresses) and called to acknowledge participation and receipt of consent form. Once the participant accepted, meeting

preferences and interview sessions dates and times were created. At the meeting, the researcher discussed the research, the participation process, confidentiality, timelines, and the consent form and addressed any participant questions. The consent forms were handed out at the meeting for participants to read, sign and return at the conclusion of the meeting.

Sources of Data

Interviews. Interviews in qualitative research are a dialogue between the interviewees and researchers based on the researcher's agenda (Creswell, 2014). In this study, information was collected through conference calls and face-to-face interviews. To collect data from the participants, semistructured interview questions were utilized. The semistructured questions are included in Appendix A (11 questions). The interview sessions were 60 minutes. These questions were critical to obtaining in-depth information and candor from the participants. It was important for the transportation participants to feel comfortable and supported during this process to share information in a non-bias manner. Additionally, remaining flexible in gathering the information and viewpoints was vital. Interviewing allowed for an in-depth understanding of participants' perceptions and experiences.

Focus group. In qualitative research, focus groups are commonly utilized. The focus group allowed participants to share experiences, perceptions, and information based on the open-ending platform. The focus group discussion topics from the current study are included in Appendix B. The participants were (a) two campus administrators, (b) five school bus drivers, (c) transportation manager, (d) field safety investigator, and (e) one safety trainer. Some of the participants (namely the transportation employees) from the focus group were also a part of the individual interview process. The campus administrators were selected by me for the focus group. The focus group met for 60 minutes at the main transportation department headquarters.

The researcher took notes and recorded the session. The participants received a meeting transcript to check for content accuracy.

Observation. Researchers use all their senses to examine people in environments through observation. A systematic approach to data collection comes from observation (Creswell, 2014). There are many reasons for collecting observational data such as (a) answering the how or what in research, (b) to explain the behavior of people, and (c) when self-report data is different from actual behavior (Yin, 2014). In this study there were four bus observation ride a-longs (2 hours in the morning and 2 hours in the afternoon), that totaled to 480 minutes of observation. The observation sheet (see Appendix C) captured the field notes from the researcher's school bus ride along. The context of the on-the-bus observation included communication, interactions between students, bus driver, and campus staff. The observation examined the behavior norms and what occurs when behavior becomes a concern on the bus. The observation process was utilized to authenticate the school bus driver's perceptions and gather in-depth information to discuss participant perceptions and establish common themes (Yin, 2014).

Participants were fully informed how all data from the interviews and focus group would be utilized solely for the purpose study. All methods to record responses (notes, email, and recorder) were to capture communication with participants during the interview process. Participants were informed for consent to utilize a recording device when necessary. Recording ensured any incomplete notes did not lose data. After each interview, the goal was to transcribe the interviews immediately to ensure accuracy and member checking was also utilized to make sure transcriptions and interpretations of responses were accurate. The researcher hand delivered the interview transcripts to each participant, in person, at their transportation terminal location to

ensure that the participants received them and to protect the confidentiality of the participant's responses by ensuring that each participant received the transcripts directly. Each participant was allowed 24 hours to review their responses for accuracy and suggest any edits. Any transcript edits were picked up at the terminal location and addressed by the researcher within 48 hours and returned to the participant for final review and approval. Once the researcher confirmed the accuracy of the transcripts, the data was utilized for qualitative analyses.

Field testing. The importance of an effective data source is key to the success of the study. The field test allowed for interview questions to be provided to educational stakeholders prior to the actual data collection for the study. The interview questions were administered to the district transportation senior managers, senior driver, and two school bus drivers. This group was not a part of the participants for the case study. This action enabled validity and reliability of the instrument. In addition, the researcher was able to plan for any challenges or modifications prior to the study with selected participants.

Data Collection

A letter of consent was created and submitted to the Chief of Operations for approval to conduct the study and the use of key personnel. After the approval letter was received, participant selection began for the study based on set criteria. The researcher selected 15 employees were selected to participate however I also had 10 alternative employees in case someone selected dropped out during the process. Participants were fully informed this was voluntary participation for a set amount of time during operational hours. Additionally, they were informed all activity would occur on school district property (i.e., school bus or transportation headquarters). The Chief was not informed of the selected participants' names, and special coding was utilized to protect the information and participants. Interview scheduling

began based on participants' availability and the school district calendar (upcoming holidays and student standardized testing schedule).

Consent forms were provided for all participants to sign. Interviews were conducted in private professional settings at an agreed upon time. A recorder (i.e. cell phone) was utilized during the interviews for additional documentation purposes. The provided timeline for each interview was 60 minutes. The interview environment was free of distraction, so participants were relaxed and free to respond in detail. Demographic data included gender, age, job title, and years of service in perspective roles. This information was added to the appendixes section. Prior to the start of the interview, each participant was verbally reminded that participation was voluntary. Every effort was made to ensure confidentiality, integrity of data, and adhere to school district policy/procedures and guidelines set forth by the Concordia University and Institutional Review Board (IRB). To secure data, the researcher utilized a password protected personal computer and USB. Informed consents and researcher notes were also stored in a secured, locked cabinet only accessible to the researcher. A three-year deletion date was established to destroy all data and documents.

Identification of Attributes

The attributes defined in this qualitative study were experiences, knowledge, concerns or challenges, and perceptions of the school bus drivers and campus administrators. The goal was to investigate the challenges school bus drivers face with student behavior and the relationship between school bus drivers and campus administrators. The narrative from interviews and focus groups with school bus drivers and administrators served as the primary data source for qualitative data analysis. Furthermore, the data that was collected in the current study involved

the perceptions and descriptions of the participants' experiences in the context in which they had occurred.

Data Analysis Procedures

There is a large amount of data in case studies that researchers must organize and analyze (Yin, 2014). Data analysis requires the information to be thoroughly examined to ensure it can be utilized in the study. Utilizing the in-depth note taking procedures, recording device for clarity, and documentation was beneficial. The researcher ensured the information acquired from the interviews was properly analyzed during the research process. After interviews and focus group meetings, notes were reviewed and transcribed. During data analysis, the researcher remained neutral and flexible to gathering data from creditable sources, as this is important to qualitative studies (Creswell, 2014). All documents were transferred in Microsoft Word. The researcher incorporated data analysis and interpretation strategies supported by Ochs (2014). According to Creswell (2014), descriptions from the data, codes transfer to themes, data findings should be presented in a variety of methods (i.e. diagrams, charts, tables, figures).

The researcher analyzed data from interviews, observation, and focus groups using manual coding and the NVivo software program to consolidate the data and correlate words or phrases within the transcript. The researcher then applied the coding process, which consisted of determining the emerging themes, what was occurring or not occurring, and what was learned (Creswell, 2014). The researcher then took the information gathered and categorized it for meaning, organization, comparison, and pattern credentials. Once this was accomplished, the researcher then connected information to create themes.. After the researcher identified the themes that emerged from the data, the research then took the information and grouped it into smaller segments to analyze and identify components that did not align with the findings.

Finally, the researcher analyzed the information for reoccurring patterns, collaborating findings and theories, and generalizing theories and constructs. The researcher found patterns that illustrated obstacles related to student behavior management, strategies to resolve student behavior management, training and support for school bus drivers, school bus driver and campus administrator's perspectives. Collectively, the researcher analyzed, displayed, organized and summarized the findings of the data to provide meaning to the data and clearly and concisely answer the researcher questions through analysis and interpretation.

Limitations of the Research Design

Limitations and delimitations affect credibility, conditions, or circumstances of the study. There were limitations in the qualitative case study design. The limitations were the sources of data collection and analysis and concerns with credibility and dependability. The study was done in the largest public school district and pupil transportation department in Texas. The study did not apply to other states or school districts which limited the findings in the case study. The participants were unique in terms of backgrounds, experiences, demographics, policies, and education. The selected participants were interviewed individually. The goal through interviewing was to obtain different responses and perspectives. The diverse values and views of the participants played a key part in their responses. Relying on the perceptions of the participants and their varied cultures and backgrounds was important. The depth and scope of a study can be defined through a case study.

Validation

Validity refers to accuracy or correctness of the findings. To validate and assess the rigor and quality of the qualitative research credibility and dependability are key criteria. Triangulation was also used to validate the study. To confirm accuracy and credibility of

information, participants reviewed the transcription of data, analyze themes and interpretations, and conclusions. The researcher was held responsible for continuously reviewing the interview recordings and responses to become familiar with the overall content of data. Participants were continuously engaged to confirm the credibility, and accuracy of the information. In a qualitative case study, research credibility largely depends on the ability, efforts, and skills of both the researcher and participants.

Credibility

Credibility relates to the trustworthiness of the findings and established through the experiences and knowledge of the participants. Additionally, credibility depends on the richness of the data gathered. The author contends, a qualitative study cannot be transferable unless it is credible, and it cannot be credible unless it is dependable. Trustworthiness or validity in qualitative research reflects the accuracy of findings of the study (Creswell, 2014). The study participants primarily decided if the results reflect what was being studied. Thus, it was important the participants felt the findings were credible and accurate. The main strategies employed to validate credibility of qualitative research were researcher's bias, triangulation, aggressive observation, and providing a robust description. It was critical to verify participant viewpoints, perceptions, experiences, backgrounds, and behaviors. In addition, supporting data was included to substantiate findings.

The researcher sought support from other educators in the field, colleagues, and family members not included in the study, but who had similar perspectives and interest in the content. Other scholars suggested other strategies to ensure trustworthiness. Maintaining records and notes throughout the process demonstrated clarity, consistency and transparency of the data. The

participant responses were compared to ensure diverse perceptions were represented. In addition, the participants were encouraged to provide precise responses to ensure accuracy.

Ethical Issues in the Study

Regardless of the research, ethical issues are important, and the researcher must take into consideration general and specific research principles (Creswell, 2014). Issues may arise as the researcher becomes sensitive to the needs of the participants and the study. Ethical issues can occur throughout the research process. Addressing ethical issues is the responsibility of the university and researcher. Participants, information, experiences, documentation and communication related to this study were protected. Confidentiality was a priority for the researcher. There are several core ethical principles important in qualitative research, such as respect for people, communities, and justice (Creswell, 2014). The researcher continuously conveyed honesty and trust during the research study and interaction with participants. The ethical issues addressed during this study were perceptions of the school bus drivers and campus administrators on student behavior management in addition to a conflict of interest assessment, identification of the researcher's position and possible ethical issues in the study. The researcher was not in any position of authority over participants. The researcher did not have any personal relationships with any of the participants or members of the university IRB. Lastly, the researcher did not have any conflicts of interest while conducting this study.

Ethical issues in the study. The researcher sought approval from Concordia University (IRB), Dissertation Committee members, and school district Chief Operations Officer prior to conducting the study. After granted approval, the researcher obtained content forms from the study participants and shared data. Participants were allowed to review responses, data analysis

and interpretation for validation purposes. All parties involved were completely protected (i.e. privacy, anonymity, confidentiality) throughout the process.

Other ethical considerations. Once the study was reviewed and approved by Concordia University (IRB) the researcher investigated possible risks and explained these to participants. The researcher was responsible to protect participants confidentiality prior to, during, and after data collection. In addition, all data remained private, confidential, and secure. Participants were reassured of confidentiality and no impact on their job. Furthermore, participants were reminded the interview process was recorded and notes taken. Also, participants were informed participation was on a voluntary basis.

Chapter 3 Summary

According to Goldin and McDaniel (2018), a major concern is schools, districts, and states do not consider the effects of student behavior on the bus while addressing the problem systematically. Misbehaving on the bus can create unsafe conditions and extend into the campus and home environments (Putnam et al., 2003). The school bus must be considered a place of learning and influence for students (Gold & McDaniel, 2018). Chapter 3 provided details for a qualitative case study that sought to understand how school bus drivers perceive their experiences with student behavior, discipline, and collaboration with campus administration. Eleven participants were selected to participate in the study from a public school district in Texas. The researcher used data from interviews, focus group session, and observation to support findings and gain an in-depth understanding of the concern.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Results

Introduction

Ensuring that students get to and from school safely is a critical part of the overall learning experience. In their daily work, school bus drivers continue to face challenges associated with student behavior management and communication with students, parents, and campus administration. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore how school bus drivers perceive their experiences with student behavior, discipline, and collaboration with campus administration. The researcher explored the experiences of school bus drivers who engage with students and campus administration on a regular basis. Qualitative analysis allowed the researcher to gain key insight from the participants' responses from interviews, observations, and focus groups. The following research question was used to guide this study: How do school bus drivers perceive their experiences with student behavior, discipline, and collaboration with campus administration?

This chapter will begin with a discussion of the descriptive data of this study, followed by a description of the data collection and analysis strategies. The chapter continues with a discussion of the trustworthiness of the study, which is followed by a comprehensive description of the themes and patterns which emerged from within the analysis of the study's semistructured interview, focus groups, and observational data.

Description of the Sample

The study was conducted in a public school district in Texas, which has experienced challenges related to school bus drivers and administration communication. School bus drivers and persons in leadership openly discussed the challenges that have been experienced within student transportation, demonstrating an apparent tension between the transportation department

and campus. Due to the case study nature of this research, the researcher's goal was for the results to be descriptive of this district's school bus driver population and not demonstrative of the larger population of school bus drivers. In the following section, the demographic data of the study will be discussed.

Demographics. The 15 participants interviewed were school bus drivers from within one selected public school district in Texas. There were variations in years of service, job titles, and gender within the group of participants. A set of criteria was developed in order to ensure the inclusion of participants with varying years of experiences in the school bus field: (a) Transportation managers who possessed five years of experience in transportation or management, (b) Senior Drivers who possessed 10 or more years of driving and safety experience in pupil transportation environments, (c) Field Safety Investigator and Safety Trainer who possessed seven or more years of school bus driving, safety, training, and investigation experiences, and (d) School Bus Drivers who possessed 10 years of public or private school bus transportation experience.

Stratification was used to allow for equal groups; for instance, seven out of 15 interview participants were female, while the remaining eight participants were male. Additionally, of the individuals who participated in the campus leadership focus group, three out of the six participants were females, while the remaining three participants were male. In the bus driver focus group, three of the eight participants were female, while the remaining five were male. While all the participants were either bus drivers or campus administrators, their job titles varied and are detailed in Table 1. The job title with the most interview participants was School Bus Driver, which included 10 out of 15 participants. Additional job titles from this group included:

Manager/School Bus Driver (2 participants), Field Safety Investigator (1 participant), Safety Trainer (1 participant), and Senior Driver (1 participant).

Table 1

Job Title of Interview Participants

Job Title	Number of Interview Participants	%
School Bus Driver	10	66.67
Manager/School Bus Driver	2	13.33
Senior Driver	1	6.67
Safety Trainer	1	6.67
Field Safety Investigator	1	6.67

In addition to variation in job titles, there was also variation in the number of years of service within the bus driver population. Number of years served ranged from five to 28 years, with an average of 12.33 years. The median number of years served was 10 years. A complete breakdown of participants' service years is provided in Table 2.

Table 2

Service Years of Interview Participants

Number of Service Years	Number of Interview Participants	%
5 to 9	7	46.67
10 to 14	3	20.0
15 to 19	2	13.33
20 to 24	2	13.33
25 to 29	1	6.67

Research Methodology and Analysis

Methodology and data collection. Data collection was completed in several steps. First, interviews were conducted with the 15 selected school bus drivers who met the minimum number of years of service requirement. Permission to engage the school bus drivers was obtained from the district's Chief Operations Officer (COO); however, the participating school bus drivers were not identified to the COO. To ensure minimum interruption to the learning environment and transportation operations, interviews were conducted at transportation terminals or via conference call, according to the available times of the participants. Prior to their participation in the study, the researcher conducted a meeting with everyone selected, at which the participants submitted their consent forms. Selected participants were informed of the intentions and focus of the study, and continuously reminded that all participation was voluntary and confidential.

The interview process was guided by 11 semistructured questions and each interview lasted 60 minutes. The semistructured interviews allowed the participants to respond candidly, providing in-depth information. Interviews were recorded and transcribed, in addition to the notes taken by the researcher. After each completed interview, participants were provided with transcripts of the interviews and their responses, so that they could ensure the accuracy of their response transcriptions and additional notes that were taken by the researcher during the interview.

In addition to the interviews, two focus groups were conducted: one with six campus-based leaders and another with eight school bus drivers within the school district. A few of the participants completed both interviews and focus groups (the transportation employees). researcher utilized these focus groups to acquire additional information from the participants regarding the primary research question of the study, as well as the themes which were identified through analysis of the interview transcripts. Table 3 identifies important process data from the participants during data collection.

Table 3

Participation Tracking Table

Participant ID	Job Description	Participant Group
SC00015	Manager/Driver	Transportation
RN00011	Field Safety Investigator/Driver	Transportation
CS00012	Trainer/Driver	Transportation
EI0002	Senior Driver	Transportation
RJ0001	Driver	Transportation
JH0004	Driver	Transportation
RP0006	Driver	Transportation
BY0007	Driver	Transportation
CP001	Elementary school	Leadership
CP002	Middle school	Leadership
AP003	High school	Leadership
AP004	High school	Leadership
MC005	Elementary school	Leadership
MC006	Middle school	Leadership

To get a first-hand look into the experiences of the school bus drivers, the researcher participated in four roundtrip ride-a-longs (about one hour long each ride), during which time observations related to both student and driver behaviors were recorded. The bus observations were conducted on the bus with the driver and students over the course of three days after the midst of interview process. By accompanying the bus drivers on their routes both to and from school, the researcher was able to gain insight into the specific challenge's drivers face, expanding the researcher's understanding of the drivers' experiences. The researcher strived to record observations related to the communication between all parties involved: parents, students, drivers, and campus administration. The combination of interview responses, focus group responses, and school bus observations made up the primary data for this study. The following section will discuss the strategies used to organize and analyze the data.

Data analysis. Following the collection of data through interviews, focus groups, and observations, the data was analyzed utilizing qualitative thematic analysis strategies. The

thematic analysis allowed the researcher to extract relevant themes and patterns from the data collection. The researcher analyzed data through multiple phases, enabling strategic organization and identification of internal meaning. NVivo software was utilized to assist the researcher with analyzing the data.

First, the researcher transferred all data into electronic formats. Handwritten observation and interview notes were input into Microsoft Word, and the audio recordings of each interview were transcribed into Microsoft Word, as well. Once all data had been successfully saved as Microsoft Word files, all data was compiled into a single NVivo project. The use of NVivo software enabled the researcher to collect and organize the differing forms of data, facilitating analysis by allowing the researcher to quickly and easily review the data either as an entire collection or by looking at one form of data at a time. For example, in the preliminary stages of analysis, the researcher was able to consider the data population in its entirety; whereas, in the stages of analysis that followed, the researcher was able to filter the data population and consider, for example, only bus driver interview responses.

Next, a comprehensive preliminary reading of the data was conducted. Each transcript was read in its entirety, and the entire population of transcripts was read in succession, without conducting any further coding or organization of the data. This initial reading of the collection of transcripts enabled the researcher to become familiar with the data, as well as to begin identifying topics, themes, and patterns emerging from the data. Although no codes were officially assigned until the preliminary reading of all texts was completed, NVivo facilitated the researcher by enabling an efficient progression from text to text. In doing so, the researcher was more easily able to begin to make connections and to identify trends within the data, progressing smoothly between data that had been previously sorted and organized.

With an overview understanding of the data established through the preliminary reading, organization and coding of the data began. Each transcript was carefully read, with the researcher beginning to assign codes to the data. These initial codes tended to be broader and more encompassing than the final codes which were developed into the themes of this study, serving to aid the researcher in organizing the data and narrowing the analytical lens. For example, early codes included “training needs,” “experience addressing student behavior,” and “challenges communicating with administration.” Codes such as these enabled the researcher to view coded data alongside other similar responses and further narrow the codes according to the recurring trends within the participants’ responses.

The researcher continued by reading each transcript multiple times, each time striving to further organize the data into relevant organizational groups. As the data became increasingly organized into coding groups, the codes began to take shape into the resulting themes of this chapter. All codes were identified inductively from the data, representing the recurring topics and trends connected to the participant responses. For example, from within the responses, which were initially coded as “training needs,” the researcher was able to identify the recurring themes of bus drivers desiring training in behavior management, communication, and in establishing a positive bus environment.

After the data had been sufficiently organized and coded effectively, each coding group was reviewed against the collected data population to ensure that the resulting themes remained clear, accurate, and representative of the data population. Reviewing the data in this way also enabled the researcher to strengthen or adapt themes where appropriate, such as combining similar and relevant coding groups into one theme. The themes that resulted through these

carefully conducted stages of qualitative thematic analysis will be discussed in the results section to follow.

Trustworthiness. The trustworthiness of the study and its results was a priority to the researcher. During the collection and analysis process, data collected was triangulated. The researcher recorded and transcribed the various forms of communication, as well as took comprehensive notes during interviews, focus groups, and observational sessions. To ensure accuracy and validity of the data, transcriptions and researcher notes were reviewed by the participants, allowing the individual to revise information as necessary to reflect their personal opinions.

Summary of the Findings

The process of conducting qualitative thematic analysis of data allowed the researcher to gain insight into the following guiding research question: How do school bus drivers perceive their experiences with student behavior, discipline, and collaboration with campus administration? The reoccurring themes and patterns that are discussed in this section emerged from the participants' responses.

From the data collected during the interviews with bus drivers, 20 themes were identified. Those themes were related to the perceptions and experiences of the drivers regarding their communication with campus administration and managing student behavior. Some themes related to the bus drivers' desires and goals to manage student behavior, while others demonstrated the challenges or frustrations which the bus drivers have experienced. Six additional themes were identified from the bus driver focus group. Eight themes were identified from the leadership focus group responses.

Presentation of the Data and Results. In this section, themes and patterns from the researcher's discussions and findings will be identified from the responses of the 15 participants interviewed.

Participants chose to work in public school transportation due to previous experience. When examining the variables that participants mentioned as influencing factors to become school bus drivers, the most reoccurring response was that individuals held some form of previous driving industry experience. Six of the 15 participants stated they had professional driving experience, either as a truck driver or driving in another transportation industry. Participant 9 stated, "I always enjoyed driving OTR [Over-The-Road]. One day I passed a sign that said the school district needs skilled and reliable commercial licensed drivers—I applied, and the rest is history." Participant 1 shared, "I already possessed a CDL [Commercial Driver's License] and truck driving experience prior to applying," and Participant 11 said, "Prior to coming to America, I was a driving instructor/trainer in India. After coming to America, I had a passion to remain in transportation and driving. I applied for the school district and have been driving ever since."

Family influenced participants' decisions to become a bus driver. Family influence was referenced several times related to making the decision to become a bus driver. Five out of the 15 interviewees provided responses which included family members. For example, Participant 5 stated, "My wife is a teacher. She convinced me to apply at the school district, so we could have more time together. I already had truck driving experience and was hired as a school bus driver." Individuals with children also took their families into consideration, such as Participant 2, who stated: "Becoming a single mother overnight required me to quickly find employment that would meet my family's needs . . . becoming a school bus driver allowed me to

have income and time with my kids.” Additional reasons identified as factors in the participants becoming school bus drivers are listed in Table 4.

Table 4

Factors Influencing Participants' Decisions to Become Bus Drivers

Factors	# of Participants	% of Total
Previous driver experience	6	40.0
Needed employment	6	40.0
Family	5	33.33
Referred by others	4	26.67
Wanted to make a difference	3	20.0

Participants desire additional communication strategies and skills. As the participants discussed bus management strategies and the training provided by campus administration, the majority expressed interest in strengthening their communication connections and skills. These skills and connections included strategies in communicating with children, parents, and campus administration. For example, Participant 1 stated, “How to communicate with students, parents, and campus about behavior,” Participant 10 stated, “How to communicate with all levels of stakeholders (parents, students, and principals),” and Participant 15 stated, “How to effectively communicate at all levels, and for results.” Note that participant responses generally outlined communication skills across all levels, as individuals not only desired the necessary skills to expand their connections with other school bus drivers, but also with other adult parties involved.

Participants desire student behavior management skills. Ten out of 15 responses highlighted a desire to improve student and behavior management skills. As Participant 10 stated: “The department needs training on how to manage students [on the bus].” Additional responses listed student management as a necessity when it comes to school bus driver training, such as Participant 13, who stated: “Current drivers need on-going student management training.” Similarly, Participant 8 highlighted, “Effectively managing student behavior,” and Participant 6 stated, “We need training on how to address students that misbehave.” An additional four participants highlighted a desire to receive training on proper documentation of issues. Such responses are also related to student behavior and could contribute to improvements in behavior management on the bus.

Participants desire to create positive bus environments. Nine out of 15 responses expressed the desire to establish a positive bus environment. Typical responses which demonstrated these views included phrases such as, “create a positive bus environment” (Participants 8, 10, and 13) and, “creating a positive bus environment and culture” (Participant 3). Little elaboration was provided into the drivers’ definitions of a “positive bus environment,” though it is significant that positivity was referenced by so many participants. In addition to referencing creating a positive environment, an additional five participants highlighted the desire to improve their understanding of the students.

Table 5

Training and Skills Desired by Participants

Factors	# of Participants	% of Total
Communication	11	73.33
Managing behavior	10	66.67
Building a positive bus environment/culture	9	60.0
Understanding students	5	33.33
Documenting issues	4	26.67

Participants believe the drivers themselves contribute to the occurrence of incidents.

Numerous bus drivers referenced the actions or beliefs of the school bus driver as a contributing factor to the occurrence of incidents with driving or managing student behavior. These responses contrasted with those which emphasized the actions of the students. While there was variation within the responses and the way participants perceived the school bus driver's responsibility in these incidents, the fact that 12 out of 15 responses attributed at least partial liability on the school bus drivers is significant. Examples of these types of responses included Participant 7's statement, highlighting "Drivers lacking focus; concerns with personal issues as a distraction," and Participant 14's statement that drivers are "Failing to take job seriously . . . lack of focus on the job; remaining unprepared for the job and its expectations." Participant 3 also held bus drivers responsible for "failure to set the tone as the leader on the bus." Each of these

responses implied that the behaviors of the school bus driver contributed negatively to the overall bus environment and culture.

Participants perceive student behavior as a contributing factor to bus incidents. In addition to participants holding school bus drivers accountable for bus incidents, the behaviors and actions of students were also highlighted in multiple responses. Eleven participants listed student distractions as a factor which contributed to the occurrence of incidents. For example, Participant 11 stated, “Student distractions such as behavior—loud talking, music, horse playing.” Participant 15 also shared that challenges occurred, “when a driver has to deal with unruly and disrespectful students, or students that have no knowledge of the bus rules and expectations of bus riding privileges,” and Participant 5 stated, “Various distractions (name calling, loud music, and video games on cell phone/laptop) related to student behavior on the bus.”

Other repeatedly mentioned factors that contributed to potential incidents included traffic, construction, and route challenges/changes. A comprehensive list of factors identified by the interviewed participants can be seen in Table 6. These additional factors were generally listed in addition to the behaviors previously discussed, such as Participant 2, who listed “bad weather, traffic and road constructions,” in their factors which influenced their success. Participant 5 expressed similar sentiments, stating, “Various distractions related to student behavior on the bus, traffic and construction, unfamiliar with route, bus mechanical issues”

Table 6

Factors Identified by the Participants

Factors	# of Participants	% of Total
Driver actions or emotions	12	80.0
Student behavior	11	73.77
Traffic	8	53.33
Construction	7	46.67
Route challenges/changes	6	40.0

When preparing to perform their work, participants prioritize safety first. Twelve out of 15 participants emphasized the importance of ensuring safety to effectively accomplish their work. For example, Participant 13 stated they prepared by, “staying focused . . . putting safety at all levels (school bus and environment) and putting students as priority.” Other responses which expressed these sentiments included Participant 12: “Be safe; start the day with safety as a priority,” and Participant 8: “Try to create a safe school bus ride as much as possible.”

Participants perceive communication as a significant factor in working effectively. Out of the 15 participants, 10 provided responses which included references to work communication with stakeholders (students, parents, or campuses). Of these responses, six included explicit reference to greeting their students, while others expressed the importance of communication in other ways. Typical responses related to greeting students included Participant 15’s statement, “Communicate—greet and talk with the students.” Participant 4 also stated, “Greet the students; build good rapport with parents, students, and campuses.” Responses which

cited other forms of communicating include Participant 12's efforts to "understand the importance of engagement with campus and students," and Participant 5's efforts to "remain in constant communication with stakeholders."

Many responses also focused on restating the school bus rules. For example, Participant 10 stated that they "share expectations and school bus rules daily with students." Similar responses that referenced school bus rules and expectations included Participant 13's statement to "remind students of the rules and the importance of them to adhere to them so we can be safe," and Participant 4's strategy to "discuss school bus rules and expectations with students daily." Additionally, skills and actions highlighted related to preparation for effective work included completing pre-trip school bus inspection and maintaining a positive attitude, which were mentioned in seven responses each. The most frequent variables perceived to be associated with working effectively are listed in Table 7.

Table 7

Variables Associated with Working

Factors	# of Participants	% of Total
Prioritizing safety	12	80.0
Communication	10	66.67
Stating bus rules and expectations	8	53.33
Pre-trip inspection	7	46.67
Positive attitude	7	46.67

Participants have not received any training since the annual in-service training provided by the district. Thirteen out of 15 participants stated the last training they received was at an annual employee in-service held in August at the start of each school year. Many participants expressed dissatisfaction with the in-service training provided. For example, Participant 7 stated that they received some training at the “annual in-service in August, however we need more hands-on and content focused training, and more training on student management.” Likewise, Participant 6 stated, “The annual August in-service is given but it’s a standard event no meaning; it has been years since I can recall receiving training that targeted meaningful topics helpful to school bus drivers.” Most responses simply answered the question related to their most recent training by stating a variation of “the annual in-service,” such as, “the normal in-service” (Participants 1 and 11), and, “the August in-service” (five participants).

Participants received training from external sources. From the participants who mentioned trainings beyond the annual in-service day, three stated that they attended trainings outside of the district, paid for with their personal funds, while two participants stated they completed Crisis Prevention Intervention (CPI) trainings. Both participants who have been CPI trained expressed the critical importance that all school bus drivers would greatly benefit from CPI training.

Participants would like campus administration to offer greater support to school bus drivers. Nine out of 15 participants stated they would like to receive greater support from the school district. Most of these responses emphasized a desire to see a greater willingness to “partner with” (Participants 5 and 6) or “support” (Participants 7, 10, and 14) the school bus drivers. These responses emphasized a collaborative effort and a shared accountability when it came to managing student behavioral issues. For instance, Participant 9 stated, “Campus

administrator being willing to meet with the school bus drivers and students to resolve the issues and hold students accountable to behave on the school bus; creating a working relationship with all.”

Participants would like parents to ensure children understand the school bus rules and expectations. The most common complaint received regarding the role of parents in ensuring a positive school bus experience was that parents must have a thorough understanding of school bus rules and expectations, so that parents can hold students accountable for their actions. Ten participants referenced parent knowledge of bus expectations. Representative examples of such responses included Participant 7’s statement that “[parents should] get involved; learn the bus rules; hold students accountable; understand the role of the school bus driver; support school bus safety.” Similarly, Participant 4 stated that parents should “hold student accountability for following the rules and school bus expectations; understand the expectations,” while Participant 10 shared that parents need to “understand school bus rules and student expectations; hold students accountable to behavior on the school bus.”

Participants perceived student discipline as most troubling issue. Thirteen out of 15 participants expressed that issues and challenges were generally related to student behaviors and resulting discipline attempts or strategies. Some participants described specific behaviors of students, such as Participant 12, who stated, “Yes, I have faced many issues . . . continuous behavior is standing, disrespect, moving while the bus is in motion, cursing me out, or other students, screaming.” Other participants described their frustration with managing student behavior, as well as their attempts to resolve issues through verbal warnings to students, student conduct referrals, and disciplinary documentation.

For example, Participant 8 described their frustration as follows:

Many times, when I have documented student behavior and submitted the forms to the campus, nothing happens. I don't get a chance to speak to anyone because they are not available. When I inform my manager, nothing happens. There is no communication or follow-up. Only when a student misbehaves at the campus or makes a bullying action or verbal threat on the bus does action be taken at the campus. Transportation has no input on student discipline decision-making. The school bus is invisible to a campus.

Participant 5 expressed similar concerns as Participant 8 regarding managing student behavior and seeking support from campus administration. Managing behavior on the bus is a challenge when fear is present, and support is lacking from the department, campus, or parents.

Participants are frustrated by the lack of administration follow-up. Nine out of 15 interview participants expressed frustration at the fact campus administration rarely provided feedback or follow-up regarding behavior reports or documentation. For example, Participant 9 stated, "I don't feel equipped to address student behavior because I have write ups from the beginning of the school year that have never been addressed by transportation management or campus leadership." Participant 2 summarized their frustrations similarly, outlining: lack of follow-up/feedback from transportation management and/or campus; frustration with on-going neglect of school bus driver issues; lack of trust in the school district that school bus driver's concerns even matter to anyone; being judged by the campus; not being comfortable with communicating at such a high level; not wanting to be fired for speaking out against a student's behavior. A list of the challenges highlighted by participants is provided in Table 8.

Table 8

Challenges Associated with Managing Students and Collaborating with District Administration

Factors	# of Participants	% of Total
Student discipline	13	86.67
Lack of campus follow-up	9	60.0
Communication	5	33.33
Lack of training	3	20.0

Participants perceived a lack of communication/feedback from the campus as a barrier to effective student discipline. Fourteen out of 15 responses included a reference to delayed or lack of feedback from campus administration as a challenge and barrier to effective student discipline. Participant 3 summarized their experiences as:

If you're not persistent there is an experience of lack of follow-up and/or support to the school bus driver. Sometimes there is no punishment for student behavior; transportation department is a 50/50 on supporting school bus drivers when student behavior concerns exist on the bus.

Participant 10 expressed similar experiences stating, "Overall lack of response from all involved."

Some participants further expanded upon challenges with campus administration, including two participants stating that they have gone so far as to engage their union, when necessary (Participants 4 and 6). Participant 14 also described their strategy for overcoming this lack of campus support and communication, stating, "Due to the lack of respect or concern I started emailing or just letting my terminal manager communicate concerns with student behavior." Whether seeking alternative methods to obtaining support from the district, such as

involving the union or bypassing protocol, or merely enduring the frustration, the clear majority of participants expressed great frustration with the lack of communication and support from campus administration.

Participants believed that school bus drivers must ensure their own behavior management success. Participant responses suggested that because of minimal or lacking support from campus administrations, school bus drivers must take it upon themselves to resolve issues and management behavior on the bus as best as possible. Participant 12 summarized these concerns, stating, “Drivers have to understand it’s up to them to get student behavior issues resolved by any means necessary . . . I feel sorry for any school bus driver that does not realize it is on us to make this work, be safe, and not get fired.” Participant 2 continued by stating, “The transportation department nor campuses want to address school bus drivers when students are acting out on the bus. School bus drivers are on their own to hold students accountable while on the school bus.”

The unwillingness of campus administration to support school bus drivers when it comes to student management is perceived by many participants as a lack of respect. While many responses suggested such concerns, three participants explicitly referenced lacking respect as part of their frustration. For example, Participant 15 stated:

As a school bus driver, the lack of respect is huge from the parents, students, transportation management, and campus. The students know that a school bus driver has no control, say, or power of anything really on the school bus, so they continue to act out. The transportation department has no say so in what happens to a student as far as discipline goes.

Participants do not feel supported by campus administration. Eleven out of 15 participants stated that they do not feel supported by campus administration (see Table 8). Five individuals explicitly stated they did not feel supported, such as Participant 11's statement: "No, as a school bus driver I do not feel supported. I feel like the transportation department, parents, and campus only care if the school bus is on-time, nothing else matters." Participant 14 chose to compare this district's challenges to the relative successes of others, stating:

Look at what is working in the school transportation departments in other school districts and bring some of their practices to this district; not every school district is struggling with training needs or behavior concerns on the school bus; we want leaders to focus on what's the best interest of the school bus driver's success.

Participants believed school bus drivers would benefit from more training.

Participants unanimously responded that school bus drivers would benefit from receiving additional training. For example, Participant 1 stated,

The department needs to give school bus drivers more training (a mixture of content, hands-on, and situational) in areas that affect us the most; add drivers to the same behavior management training that the teachers receive, the district needs to make campuses treat us as employees a part of the student learning process; we need how-to guides, escalation tips, best practices tools to better manage the school bus; currently there is nothing that the department does to educate or enhance knowledge on managing behavior as a school bus driver or invest in me.

Similarly, Participant 10 expressed that "regardless of the budget we deserve and need more training and support from the district, department, parents, and the campus," and Participant 2

stated that, “as an employee you want and need on-going training opportunities not only once a school year; once a year training does nothing to support growth in any way.”

Table 9

Bus Driver Perceptions of Support from Campus Administration

Factors	# of Participants	% of Total
Do not feel supported	11	73.33
Feel somewhat supported	3	20.0
Feel supported	1	6.67

Participants feel that safety is the primary concern when transporting students.

Participant responses concurred that safety is the primary concern when it comes to transporting students daily. Regardless of whether they feel supported by the district, department, the students, or the parents, safety was continuously perceived as school bus drivers’ top priority. As stated by Participant 10, “Maintaining safety is an absolute must; learning as much as possible so I can manage a bus environment of success and safety is important.” In comparison, Participant 11 stated:

As a driver, my main priority is being safe on the road and ensuring students are behaving and safe, I need to know my route and students needs to be informed and reminded of the bus rules along with the parents. I must remain positive and focused daily to ensure safety above all else is at the forefront of everything.

Other participants gave concise examples of safety being a priority: “Putting student safety first” (Participant 3), “Remaining safe at all times” (Participant 4), and, “As a driver I am constantly focused on being safe” (Participant 7).

Themes Resulting from Focus Groups

In the following paragraphs, those themes that emerged from the responses of the two focus groups will be discussed. First, the emerging themes from the school bus driver focus group will be discussed, followed by a discussion of the themes that emerged from the leadership focus group. At the conclusion of these discussions, a summary of these findings will follow in the final section.

Themes resulting from the bus driver focus group. In this section, themes were identified from the transcript responses of school bus drivers participating in the focus group.

Participants perceived regularly reviewing school bus rules to be a successful tool in managing student behavior. Four out of eight participants stated that they considered regularly reviewing of the rules with students to be an effective tool in behavior management on the school bus. Participant 15 stated clearly that “the school bus does not leave the campus without me going over the rules.” Likewise, Participant 12 stated, “I go over the school bus rules and expectations with my students; I forewarn them of the consequences of misbehaving on the school bus and I share this information with as many parents I see at the stop.”

Participants believe that personally ensuring that problems are addressed is the most effective strategy. In consideration of the lack of responsiveness of campus administration, which was repeatedly expressed by participants, some focus group participants described ways in which they take matters into their own hands to ensure a successful school bus ride (see Table 9). For example, Participant 7 stated:

I set the tone on my school bus and I treat to students with respect and like young adults.

They know the rules and what will occur when they don’t follow them. I been doing this

too long to not get it right and under control. I don't even worry myself if I never see the principal, if I am following the employee handbook. I am protecting myself, bottom line.

Participant 7 feels he must protect himself, as school bus drivers generally are not receiving sufficient support, and therefore must ensure their own success. In comparison, Participant 4 stated:

I'm from the old school, I let every student know what the rules are on the school bus and then I don't play with them. Now, I respect the students but I'm not playing no games when it comes to ensuring my school bus is safe and everyone is behaving always.

In addition to the previously discussed strategies, other strategies highlighted included establishing a seating chart, utilizing verbal warnings or threats towards students, and focusing one's attention on their own job, rather than student behavior.

Table 10

Bus Driver Strategies for Addressing Student Behavior

Factors	# of Participants	% of Total
Reviewing rules and expectations	4	50.0
Personally, ensure success	3	37.5
Seating chart	1	12.5
Verbal warnings/threats	1	12.5
Focusing on own job	1	12.5

Participants implemented documentation strategies in response to behavioral issues.

When behavioral issues occurred on the school bus, six out of the eight bus drivers focus group

participants stated they proceed by documenting the incident and reporting it to their supervisor. Although most respondents agreed in the implementation of incident documentation, the approaches they took in documenting incidents varied. For example, Participant 2 described their documentation strategy as follows:

I write up everything a student does on my school bus to protect myself because it's easy for a school bus driver to get fired. I don't bother going to the campus office because that's a waste of time . . . I give my student discipline documents to the transportation supervisors. Let them be held responsible to get things figured out.

Four participants stated they proceed to document incidents only after verbal warnings have been provided and disregarded. For example, Participant 12 described their entire behavior management process, ranging from verbal warning to refusing transportation service to students:

After three verbal warnings to students and behavior of any kind is still a concern, I try and alert the parents if I see them at the stops; if that does not work, I document the behavior and I take it inside the campus and request to meet with a campus official; if I have a working contact number for the parent I will call them as well; I follow-up as often as necessary to get the issues resolved; I maintain a seating chart; if no action is taken and if I believe the behavior is a threat to bus safety I alert transportation and the campus that I cannot transport the student; there have been routes that I simple refuse to drive for because some campuses absolutely will not suspend or do anything with students to correct behavior on the bus.

Participants will refuse service after repeated behavioral issues. As Participant 12 previously commented, some bus drivers resort to refusing service in cases of repeated behavioral issues. Three out of the eight participants stated that when other strategies fail to

improve student behavior, they are not afraid to refuse service to that student. For example, Participant 4 described their behavior management process as follows:

I verbally instruct the student of how they are breaking the bus rules and let them know I expect them to improve. If that does not change the behavior, I reach out to the parent then document the student's behavior and submit it to the campus. I wait about 48 hours then let the transportation managers know that I need their assistance via email or to set a meeting with the campus principal. If nothing works and I reassign the behavior student(s) to sit up at the first, so I can keep watch over them, as a very last option, I will refuse service, especially if the behavior is threatening to me and other students.

Reponses to driver behavior management actions were generally negative. Six out of eight participants expressed that their attempts to implement behavior management strategies result in negative responses from either student, parents, or the campus administration. For example, Participant 11 stated:

I don't waste my time reporting it to the campus. I have seen where some drivers that take it to that level are removed from their routes or parents go to school board on them. I don't want to deal with all of that. Some of the students listen to me, while others ignore me and continue the behavior on the bus.

Participant 4 expressed similar experiences, stating:

I have been written up for refusing students transportation, but that does not bother me, if this district wants us to be safe, I will do what is necessary to ensure safety, we don't have clear actions to follow with student discipline on the bus but as a driver we all must protect ourselves and do something to document student behavior.

Behavior management strategies led to improvements in the behavior of some students.

A few participants detailed examples of times where they found positive responses from students when they attempted to manage behavior. For example, Participant 2 described the following example:

When I use the school bus radio and call dispatch to report students or request the school bus video to be pulled and reviewed, then the students know I mean business and sometimes that's all it takes for them to start acting better; sometimes if I see a campus officer, I will ask them to board the bus and address the students acting out, sometimes that helps.

Another example of successful implementation of behavior management strategies was demonstrated in Participant 15's statement:

From a student perspective they have either improved the behavior, had the parents report me for refusing to pick them up or the campus finally responds and disciplines the student. Regardless, the behavior is documented and the student either improves or the parents are held responsible to get the child to and from to school and home.

Themes resulting from the leadership focus group. In the current study's focus group, the participants were (a) two campus administrators, (b) five school bus drivers, (c) transportation manager, (d) field safety investigator, and (e) one safety trainer. The following themes are those that were identified from within the responses of the leadership focus group participants.

Participants blamed bus drivers for creating challenges. Participants blamed school bus drivers for creating challenges. Three out of six focus group participants suggested that challenges are a result of the school bus drivers themselves. These responses described school

bus drivers as having consistently negative attitudes and unpleasant interactions with others. For example, Participant CP002 described their interactions with school bus drivers as:

I, or my administrative team are on the bus ramp daily. We greet every school bus driver and rarely get a response back—just the school bus driver looking upset or disengaged. I have had the school bus doors closed in my face with the driver driving off while I was talking, or over talking a student and parent.

Another example of participants perceiving school bus drivers as contributing to challenges can be seen in Participant AP003's statement that "the school bus drivers that come to work just look at you with a Mr. Grinch stare. The school bus drivers seem frustrated, tired, and unhappy all the time." Similarly, Participant CP001 stated, "My students complain to me about the negative attitudes of the bus driver on a regular basis. Parents call my cell, email me, and call or visit the campus daily about late or no-show buses every day."

Participants expressed desire to have more open communication with drivers. Three out of the six participants expressed an interest in improving communication between administration and the school bus drivers. For example, Participant AP003 stated:

When you think about communication, it should be open, honest, welcoming, and a two-way dialogue . . . it has been very difficult at all levels to deal with this department. How can I communicate if daily I am missing 3–5 routes due to driver absences?

In this response, Participant AP003 clearly described their perception of the ideal communication between individuals while also expressing frustration with the current situation. Participant MC005 also described campus' work to establish open communication, stating, "Our campus team is in constant communication with the transportation managers and our school bus drivers on a variety of matters, especially student behavior." Despite disagreements with school bus

drivers, responses such as these demonstrated a willingness from administration to work with their school bus drivers and transportation department.

Participants expected incidents to be well documented. Out of the six total participants, five responses demonstrated school bus driver incident reports and complaints should be well developed via documentation. Four of these responses included the preference to have school bus video evidence included with each the report. For example, Participant MC005 stated:

We expect school bus drivers to be fair with our students and address them with respect and professionalism. If students are misbehaving, we expect to be informed and provided the school bus video, and we will address and determine the best course of action.

Participant MC006 expressed similar concerns, calling for clear and compelling bus video documentation. They stated:

To keep it simple, our campus wants to be solely involved and responsible for addressing fact-base behavior concerns on the school bus. We want the school bus drivers to be able to communicate without aggression what is occurring on the school bus and provide a working bus video, so we can quickly and effectively address the situation and follow-up with all involved.

Participants expected drivers to be fair and understanding towards students. Four of the six responses emphasized the importance of school bus drivers being understanding and fair towards their students. Participant MC005 stated their expectations as, “We expect school bus drivers to be fair with our students and address them with respect and professionalism . . . we expect the school bus drivers to be professional and courteous with our students and work with them not against them.” Additional responses reflected similar perceptions regarding the

expectations of school bus drivers, such as Participant AP003 who stated, “I expect the school bus drivers to be the leaders on the school bus, however, be fair and consistent.”

Participants stated that improved professionalism of drivers would improve dialogue between drivers and administration. Five out of six participants discussed the professionalism of school bus drivers, either considering the communication challenges associated with unprofessionalism, or the benefits to be gained from improved school bus driver professionalism. For responses that discussed the unprofessionalism of school bus drivers, consider Participant CP001, who stated, “This year the school bus drivers have been unprofessional, no show, and late—it’s difficult to have a conversation or hold a ghost accountable” The participant was clearly dissatisfied with the school bus drivers, and implied that dialogue and communication would be improved with improved levels of professionalism.

Participant responses that highlight the positive engagement that emerged through professional behavior included Participant MC005's statement: “Be honest and fair with students and parents . . . if a school bus driver has to address a student, be fair and professional and always remember these are children.” Unlike the previous examples, which highlighted the negative behavior of school bus drivers, this response strived to encourage and instill positive behavior within their school bus drivers.

Participants believed that drivers should have more compassion for students. Five participants expressed that drivers should try to have more compassion and understanding for the students. For example, Participant CP001 questioned, “Do you ever take in account what students face before boarding the school bus; my campus is in the heart of an impoverished older community, 83% of my students are bus riders.” This participant was focused on a sense of empathy and understanding for the students by challenging the school bus driver and the

interviewer to consider the overall lives of the students. In comparison, Participant MC005 stated, “If a school bus driver has to address a student, be fair and professional and always remember these are children.” In reminding the school bus driver they are dealing with children; the participant is attempting to promote a stronger connection within the school bus driver.

Participants perceived drivers as unresponsive to feedback. Leadership focus group participants consistently expressed the views that feedback and communication between campus administration and school bus drivers has generally been unsuccessful in the past. For example, Participant CP002 stated, “To be honest it’s been no response or nothing but attitude whenever I or staff have attempted to work with the school bus driver team or transportation department.” Participant MC006 stated, “From what our campus has experienced, school bus drivers don’t respond to student’s period; the school bus drivers have no correlations or understanding of effective student management because it has not been taught to them.” Participant MC005 also stated, “School bus drivers have not been responsive to the way we want students addressed; our greatest fear in the challenges transportation is facing this school year is the end results of how disgruntled the school bus drivers are currently.”

Participants perceived that drivers would benefit from additional training. Out of the six participants, four expressed a necessity for school bus drivers to receive additional training and support. Responses of this category included Participant AP003's statement:

Our teachers receive various student management trainings in the summer and throughout the school year. I don’t see why we could not include our school bus drivers, so they could become better equipped in this role and in their engagement our students.

Similarly, Participant CP001 stated:

I would be willing to include my school bus drivers in any training we offer at the campus on student management and willing to pay them from my budget. I just want a professional caring adult interacting with my students that understands the needs of my students and parents.

Chapter 4 Summary

This chapter provided a complete description of the study and its results. Qualitative thematic analysis was utilized to gain insight into the guiding research question: How do school bus drivers perceive their experiences with student behavior, discipline, and collaboration with campus administration? The perceptions and experiences of both school bus drivers and campus administrators was analyzed using interview and focus group responses.

Data was analyzed through multiple stages of careful data organization and coding with the assistance of NVivo software. The themes that were discussed in the results portion of this chapter reflected the patterns and trends that were identified as being significant through the thematic analysis process. Significant themes were related to common strategies employed by school bus drivers, challenges associated with school bus driving and behavior management, and the potential improvements that are perceived as desirable to school bus driver participants. Through the conducting of interviews and focus groups, the researcher gained critical insight into the experiences of drivers and the communication strategies between all parties involved in school transportation success.

In the next section, further insight into the findings of this study will be provided, as findings are interpreted according to the theoretical framework that guided this research. As social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) and sociocultural learning theory (Vygotsky, 1978)

emphasize the ability to influence individual behaviors through the interaction with and observation of other individuals, these findings demonstrated some of the specific ways that bus drivers and campus administrators may be able to utilize social and sociocultural to improve school transportation experiences. Both positive and negative experiences and perspectives of drivers were highlighted in the themes discussed, providing insight into the strategies that could be used to either reinforce good behavior or eliminate negative behaviors. These interpretations and results will be discussed in Chapter 5, as the researcher works to draw conclusions regarding the limitations of the research, as well as recommendations for future research, practice, and theory.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

Introduction

School bus drivers today face more challenges than simply driving students to and from schools. Evidence from the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 demonstrated how school bus safety has been onerous due to complications such as student behavior and discipline (Childs et al., 2016; DeLara, 2008; Zohar & Lee, 2016). As a mode of transportation for most students to and from school, the school bus may be considered a part of the school system. Unfortunately, school bus drivers have reported receiving little to no support from district and school administrators regarding issues such as student bullying and other student behaviors that may potentially cause accidents (Goodboy et al., 2016; Kennedy & King, 2017). School bus drivers appear to be unheard not just by their respective districts and campuses, but by the research field as well. As these drivers receive firsthand experience of what goes on in the school bus, their perceptions, insights, and suggestions may be an invaluable source to improve the school bus system. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore how school bus drivers perceive their experiences with student behavior, discipline, and collaboration with campus administration. This chapter discusses the findings of the study along with existing related literature, as well as the limitations, recommendations, and implications of the study.

Summary of the Results

Bandura's (1977) social learning theory and Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural learning theory was used as the theoretical frameworks. Exploring the dynamics of student behaviors in the school bus is critical, as misbehaviors appeared to be a major cause of disruption for school bus drivers, thereby jeopardizing the safety of the vehicle and its passengers (Cash et al., 2014;

Zohar & Lee, 2016). With the purpose and theoretical frameworks, this study sought to answer the research question:

RQ1. How do school bus drivers perceive their experiences with student behavior, discipline, and collaboration with campus administration?

The data presented in Chapter 4 delineated the findings of this study, identifying 20 themes. These themes may be classified into seven categories. The first category describes the reasons behind participants' decision to become bus drivers, including the themes: (a) participants chose to work in public school transportation due to previous experience; and (b) family influenced participants' decisions to become a bus driver. The second category displayed the skills and trainings desired by the participants, which included: (a) additional communication strategies and skills; (b) student behavior management skills; and (c) creating positive bus environments. The third category, factors that contributed to potential incidents, contained the following themes: (a) participants believed that the drivers themselves contribute to the occurrence of incidents; and (b) participants perceived student behavior as contributing factor to bus incidents.

Attributes perceived to be associated with working effectively were presented in the fourth category, with the themes: (a) when preparing to perform their work, participants prioritize safety first; and (b) participants perceive communication as a significant factor in working effectively. Perceived challenges, on the other hand, were presented in the fifth category, with the themes: (a) participants have not received any training since the annual in-service training provided by the district; (b) participants received training from external sources; (c) participants would like campus administration to offer greater support to school bus drivers; (d) participants would like parents to ensure children understand the school bus rules and

expectations; (e) participants perceived student discipline as most troubling issue; and (f) participants are frustrated by the lack of administration follow-up.

The sixth category revealed participants' perceptions of support from campus administration, with the themes: (a) participants perceived a lack of communication/feedback from the campus as a barrier to effective student discipline; (b) participants believed that school bus drivers must ensure their own behavior management success; (c) participants do not feel supported by campus administration; and (d) participants believed school bus drivers would benefit from more training. The final category described the theme: participants feel that safety is the primary concern when transporting students. These will be discussed in detail in the following sections.

Discussion of the Results

The findings of this study provided insights on the overall experiences and perceptions of school bus drivers. Recognizing their voice on the matter was deemed important to the study as they experience firsthand the process and issues regarding school bus driving. The following findings showed that, the school bus drivers were able to enumerate the challenges and issues that they faced regarding the school bus system and provided suggestions to further improve this system.

Theme 1: Participants chose to work in public school transportation due to previous experience. This theme describes the motivation behind school bus drivers' decision to work in their field. Exploring this was important to find out why they chose this type of work in the first place and to give an idea about their expectations. Six out of 15 participants described how their previous experience in the transportation industry influenced their decision to become school bus drivers. Most of them were previous truck drivers who are used to handling large vehicles. One

participant was even a driving instructor/trainer in India who had a passion for the industry., several the participants described their enjoyment as drivers in general. This finding shows that their main motivation for applying as school bus drivers leaned more towards the driving aspect, and less on the “school” aspect.

Of note is the fact that, while participants reported having experience in driving and having credentials such as the Commercial Driver’s License (CDL), none of them reported having previous experience with dealing with children. Having little to no experience with children, it is not surprising that the school bus drivers may have trouble establishing rules with them or disciplining them. Also, while they may enjoy driving by themselves, driving a school bus with several young passengers presents a totally different scenario, which they may not enjoy. This finding then sets the groundwork for the rest of the themes, as we have learned how inexperienced the school bus drivers can be on student management based on their past experiences.

Theme 2: Family influenced participants’ decisions to become a bus driver. Another major reason for participants’ decision to apply as school bus drivers was the influence of their family. One participant stated that his wife was a teacher, and that she convinced him to take on the job. Although this gives the school bus driver an advantage of having someone close to him with experience on student management, it does not necessarily translate into the driver having the same knowledge and skills as his wife. School bus drivers’ family members may not be aware of the scenario in school buses, and what the job entails.

Another participant indicated her status as a single mother as the reason, as being a school bus driver allowed her to both spend time with her children and have a steady income at the same time. Other reasons presented by participants included: the need for employment,

referral by others, and a desire to make a difference. The latter was only stated by three participants and was not elaborated on. The fact that only three out of 15 participants revealed any interest in making a difference might exhibit a problem with the perceptions of school bus drivers of their own jobs. This could partially explain why some campus leaders in this study's focus group discussions (FGD) reported that their school bus drivers displayed negative attitudes or appeared disengaged with their jobs. If the motivation to perform in a job is low or not related to the job itself, then it might influence their performance as well; however, the following themes display an interest by the participants to learn and improve upon their lacking knowledge and skills, despite their initial reasons for applying for the job.

Theme 3: Participants desire additional communication strategies and skills. When asked about what skills and trainings the participants felt they needed, most responded that they desired additional communication strategies and skills across all levels/stakeholders, including students, parents, and campus administrators, among others. The findings from this study's campus leadership FGD also displayed a lack of communication between all these levels. This appears to be one of the main issues of the school bus system, as information or the status of the school bus is not being relayed to the campus. On the other hand, the participants also felt that campus leaders and parents did not support them, which could be why they did not bother to report everything anymore. Whatever the root cause of this miscommunication or lack of communication may be, it is clear from this study's findings that school bus drivers desire more training to improve it.

Theme 4: Participants desire student behavior management skills. Next to communication skills, participants revealed a need for student behavior management skills as they deal with student misbehavior almost daily. The majority (66.67%) of the participants

believed that student management skills were fundamental in their jobs as school bus drivers. This finding reiterates the first two themes in this study, displaying how school bus drivers lacked experience in working with children, and how this crucial component of school bus driving is not often considered when applying for the job. As school bus drivers encountered more and more misbehavior on their buses, they soon realized that school bus driving requires more than simply driving skills.

Furthermore, four participants expressed a need for training on proper documentation of the issues they face in the bus. This finding was particularly surprising, as proper documentation should have been oriented to them even before they started. As with any part of any institution, documentation is always important so as to keep track of incidents. If school bus drivers are not trained to document and report incidents, then these incidents would most likely go unnoticed, and in turn, unresolved.

Theme 5: Participants desire to create positive bus environments. Other than communication and skills training, the majority (60%) of the participants also expressed their desire to create positive bus environments. They did not emphasize on this matter, but it is not surprising that many of them would want this type of environment in their workplace. What would be more crucial is how they would achieve this type of environment. Drivers without experience with managing people, let alone children, would probably lack the knowledge and skills to foster a positive environment for them. If, in the past, all they had to deal with was driving by themselves, now they must drive for several passengers as well, which makes it more difficult to set the environment. This could be another component in the knowledge and skills training that school bus drivers could benefit from.

Theme 6: Participants believe the drivers themselves contribute to the occurrence of incidents. Themes six and seven describe the factors that contributed to potential incidents. Although it may seem like student behavior would be the only major factor leading to incidents, 12 out of 15 participants stated that school bus drivers themselves may also be responsible for the potential incidents in the bus. This study's participants enumerated factors such as lacking focus, not taking the job seriously, being distracted, remaining unprepared, and failing to set the tone as the leader on the bus. With these factors, students freely misbehave in the bus with little to no consequences, thereby increasing the possibility of a hazardous incident. The fact that the school bus drivers have identified these factors indicates that they have recognized their part in the potential incidents, which is the first step to making changes and solving those problems.

In the campus leadership FGD of this study, participants also recounted negative experiences with school bus drivers and their questionable attitudes. Some leaders shared how they would greet the buses upon arrival, only to have the bus doors close in their faces while they were still talking. The finding that the drivers themselves admitted to being partially responsible for the negative environment and potential incidents may not be as surprising, considering the other factors they must deal with, which may affect their mood. Their lack of focus or being distracted could possibly be attributed to the stressful environment around them. Failing to set the tone as the leaders on the bus may also be due to lack of training on student management. Whatever the cause may be, it may be purported from this study's findings that school bus drivers are likely to be emotionally discomposed; hence, they tend to lose focus while driving, leading to potential incidents.

Theme 7: Participants perceive student behavior as contributing to bus incidents. Problems with drivers' behaviors and attention would of course be less burdensome without the

problematic behavior of students to distract them. Reports from participants revealed several student behaviors that distract the school bus drivers, such as being noisy, unruly, disrespectful, or overall not following the school bus rules and expectations. These reported behaviors could not only cause the distraction of the driver, but also contribute to the negative bus environment that drivers wished to avoid. Interestingly, this theme is interwoven with the previous one, as drivers fail to set the tone as leaders on the bus, which allows students to misbehave, which then distracts the drivers. This interplay of factors displays a major problem in the school bus system, which the participants of this study wish to address. Other factors that participants perceived to be contributors to potential incidents included traffic, construction, route challenge/changes, and bad weather, which are beyond the control of school bus drivers and campus leaders.

Theme 8: When preparing to perform their work, participants prioritize safety first.

The next two themes describe the perceived variables that are associated with working effectively as school bus drivers. Participants described how they usually started their day with safety as their priority, and how this has proved to be an effective strategy for them. Safety had to be checked on all levels, meaning, school bus drivers had to ensure that the bus itself worked properly, that the environment was hazard-free, and that the students were all seated and hopefully strapped in before beginning their journey. One participant emphasized how staying focused helped prepare them for the day ahead. The previous themes have displayed, however, how difficult it may be for school bus drivers to stay focused on their driving.

With today's culture of being in a rush, some bus drivers may prioritize speed over safety. Some drivers may be pressured to get students to their schools quickly or compensate for traffic jams by speeding up. It is, therefore, noteworthy that this current study's participants prioritized safety over speed. Additional efforts may be required to increase safety measures on

the school bus, but the finding that the drivers in this study placed it as a priority is promising, as it shows how they value safety above all else.

Theme 9: Participants perceive communication as a significant factor in working effectively. Communication with students, parents, campus administrators, and all stakeholders was reported by participants to contribute to safer bus rides. This finding is, again, unsurprising as these stakeholders all play a part in the school bus system. Restating the bus rules to the students everyday appeared to be one way in which communication contributed to bus safety. Talking to students and building good rapport with them also helped foster the positive bus environment that school bus drivers sought. While it is not necessarily part of their job, having good rapport with students would set the tone for drivers to be leaders in the bus, thereby increasing the chances that students would respect them and listen to them.

Other variables reported by the participants to work effectively included stating bus rules and expectations, pre-trip inspections, and a positive attitude. It is interesting how some of these variables that the school bus drivers suggested were related to or like the trainings and skills they desired or felt that they lacked. This shows how, even though school bus drivers found these variables effective, they still felt that they could not maximize their potentials when it comes to these variables, hence the need for more training.

Theme 10: Participants have not received any training since the annual in-service training provided by the district. As previously stated, despite the reports of variables associated with effective strategies reported by participants, several challenges were also presented, one of which was the lack of training. This study's participants stated that they received only one training session per year in August, and that this type of training did not exactly cover crucial topics such as student management. They expressed dissatisfaction, as they

stated that the trainings did not contain any meaningful topics, rather that it was just a standard event or gathering. These types of training appeared to lack any hands-on activities that could benefit the school bus drivers. This finding could yet again reflect the lack of attention given to the “school” component of school bus driving. Event organizers may underestimate how important this component is, and present trainings that simply covered driving or following protocols.

Theme 11: Participants received training from external sources. Since school bus drivers receive minimal training, some participants have gone out of their way to obtain the necessary skills for their jobs. Three out of 15 participants sought and personally paid for trainings outside of their district, and two participants revealed that they completed the Crisis Prevention Intervention (CPI) training, which they recommended as a crucial training for all school bus drivers. The campus leaders focus group discussion arrived at the same conclusion, that school bus drivers required additional training. One participant even stated that he would be willing to utilize their budget to expand their training. The finding that both school bus drivers and campus leaders agreed that more training was necessary for the drivers strengthens the idea of how inadequate the current prescribed trainings for school bus drivers were. Indeed, as employees of the school district, school bus drivers should not be forced to rely on their own resources to find the training that they need.

Theme 12: Participants would like campus administration to offer greater support to school bus drivers. Collaboration between school bus drivers and campus administration was something that both parties desired. Participants from this current study have expressed the need for shared accountability, as both parties are involved in the school bus system. School bus drivers expected campus administration to meet with them to resolve the issues that they may

have regarding their rides. They also expected campus administration to hold students accountable for their misbehavior. Unfortunately, this is a challenge for school bus drivers as they felt little to no support from campuses. On the other hand, campus leaders from this study's FGD reported that the school bus drivers themselves were difficult to talk to. It is possible that either the school bus drivers or the campus leaders have given up on approaching the other due to past experiences of difficulty in communicating. It is not certain which party actually lacked effort in communication; however, what is certain is that these conflicts between parties indeed create barriers from proper and effective collaboration. This finding then opens the doors for both parties to exert more effort in approaching the other and finding ways to collaborate for the improvement of the school bus system.

Theme 13: Participants would like parents to ensure children understand the school bus rules and expectations. Parents, like campus administration, are also viewed by participants as partners in the school bus system. Participants of this current study expressed how parents should be responsible for the actions of their children. They also believed that parents should be aware of the school bus rules, just as they are aware of school rules in general. Majority of the participants, however, revealed how parents lacked an understanding of the school bus rules and expectations, creating yet another barrier from effective collaboration. The lack of communication between school bus drivers and parents may also be attributed to either party. It is unknown whether the lack of effort in communication and relaying the school bus rules lay with school bus drivers or parents. What this finding does show is that there is indeed a lack of effort, and that school bus drivers must do what they can to make sure that parents are aware of the school bus rules and expectations.

Theme 14: Participants perceived student discipline as most troubling issue. As aforementioned in Theme Seven of this study, student misbehavior plays a huge role in creating potential incidents in the bus. As school bus drivers focus their attention on the road, with the added factor of lack of training in student management, discipline attempts on misbehaving students have proven to be a challenge for them. One participant even expressed how he was “afraid of students,” which is a troubling finding. This reflects yet again their lack of training on establishing themselves as leaders on the bus, and how it poses as a major challenge for them.

Theme 15: Participants are frustrated by the lack of administration follow-up. The struggles that participants had with student discipline were further aggravated by the fact that their reports to campus administration were often ignored. One participant revealed how his reports from early in the school year have never been addressed. Another participant expressed his distrust in the school district and shared a fear of being dismissed for speaking out against a student’s behavior. This finding was contested by the campus leaders FGD, where campus leaders stated that the school bus drivers themselves were unresponsive to feedback. Again, it is unclear which party lacked effort in communication. What this suggests is that both parties must be more assertive in their communication, and that school bus drivers must not be disheartened by a few ignored reports. As long as the school bus drivers have proper documentation to support their statement, there should be no fear whatsoever in bringing it to the campus administration.

Theme 16: Participants perceived a lack of communication/feedback from the campus as a barrier to effective student discipline. In terms of school bus drivers’ perceptions of support from campus administration, almost all participants shared experiences of being ignored or not being taken seriously enough. The topic within the campus leaders’ FGD of this

current study revealed an opposite perception. Campus leaders stated that they desired more open communication as well, and that the drivers themselves were unresponsive to feedback or communication attempts.

While campus leaders in this study's FGD stated that they were willing to communicate with school bus drivers, it did not necessarily mean that they agreed with the gravity of the reported incidents. An incident that the driver perceives to be dangerous or to compromise the safety of the passengers may not be perceived as dangerous by campus administration. This could lead to the idea that school bus drivers were not taken seriously by campus leaders. One participant even stated that involving their union was sometimes necessary because they receive very little support from the school or department management. This entails deeper and more detailed communication between the parties. School bus drivers must let campus leaders know the gravity of the incidents that they report by presenting the possible damages it may lead to. At the same time, campus leaders must be more diligent in updating school bus drivers on the results of their reports.

Theme 17: Participants believe that school bus drivers must ensure their own behavior management success. Due to the perception that campus administration provides minimal or lacking support, participants have expressed how they felt solely responsible for the incidents on their buses. One participant stated that school bus drivers who still relied on campus administration or on others were at a disadvantage, because in their field of work, they can only rely on themselves. This finding shows how school drivers felt abandoned and alone in their efforts to keep the school bus a positive and safe place. While school bus drivers may employ certain strategies and practices, such as those mentioned in Theme Eight, they may not

be enough to maintain the safety of the school bus. All stakeholders, not just the drivers alone, must all be involved in creating the safe and positive school bus environment.

Theme 18: Participants do not feel supported by campus administration. As aforementioned, the lack of support from campus administration has been a massive issue for participants. They expressed how all other parties involved in the school bus system only cared about the promptness of the bus and nothing else. This raises the question of priorities yet again. If students, parents, and campus leaders only cared about promptness or speed, then safety is compromised. A participant from the current study suggested that further support from campus administration and department management is necessary to improve the system's conditions. Implementation of best practices from other districts was suggested. This would indeed benefit all parties, as they could examine what works for other districts in terms of campus involvement in the school bus system.

Theme 19: Participants believed school bus drivers would benefit from more training. Frustrated and under-trained, participants candidly asked the administration to provide more training for them in areas that would benefit them the most. Themes Three, Four, and Five of this study describes the type of training they believe would benefit them most. Participants elaborated how they, like the teachers in school, were employees that are part of the student learning process as well, alluding to the idea that they needed more training like those received by teachers. This finding aligns with the campus leaders' FGD, where they stated that more training was indeed necessary for school bus drivers. One leader even stated that he would be willing to expand his budget to include the school bus drivers in any on-campus trainings offered. As both school bus drivers and campus administration agree that more training is necessary, it is only a matter of implementation and ensuring that all drivers receive the proper

training on all the essential topics they have requested. After all, they are the ones who know what skills they are lacking based on the challenges they face in their work.

Theme 20: Participants feel that safety is the primary concern when transporting students. One thing that school bus drivers all agree on is that safety is the number one priority. Participants have reiterated the importance of reminding students and their parents about the bus rules and how they are necessary for safety. This finding is noteworthy, as students, parents, and campus leaders might forget that the ride to school is a potentially dangerous situation. The other parties may not be aware of the hazards that the school bus drivers presented in the previous themes. Safety as the number one priority, and how to achieve it, should be reiterated to all parties constantly, to emphasize the potential dangers that might occur throughout the ride. In conclusion, the themes presented above displayed the school bus drivers' perceptions regarding the following categories: reasons for being a school bus driver; training and skills required/desired; factors that contributed to potential incidents; what is working effectively; challenges with managing students and collaborating with administration; perceptions of support from campus administration; and safety as the top priority. Majority of the participants felt a lack of support and collaboration with both parents and campus administration regarding their issues on the bus. They also felt that student misbehavior was a major contributor to potential incidents but conceded that they were partially responsible as well. With that, participants desired more support and training on proper communication with all stakeholders, and on student behavior management, as these skills would allow them to create a positive bus environment and maintain their top priority, which is safety.

Discussion of the Results in Relation to the Literature

In this section, the findings discussed above are compared to the previous literature discussed in Chapter 2. Of note in existing literature Hendrix et al. (2018), DeLara, (2008), Brown et al. (2019), and Goodboy et al. (2016) studies which has been cited in several works and has played a pivotal role in giving voice to school bus drivers in the field of research. These works, which gathered school bus drivers' perceptions of student behavior, effective communication, and key stakeholder collaboration, was particularly selected as it aligned well with this current study. Other works on school bus drivers were also examined in line with study and are discussed in the following subsections.

Reasons behind decision to become school bus drivers. The first two themes of this present study fall under the category of reasons behind participants' decision to become bus drivers. Existing literature regarding these two themes are extremely limited; however, they were deemed integral to the study as they represent the initial motivations of these school bus drivers, which are part of the school bus drivers' whole experience. The prevalent reasons for the participants in this present study were their previous experience as truck drivers or driving instructors, and the influence of their family. This type of motivation, however, did not include any indication of working with children. As Brown et al. (2018) revealed, the component of school bus driving that involves student management and discipline is often left out of the job description. School bus driver applicants are not immediately made aware of this crucial part of the job, which potentially creates a job mismatch. Their motivation for doing the job might be colored by their different priorities, as some may view school bus driving as simply "driving" (Brown et al., 2018). Seeking individuals that understand the importance of student learning and the role public school transportation plays is vital to the educational environment.

Skills and training desired by participants. The participants in this study stated that they desired more skills and training on communication across all levels, student behavior management, and creating a positive bus environment. Proper communication may indeed have a major influence on how stakeholders will react or how willing they may be to cooperate with the school bus driver, as it plays a huge role in Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural learning theory. Vygotsky (1978) believed that all stakeholders were responsible for the development of student behavior, and that they must all communicate and collaborate to influence the students. A single group, such as school bus drivers, may not be enough to influence students' behaviors, but a collaboration between all groups involved might be more effective.

Like this current study, the desire to be included in the communication channels was also expressed by participants in Brown et al.'s (2018) study, where they stated that they wanted to take part in the bullying prevention efforts and interventions. School transportation departments should procure training resources that educate and raise awareness to student behavior while developing practical solutions (Hendrix et al., 2019). These findings, along with those of previous studies on school bus drivers, revealed how communication appears to be a priority for school bus drivers in terms of perceived necessary skills and training.

Communication might be a common dilemma for the school bus drivers, as this topic was also broached in the campus leadership FGD. In the campus leadership FGD, participants expressed a desire to have more open communication with school bus drivers. Many of them felt that school bus drivers were not willing to have open and honest communication with them, with some stating that they rarely see their bus drivers at all due to absenteeism and tardiness. Having minimal communication between all stakeholders, including the bus driver, may indeed have negative consequences, such as underreported misbehavior on the bus.

Also, of note are the potential benefits of having better communication lines between all stakeholders. An anecdote from several studies, was creating and maintain open lines of communication and effective relationships amongst the school bus drivers, students, parent and the campus leadership was essential the bus safety and culture. This displayed how communication between all stakeholders could effectively formulate solutions for the issues and incidents within the school bus.

The finding that school bus drivers desire more student behavior management training is also reflected in several past studies that revealed positive effects of student behavior management training (Collins & Ryan, 2016; Goldin & McDaniel, 2018; Goodboy et al., 2016; Rusby, Crowley, Sprague, & Biglan, 2011). Goodboy et al. (2016), who investigated bullying on the school bus, purported that bus drivers could benefit immensely from training on responding to bullying. They noted how bus drivers themselves, and not just students, may be victims of bullying in the bus.

A type of approach on student behavior management called Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) has been presented by previous studies (Collins & Ryan, 2016; Goldin & McDaniel, 2018; Rusby et al., 2011). These past studies recommended school bus driver training on PBIS to alleviate the disciplinary problems they face. PBIS involves multi-tiered intervention addressing student behavior in varying degrees, which allows school bus drivers to implement first tier intervention even when no misbehavior occurs, as a prevention strategy (Rusby et al., 2011). Goldin and McDaniel (2018) noted, however, that the effects of PBIS training were most noticeable after three years. As effective as PBIS training might be, this displays how it might be necessary to provide more training on student behavior management to school bus drivers, as suggested by the current study's participants.

PBIS not only addresses misbehaviors but provides positive alternatives to rules and expectations as well (Goldin & McDaniel, 2018), which may assist in the third desired training and skill by the current study's participants. To create a positive bus environment, as this study's participants desire, students must be made to feel that they are partners in bus safety, and not just "rulebreakers." A shorter, more positively-worded list of rules and expectations may elicit this feeling within the students (Goldin & McDaniel, 2018).

Other ways in which to improve the positive bus environment has been found by previous studies to prevent students from misbehaving. Allowing more social activities within the bus, instead of simply letting children sit silently by themselves, creates a positive environment and was found to be beneficial in engaging students (Westman, Olsson, Garling, & Friman, 2016). One participant in this study stated his desire to improve his understanding of the students. Indeed, training bus drivers to build rapport and create a more positive bus culture is also in line with Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural learning theory, as this culture may reflect in the students' behaviors. Furthermore, if bus drivers displayed positive behaviors within their buses, then students may imitate their behaviors. This type of learning was purported by Bandura (1977) in this study's other theoretical framework, social learning theory. It is inevitable, however, that some students might still misbehave, hence, the participants' desire for documentation training as well. Unwanted incidents may still occur despite prevention, requiring proper documentation.

Factors that contributed to potential incidents. As participants of the study stated, they may lack focus or get distracted at times, which may affect their own behavior and cause potential incidents. The problem of drivers' divided attention has also been alluded to in Goldin and McDaniel's (2018) study. They purported that the PBIS's preventive measures would help alleviate this problem, allowing school bus drivers to focus their full attention on road safety

(Goldin & McDaniel, 2018). Other than being distracted, school bus drivers' irritability and lack of professionalism was also propounded in this current study's campus leadership FGD. If school bus drivers are irritable, then this might connote a negative effect of Bandura's (1977) social learning theory, as students may imitate this negative attitude. Students would likewise be irritable and add to the negative bus environment, which would then add to the chances of potential incidents.

The finding that student behaviors also contribute to potential bus incidents is consistent with numerous existing literatures describing problematic behaviors by students on buses (Brown et al., 2018; Goldin & McDaniel, 2018; Goodboy et al., 2016; Hendrix et al., 2019). Unfortunately, as previously stated, drivers themselves may also become victims of student bullies (Goodboy et al., 2016). This type of disrespectful behavior may indeed be distracting, as bus drivers must deal with this behavior to avoid anyone getting hurt. Some bullying behaviors go so far as to develop into physical assaults, which would warrant the attention of the driver (Brown et al., 2018; DeLara, 2008).

Aside from bullying, other behaviors, which may appear harmless, could distract the drivers as well. Uncontrolled and loud noise, for one, can be very distracting (Goldin & McDaniel, 2018). Failure to remain in seat, aggressive acts including fighting, destruction to the interior of the bus, obscene language, and constantly unbuckling seat belt (King, Kennedy, & Powelson, 2019). In general, any behavior issues have an impact on school bus drivers and potential to distract drivers and contribute to safety concerns.

Interestingly, previous studies have also found that the time of travel was also a factor, with early morning bus rides being more peaceful than afternoon ones (Brown et al., 2018;). A participant in Brown et al.'s (2018) study revealed that morning bus rides usually consisted of

sleeping children, while afternoon rides consisted of children with pent up energy. Hirsch, Lewis-Palmer, Sugai, and Schnacker (2004) revealed how the first 4 months of the school year was also rampant with student misbehaviors, and how the last 5 months of the school year were less eventful. Age was also found to be a factor, as younger students, particularly those in middle school, appeared to be more aggressive than older students (Galliger et al., 2008; Long & Alexander, 2010). With all these potential contributors to incidents in the school bus, drivers are really required to be attentive and prepared to deal with them. The following two chapters discuss the variables participants perceived to be associated with effective strategies.

Factors perceived to be associated with working effectively. Participants in this current study provided suggestions on what worked effectively for them in their job. The first and foremost variable presented was safety as a priority. As King et al., 2019 stated in their study, school bus drivers are frequently the only adult on the school bus for certain lengths of time. The school bus driver is responsible for the transportation and safety of the student (Zohar and Lee, 2016). This goes in line with the current study's finding that school bus drivers are charged with more responsibility of keeping the students safe. If anything happened to any student, the school bus drivers would be the first to be asked because of their unique roles as first and last adult companions of students within a school day. Also, in line with the participants' suggestions on safety, Zohar and Lee (2016) have found that school bus drivers who prioritized safety were able to alleviate the disrupting factors during the bus ride.

The other variable suggested by this study's participants was communication across all stakeholders. This is once again supported by Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural learning theory, as the safety of bus rides depended on a collaboration of all stakeholders. Stakeholders included everyone who benefits from an act or program, in this case, the school bus rides (Pollock et al.,

2017). As they are beneficiaries, stakeholders are then significant parts of a whole, which calls for proper communication between these parts (Long & Alexander, 2010; Pollock et al., 2017). The simple act of greeting their students was reported to be an effective strategy to prevent incidents. Creating on-going relationships and communication between school bus drivers, students and campus administrations is important. A participant in the current study reported how he communicated the school bus rules with the students in every ride.

Working closely with parents and school administrators has also been effective in past studies (Brown et al., 2018; Long & Alexander, 2010). A participant from Brown et al.'s (2018) study described how she worked closely with the school administrator to enforce sanctions, which vastly improved their students' behavior in the bus. The PBIS, which has been found to be an effective preventive strategy, requires drivers receive the necessary support from stakeholders. Goodboy et al. (2016) proposed a whole-system approach in which all stakeholders, including students, parents, and school administrators, took part in collaborating and being responsible for the safe bus ride. These past studies all support the current study's finding that communication is an important variable in safe school bus rides.

The variables relayed by this current study's participants also supplement the findings from existing literature that count certain variables that have worked well in the past. Positive reinforcement, such as the ticket/token system where students get rewards for their positive behavior, has also been found to be an effective strategy (Goldin & McDaniel, 2018). In the current study's focus group discussion with drivers, multi-tiered intervention, like the PBIS (Childs et al., 2016; Collins & Ryan, 2016), was also suggested to be an effective strategy. Participants revealed how they would start by giving verbal warnings to students who misbehave, followed by documenting the behavior. Some participants also stated that they

usually placed the misbehaving student in front, near the driver, so that they could keep watch over the student. If the students continue to misbehave, parents would be notified. Their last resort would then be to refuse service for that student. Goldin and McDaniel (2018) likewise stated that school bus transportation should be a privilege and not a right, one that can be taken away if students do not follow the rules.

Perceived challenges for school bus drivers. This study's participants emphasized the lack of training they received from the school district, as they only had one session per year. This finding is echoed by Goldin and McDaniel (2018), stating how school bus drivers receive the least possible training they can. Themes three and four of this current study delineate the type of training participants feel that they lacked. In DeLara's (2008) study, almost all participants received training on dealing with children's behaviors and illnesses or disabilities, as well as training on emergency situations. Due to this lack of training, school bus drivers were forced to go out of their way and spend their own resources on trainings outside their districts.

The lack of support from both campus administration and parents was also emphasized by this study's participants as a challenge for school bus drivers. Brown et al. (2018) shared similar findings, as their participants noted how campus administration may be bullied by the parents into siding with them instead of with school bus drivers. This once again goes against Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural learning theory. Campus leaders take up a major role in student management in the school bus, as the school bus is still within their jurisdiction as part of the school. Campus leaders are therefore part of the sociocultural circle that should help in the development of students within the school bus (Vygotsky, 1978). Parents were also identified to be a part of the sociocultural learning experience, as they are major influences in their children's lives (Vygotsky, 1978).

When it comes to the challenge of student management and discipline, this current study's finding that students showed little to no respect for school bus drivers is troubling and is echoed in past studies as well (DeLara, 2008; Goodboy et al., 2016; Goldin & McDaniel, 2018). As stated in this study by participants, some bus drivers face challenges with authority on the bus. Likewise, previous studies suggested many students fail to recognize school bus drivers as authority figures. Student and driver disrespect were a reoccurring theme from participants in the current study. These displays take a toll on drivers making it difficult to focus on maintaining a safe bus environment. The disciplinary issues reported by the current study's participants also reflect those of previous studies. The participants revealed the most common behaviors were fighting, loud noise, frequent moving seats, standing in the aisle, throwing objects, and failing to follow bus rules. These behaviors were found to be most challenging for the participants to management.

The lack of administration follow-up reported by this current study's participants also goes against the collaboration within all stakeholders necessary in sociocultural learning theory (Vygotsky, 1978). School bus drivers from past studies have shared the same sentiment, as they felt that they were not taken seriously by campus administration (Brown et al., 2018; DeLara, 2008). These findings are a challenge for school bus drivers, as it may further promote student misbehavior if they feel that their actions receive no consequences (Brown et al., 2018).

School bus drivers' perceptions of support from campus administration. This study's finding that school bus drivers were often ignored or not taken seriously by campus administration is shared by previous studies, which revealed how communication between school bus drivers and campus administration was often one-way (DeLara, 2008; Long & Alexander, 2010). DeLara's (2008) participants stated that both transportation managers and school

supervisors were unresponsive to their communication efforts, which posed a serious problem. School bus drivers felt that their efforts in reporting were wasted (DeLara, 2008).

This study's campus leadership FGD showed contrasting results though, as the school bus drivers were the ones who appeared unresponsive according to the campus leaders. These contrasting findings are of concern but may be resolved by proper communication between both parties. Goldin and McDaniel (2018), along with Rusby et al. (2011), displayed in their studies how the feedback and documentation from school bus drivers can be a crucial factor in student discipline. These reports and documentations must then be utilized by drivers, and given attention to by campus administrators, to be a productive factor in school bus safety (Goldin & McDaniel, 2018; Rusby et al., 2011).

Because of the lack of support from other parties felt by this study's participants, they believed that they themselves were solely responsible for the whole school bus system. In Brown et al.'s (2018) study, school bus drivers also resorted to individual strategies due to the lack of support from campus administration. Students, as they observed the solitariness of school bus drivers in terms of authority, may feel that they can easily abuse this and misbehave. Rusby et al. (2011) likewise found that areas with poor student-to-staff ratios were prone to student misbehavior. This then shows how, even though school bus drivers may feel like they have no choice but to enact individual strategies on student management, it may not be enough to prevent misbehavior.

Aside from feeling ignored and unsupported, this study's participants also stated that the other parties involved in the school bus system appeared to care little about their struggles. Brown et al. (2018) similarly stated that bus drivers were usually perceived as auxiliary, leading campus administration to often brush them aside. A participant in this current study reiterated

that they were part of the school bus system as much as campus administration and parents were. He suggested that more support and discussions were necessary to bring out the best practices in school bus driving.

As previously stated, a major setback on school bus driving was the lack of training they received from the school district. This reflects the lack of support given by the schools, as they only provided single annual trainings, which did not seem to cover all the necessary topics needed in school bus driving. Goodboy et al. (2016) likewise stated that bus drivers generally only receive technical and mechanical training, leaving other interpersonal topics out. Providing more training on student management, or even simply including school bus drivers in teacher trainings, may be desirable ways in which campus administration could show support to school bus drivers.

Participants feel that safety is the primary concern when transporting students. The last theme reiterated that safety had to be the number one priority for school bus drivers. Brown et al.'s (2018) findings revealed how safety, over everything else, was emphasized by school administrators. Unfortunately, this does not seem to be the case for other parties involved in the school bus system. The lack of support from other parties, as well as the lack of cooperation from students attests to their low priority given on safety.

The findings from this study then complement several past studies discussed above. The lacking job description regarding the “school” component of school bus driving was echoed by Brown et al. (2018) and DeLara (2008). This should then make recruiters aware that more details are needed on school bus drivers’ job descriptions. The lack of support, relationship, and communication between all stakeholders in this study and previous literature proved to be detrimental to the bus environment. Unfortunately, as this lack of support was reiterated by

several participants in this current study, it shows how this issue remains unresolved up to now. An interesting finding from this study shows how the campus leaders were willing to collaborate with school bus drivers, something not evident in existing literature. This finding opens new possibilities on collaborations between these parties. Aside from communication, the lack of training for school bus drivers was also evident in previous studies (Goldin & McDaniel, 2018; Goodboy et al., 2016). As the campus leadership FGD in this study shows, campus leaders were also willing to provide more training. The findings of this study on what types of training school bus drivers needed would then allow these willing campus leaders to set these trainings up appropriately.

Limitations of the Study

As this study utilized a single case study in Texas, the themes discussed above may not be generalized to other populations such as other races and locations. While school bus drivers in other locations may share the same experiences (Brown et al., 2018; DeLara, 2008; Goodboy et al., 2016; Hendrix et al., 2019; Zohar & Lee, 2016), they may hold different perceptions of these experiences. The use of purely qualitative methods also limits the findings of this study, as no correlations or causalities may be conditional. The opinions of the participants may not reflect the actual needs and experiences of school bus drivers. Considering these limitations, recommendations for future studies will be discussed in the next section.

Implication of the Results for Practice, Policy, and Theory

The insights provided by the participants in this study imparted several implications on practice, theory, and social change, which are discussed in this section. This present study provided new perspectives, and confirmed old ones from previous studies, mostly from school bus drivers, but also from campus administration, regarding the school bus system. These

perspectives may be used to arrive at the implications for the different stakeholders, and to ensure a safer and more collaborative school bus system. While these qualitative findings may not be generalizable to other populations, it may be helpful for those from similar situations or contexts.

For students and their parents, the findings reveal the large role they play in ensuring the safety of the school bus. Parents, who are major influencers of their children, should remind the children of the school bus rules and expectations, as suggested by this study's participants. Students on the other hand, should be mindful to follow these rules and expectations, as their own safety is also at stake.

School bus drivers may benefit from the effective strategies described by the participants in these findings. Prioritizing safety was recommended not just by the participants in this study, but from other past studies as well (Brown et al., 2018; DeLara, 2008; Hendrix et al., 2019; Zohar & Lee, 2016). This implies that school bus drivers must always ensure that everything is in order before beginning their daily trips. This includes preparing themselves mentally and emotionally to remain focused throughout their drives. The participants in this study also recommended building rapport with not just the students, but their parents as well, to create the positive sociocultural environment that would nurture students and encourage them to follow the school bus rules and expectations (Vygotsky, 1978).

Campus administration would also benefit from the findings, raising awareness on the challenges faced by school bus drivers, and the training needs they require. The campus leaders in this study expressed how they were willing to provide training for school bus drivers and open their lines for proper communication. These findings imply that both school bus drivers and campus administration have the same goals and are open to collaboration. Implementation of

this collaboration is then possible and might be beneficial for the sociocultural learning system (Vygotsky, 1978). PBIS training may also be attempted, as its beliefs are in line with most of the current strategies and goals of the school bus drivers (Childs et al., 2016; Collins & Ryan, 2016; Goldin & McDaniel, 2018; Rusby et al., 2011). Campus leaders and other policy-makers in the school bus system may then utilize these findings to arrive at trainings and programs that may be beneficial to the school bus drivers.

Findings from this study are in alignment with social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) as well as sociocultural learning theory (Vygotsky, 1978). For instance, in regard to social leaning theory, results indicated that students can learn from experiences on the school bus and school bus drivers can serve as role models. In regard to sociocultural learning theory, school bus drivers and school staff can work together on best practices and strategies to manage student behavior and promote a safe bus environment. Theoretically, the findings of this study imply a need for more research on school bus drivers and their issues. The findings displayed several challenges faced by school bus drivers that are still unmet. These findings have opened the doors for more investigation into these challenges, along with the strategies and recommendations provided by the participants. With further empirical data on these findings, solutions may be provided for the issues of the school bus system.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study provided in-depth insights on the experiences of school bus drivers. Future studies may build on these insights to examine ways to help school bus drivers in dealing with their concerns. The use of PBIS training has been recommended by several past studies (Childs et al., 2016; Collins & Ryan, 2016; Goldin & McDaniel, 2018; Rusby et al., 2011). Researchers may examine whether PBIS would be effective for school bus drivers, using quantitative

methods. Experimental methods with PBIS as a variable would be most optimal as it could provide a balanced school bus driver, student, and campus administration relationship. The limitations and delimitations of this study also prompt some recommendations, such as replication of the study to other populations in order to strengthen the generalizability of the results. School bus systems of other types of schools, or in other districts, may be investigated to examine whether drivers share the same perspectives, challenges, and experiences. As the findings of this study revealed contradictory reports from school bus drivers and campus administration regarding the lack of communication and feedback, future researchers may also investigate this phenomenon in more depth. Observational studies may be done to determine what the exact problem is in terms of communication between these parties. Insights from students themselves may also be gathered regarding their own behaviors on the bus, as they too are stakeholders, placing them as collaborators in the sociocultural learning system (Vygotsky, 1978); and as this study found, they are also major contributors to potential incidents on the bus.

Conclusion

The perceptions of school bus drivers have been under-studied in existing literature (Brown et al., 2018; DeLara, 2008; Hendrix et al., 2019), and should be further investigated as they are the ones who experience first-hand the challenges and issues of the school bus system. The purpose of this qualitative case study was then to explore how school bus drivers perceive their experiences with student behavior, discipline, and collaboration with campus administration. The findings revealed several challenges faced by school bus drivers, most particularly regarding students' behaviors, lack of support and feedback from campus administration, and lack of necessary training and skills.

The findings also displayed how school bus drivers themselves were perceived as factors that may contribute to potential incidents, as some may lose focus, not take the job seriously, or fail to establish authority within their buses. This finding provides new perspectives on the school bus system, displaying how the school bus drivers themselves may fall short in their efforts to provide safe school bus rides. That said, some effective strategies were recommended by this study's participants, including prioritizing safety and establishing proper lines of communication with all stakeholders. The findings also indicated the areas in which school bus drivers perceived to be lacking in their training, including communication strategies and skills, student behavior management, and creating a positive bus environment. Another unique finding from this study revealed how both school bus drivers and campus administration had similar goals and suggestions, such as increased communication and student management training. With these findings, students, parents, school bus drivers, and campus administration can collaborate to address the needs and challenges of school bus drivers, to foster a safe and positive school bus environment.

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Appendix A: Researcher's Interview Questions

School Bus Driver; Senior Driver; Safety Trainer; Field Safety Investigator

- What factors influenced your choice to work in public school transportation?
- What are the current departments' employee training needs related to student management on the bus?
- What factors do you think contribute to school bus incident/accidents and student discipline challenges?
- How have you been preparing to effectively perform your job, interaction with students, and transport in a safe manner?
- When is the last time you received training related to student management?
- What is your understanding of the parent or campus administrator's role and responsibility when student behavior on the school bus is a concern?
- What are the issues you face in managing student behavior, discipline documentation, and collaboration with the campus administrator?
- What are the struggles and barriers you experience communicating with campus administrators about student behavior?
- What is your experience with addressing student behavior on the school bus?
- Do you feel supported in your position by transportation management? How has the department provided professional development to enhance your knowledge and support your growth?
- What is the primary concern when transporting students on a school bus? How do you maintain student safety in a manner that supports safety above all else?

Appendix B: Researcher's Focus Group Topics

- Understanding of role campus administrator's in addressing student behavior on the school bus.
- Process and expectations once student disciplinary document is received from a school bus driver.
- How transportation management can support and prepare school bus driver in effectively addressing student behavior on the school bus.
- Creating and maintaining expectations for school bus drivers, parents, and students regarding student behavior concerns.
- Identifying necessary training at the campus level to manage student behavior?
- Building effective relationships and communication between campus administration and school bus drivers.

Appendix C: Observation Sheet: School Bus Student Behavior Study

Bus Route: _____ **Date:** _____ **Observer:** _____

Time	Type of Misbehavior	Interaction Prior to Behavior Concerns	How behavior is addressed	Results/Comments

Appendix D: Participant Personal Data Sheet

Participant Identifier Code: _____

Participant Job Title: _____

Participant Years of Service: _____

Participant Gender: _____

Active Employee in K–12 education system: _____

Retired Employee in K–12 education system: _____

Why did you choose K–12 education or student transportation services as field to work in:

(Provide brief answer to this question below)?

Appendix E: Consent Form

Researcher Study Title: *Perceptions of School Bus Drivers and their experiences with student behavior: A Case Study*

Researcher: Tesha Y. Foster

Research Institution: Concordia University

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Donna Graham

Purpose of Study and what participants will be do:

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to explore how school bus drivers perceive their experiences with student behavior, discipline, and collaboration with campus administration. Also, the study will explore the experiences of the school bus driver to promote a culture of student management, collaboration, and synergy with campus administration. This a straight forward study. Participation in this study is strictly voluntary. The expectation is to select 15 participants for the study. I am interested in your reflection, experiences, and opinions about the student behavior management.

Procedures for Participants:

- Read and sign a consent form for participation in the search study.
- Complete a participant personal data sheet that gives information about your name, age, gender, years of service in the school district, job title, what you chose your career field, and employment status in the school district.
- Participate in one focus group and interview session to answer questions about perception and experiences school bus transportation, student behavior management on the bus, and interaction with campus administration.
- Allow the researcher to review any current school year student disciplinary documents and employee training curriculums.
- Be flexible for follow-up questions and review of transcripts and research study conclusion.
- Notify researcher at any time if you would like to withdraw from the study.
- All information will not be used from participants that withdraw at any point in the study.

Participation should take (2-3) hours or less and the researcher will be mindful of your time.

Risks:

This research study has no foreseen risk associated with participating in the study other than your information. The researcher will ensure all information provided will be secure and coded to protect you. All documentation will remain under lock and key in a file cabinet at the researcher's home. The analyzed data will never contain any identifying information. At the time of defense or publication no participants will be identified. The researcher will destroy all documents after 7years of study conclusion.

Benefits:

This information will provide valued added insight to the public school transportation community on how to effectively manage student behavior on the school bus. Participants may benefit from this research by reflecting on how to educate stakeholders and collaboration with campus administration to promote a safe transport through managing student behavior.

Confidentiality:

No information from the participants will be provided to any outside agency and will maintained in a secure and private location. Information will be included and published in the researcher's dissertation.

Right to Withdraw:

Any participation is much appreciated however, participants at any time have the right to withdraw from participation at any point in the process. In addition, participants may skip questions if you wish not to provide an answer. This is not a mandatory participation.

Contact Information:

As a participant you will receive a copy of your signed consent form. Any questions can be directed to the primary researcher's attention in-person or via email at [redacted]. If you have questions beyond the researcher, you can email or call Dr. Donna Graham (dograham@cu-portland.edu or 610-888-0167).

Participant Statement of Consent:

I have read all information and fully understand. I understand participant is completely volunteer for this study.

Participant Name

Date

Participant Signature

Date

Primary Researcher Name

Date

Primary Researcher Signature

Date

Appendix F: Interview Protocol

Interview Time:

Date of Interview:

Interview Location:

Interview Participate:

Interviewer:

First, let me thank you in advance for taking the time to meet with me. Your background, experiences, perceptions, and responses to these questions will provide value-added information for public school transportation communities and school districts in regarding to effectively managing student behavior on the school bus. The interview session will take about 30–35 minutes or less. As informed in the consent form, all interview participants will be recorded for accuracy and clarity. This is a completely voluntary process.

Recording and all documentation will be saved on an external hard drive or USB drive as a backup. Transcripts from all interviews will be typed in Microsoft Word and saved. All transcribed information will be provided for content verification. (If changes, are necessary they will be revised during this process). Once the transcript is finalized the audio will be deleted immediately unless further directed otherwise. All interview data will be securely stored with consent forms for a 3 year timeframe at the home of the researcher.

There is no foreseen risk in this study, however some personal information and including interview responses about perceptions and experiences with students will be included. As a voluntary participant, you may withdraw at any time (any documents will be immediately destroyed upon request to withdraw), also you may choose not to answer any questions you believe makes you uncomfortable.

Appendix G: Statement of Original Work

The Concordia University Doctor of Education Program is a collaborative community of scholar-practitioners, who seek to transform society by pursuing ethically-informed, rigorously-researched, inquiry-based projects that benefits professional, institutional, and local educational contexts. Each member of the community affirms throughout their program of study, Integrity, Policy. This policy states the following:

Statement of academic integrity.

As a member of the Concordia University community, I will neither engage in fraudulent or unauthorized behaviors in the presentation and completion of my work, nor will I provide unauthorized assistance to others.

Explanations:

What does “fraudulent” mean?

“Fraudulent” work is any material submitted for evaluation that is falsely or improperly presented as one’s own. This includes, but is not limited to texts, graphics, and other multi-media files appropriated from any source, including another individual, that are intentionally presented as all or part of a candidate’s final work without full and complete documentation.

What is “authorized” assistance?

“Unauthorized assistance” refers to any support candidates solicit in the completion of their work, that has not been explicitly specified as appropriate by the instructor, or any assistance that is understood in the class context as inappropriate. This can include, but is not limited to:

- Use of unauthorized notes or another’s work during an online test
- Use of unauthorized notes or personal assistance in an online exam setting
- Inappropriate collaboration in preparation and/or completion of a project
- Unauthorized solicitation of professional resources for the completion of the work.

Statement of Original Work (Continued)

I attest that:

1. I have read, understood, and complied with all aspects of the Concordia University–Portland Academic Integrity Policy during the development and writing of this dissertation.
2. Where information and/or materials from outside sources has been used in the production of this dissertation, all information and/or materials from outside sources has been properly referenced and all permissions required for use of the information and/or materials have been obtained, in accordance with research standards outlined in the *Publication Manual of The American Psychological Association*.

Tesha Y. Foster

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Name (Typed)

July 1, 2019

Date